Developing 21st Century HRD Competencies Through International Field

Diane D. Chapman
North Carolina State University

Julia Storborg-Walker
North Carolina State University

Laurie Brummitt
North Carolina State University

Jennifer J. Stanigar
North Carolina State University

Copyright © 2013 Diane Chapman, Julia Storborg-Walker, Laurie Brummitt & Jennifer Stanigar
Developing 21st Century HRD Competencies Through International Field Experience

Paper Symposium Overview Abstract

This paper symposium is based on a recent initiative led by faculty in the Workforce and Human Resource Education (WHRE) program at North Carolina State University (NCSU). The primary objectives of the initiative were to provide an international HRD field experience for faculty and graduate students and to identify opportunities for cooperative research and scholarly engagement with interested institutional partners in a developing country. This initiative is one step the program faculty is taking to meet the needs of 21st century organizations; namely, to develop the global skills and expertise needed to lead diverse and multi-cultural work teams.

This topic is significant to the 2013 conference theme because it provides suggestions for the next generation of HRD scholars and scholar-practitioners by describing some of the challenges and opportunities facing 21st century HRD professionals. Each of the papers presented will address an aspect of HRD research that emerged as an important topic area from this field experience. These papers speak to the overarching need to prepare the next generation of HRD professionals through the development of 21st century competencies afforded by international field experiences that expose students and faculty to situations and people that foster their development. A range of perspectives from critical and social justice to international, global and cross-cultural issues to virtual HRD and technology applications will be expressed.

There is a growing body of multidisciplinary research on the development of what has been termed 21st century competencies within the management, psychology, education, and HRD literature. A competency can be defined in its most simple form as a capability or an ability that is manifested in a set of behaviors that are driven by an intention (Boyatzis, 2008). Individual workforce competencies that will be prized in the 21st century include adaptability, managing
complexity, problem-solving, self-direction, curiosity, creativity, risk taking, higher-order thinking skills, collaboration, interpersonal skills, personal and social responsibility, and the effective use of available tools (NCREL & The Metiri Group, 2003), as well as cognitive competencies such as systems thinking, emotional intelligence competencies such as self-awareness and self-control, and social intelligence competencies such as relationship management, empathy and teamwork (Boyatzis, 2008). An emerging area of research claims that these competencies can be learned and developed (Boyatzis, 2008).

On the following page, Table 1 contains a brief review of the literature on 21st century competencies with a view to four specific competencies that tie together the papers presented in this symposium. Brief descriptions of these competencies are given here:

- **Cross-cultural competence.** The capability to adapt to different cultural environments and to effectively operate within diverse contexts of customs, values, traditions and languages with tolerance and open-mindedness;
- **Global awareness.** The ability to understand global perspectives and the interrelationships between countries that impact pressing issues and challenges, such as poverty, human rights and social justice to promote change around the world;
- **Higher-order thinking.** The cognitive ability to combine critical thinking and problem solving to interpret and make meaning in multiple contexts; and
- **Information and communication technology (ICT).** The ability to identify technology needs in diverse and resource-poor environments and effectively integrate that technology in international HRD contexts of teaching and learning.

This list is not an exhaustive literature review of all 21st century HRD competencies rather it highlights those the authors deemed most important to this collection of papers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Boyatzis                       | 2008   | Higher-order thinking       | • Cognitive: systems thinking and pattern recognition  
• Emotional: self-awareness and self-control  
• Social: social and relationship skills of empathy and teamwork                                                                   |
| Gibson, Rimmington & Landwehr-Brown | 2008   | Cross-cultural/ Global awareness | • Understanding of the idea of globalization and the impact it has on others  
• Conscious of others cultural norms, values and differences  
• Different countries and individuals are mutually dependent and interconnected |
| Hartenstein                    | 1999   | Cross-Cultural Global Awareness | • Bicultural – operate effectively in own national ethnic as well as global culture  
• Ability to translate values, norms and practices into cultural framework  
• Act with respect, open-mindedness, flexibility, trust, teamwork, and holistic vision while promoting human capital across cultures  
• Appreciate cultural diversity and promote cultural change |
| North Central Regional Educational laboratory (NCREL) & The Metiri Group | 2003   | Cross-cultural               | • “Upskilling” workers in technical skills  
• Awareness of technology needs in rapidly globalized contexts  
• Ability to apply appropriate technology to training and distance learning  
• Recognize and appreciate similarities and differences of customs, values, and beliefs of one’s personal culture and others |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Central Regional Educational laboratory (NCREL) &amp; The Metiri Group (con’t.)</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Global awareness</td>
<td>- Recognize and understand how international organizations, nations, public/private economic entities, sociocultural groups relate to one another and individuals in the global context</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Higher-order thinking</td>
<td>- Process of applying complex skills of analysis, comparison, inference, interpretation, evaluation, and synthesis in various domains/contexts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                                                                       |        | Information and Communication Technology (ICT) | - Knowledge of how technology can be used effectively to achieve specific goals  
- Locate and use information resources effectively across technology networks |
| Pink                                                                   | 2005   | Cross-cultural        | - Capacity for an empathic and ethical belief in human interconnectedness  
- “Boundary crosser” with expertise in multiple domains, e.g., mastery of other languages and multicultural experiences |
|                                                                       |        | Higher-order thinking | - Systems thinking to grasp relationships between relationships, i.e., meta-ability to see how things are integrated/fit together  
- Metaphorical thinking |
|                                                                       |        | Information and Communication Technology (ICT) | - Responsive to rapid advances in technology, automation and the competitive differences in the conceptual age |
| Ramaprasad & Prakash                                                  | 2003   | Cross-cultural        | - Construct methods, procedures, policies, and procedures consistent with the local context and culture                                      |
|                                                                       |        | Higher-order thinking | - Critical inquiry skills to promote dialogue, understanding, change, creativity, and problem solving  
- Being respectful of local knowledge |
|                                                                       |        | Information and Communication Technology (ICT) | - Fluency with technology to think, express, communicate, imagine and create and adapt to local situations |
A research team of two faculty members and two graduate students, the four paper presenters included here, embarked on a field experience in Jamaica because of one team member’s intimate knowledge of the culture and context. The planned field experience included research conducted in both urban and rural parts of the island to build relationships with officials and leaders in workforce development. The experience took place over one week in June 2012. The ultimate goals of the trip were to begin the process of creating a sustained partnership with one or more institutions in Jamaica in order to serve the social and economic development needs of Jamaicans, as well as to establish relationships that support on-going international HRD field experiences for faculty and graduate students. Experiences like this provide HRD scholars and

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Trilling & Fadel | 2009 | Cross-cultural                 | • Ability to work effectively and be open-minded with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures  
• Accommodate cultural differences to leverage innovative and creative ideas |
|                |      | Global awareness               | • Awareness and understanding of global economic and social challenges |
|                |      | Higher-order thinking         | • Ability to enact various skills to analyze, interpret, evaluate, summarize, and combine new information to create new knowledge  
• Critical thinking and problem solving |
|                |      | Information and Communication Technology (ICT) | • Ability to use technology appropriately to access, evaluate, use, manage, and generate knowledge |
| Wells          | 2008 | Cross-cultural                 | • Exhibits tolerance, interconnectedness, acceptance and comfort with diversity |
|                |      | Global awareness               | • Support social justice, equality, diversity, and peace among all humans |
students opportunities to gain knowledge in addressing workforce development issues in international settings, to see first-hand the workforce development needs of organizations in a developing country, to meet and to interact with workforce development leaders to exchange ideas and to foster on-going collaborations for research and scholarly exchanges through presentations from and with faculty, students and Jamaican hosts. Immersion into culturally distinct contexts allows students and faculty to develop global and cultural competencies.

For students of HRD, international field experience provides a perfect setting for the development of the four 21st century competencies described in Table 1 and needed by HRD professionals through focus on the following key domains:

- Recognizing the HRD practices and research needs in a developing country;
- Learning about cultural issues affecting HRD through immersion experiences;
- Developing awareness of social justice issues and their impact on HRD practices;
- Exploring how organizations in developing countries approach HRD;
- Reflecting on HRD challenges through critical thinking and problem solving;
- Integrating technology for research and practical applications;
- Collaborating with organizations through presentations and panel discussions; and
- Enhancing faculty and student global perspectives.

Out of this experience, several topic areas emerged as potential areas for future research. The collection of papers that follows addresses the development of 21st century competencies from the perspective of each author.

The first paper, “Mobile and Cloud Technology Use in Resource-poor Field Research Environments: Implications for HRD”, describes some of the benefits and challenges associated with using technology in field research. The research team was unclear how technology was
going to work in a developing country. As it turned out, mobile technologies were used in a fairly sophisticated manner, as Internet connectivity was prevalent throughout the island. Technologies included iPads and mobile phones in addition to a variety of supportive software and cloud computing technologies. This allowed agility in our data collection and analysis and increased the researchers understanding of how technology is leveraged in a developing country.

The focus of the second paper “Critical Perspectives on Conducting International HRD Field Research,” naturally surfaced as a result of the different interactions the research team experienced during their encounters at each research site. In a post-colonial context, these lived experiences and observations provided much richer data to situate the research in the reality of the small island developing country. It underscores the need for HRD researchers to be sensitive to cultural nuances and potential barriers to international collaboration.

The third paper, “Preparing the Next Generation of HRD Professionals through International Field Experience,” suggests that international field experience is important to students of HRD to build 21st century competencies – specifically cross-cultural understanding and global awareness. Another aspect that emerged from this research is that there are implications for HRD to align the curriculum with the future needs of the profession in a globalized world.

The fourth paper, “Planning International HRD Field Experiences: The value of in-country social networks” provides insight into how local knowledge and in-country social networks facilitates the design, planning, and execution of international field experiences and collaborative research. Having a pool of tangible and intangible resources made this research location more attractive due to the inherent advantages that local networks supply. While the
development of 21st century competencies is not the focus of this paper, the author acknowledges that planning international experiences calls on each of the competencies explored in Table 1.

In a global economy, HRD leaders are expected to develop a broad understanding of international issues including labor markets, the processes of economic development, and the social and economic consequences of globalization. In addition, HRD professionals are required to have the knowledge, skills, and abilities to do the work of HRD at the individual (Training & Development), organizational (Organization Development) or societal (NHRD) levels to focus on workforce development issues in developing countries, and to address the impact of economic development on organizations, communities, and people. International field experiences are one way that students and scholars alike can build their capacity to work at all of these levels.
References


Paper Abstract #1

Mobile and Cloud Technology Use in Resource-poor Field Research Environments:

Implications for HRD

Diane D. Chapman
North Carolina State University

*Keywords*: mobile technologies, developing countries, field research

“Technology by itself is not inherently good or bad. It is how technology is harnessed in the service of human endeavor that determines its effect” (Couper, 2002, p. 2).

Technology and globalization have changed the ways in which we think about and perform research, both in the quantitative and qualitative realms (Garavan & Carbery, 2012; Hesse-Biber, 2011). McWhorter (2010) posed the question of whether or not Virtual Human Resource Development (VHRD) would become a paradigm shift in the field of HRD. At the same time, Garavan and Carbery (2012) suggested that HRD cannot ignore globalization and issues of global workforce development. The use and study of mobile and cloud computing in Human Resource Development (HRD) field research fits neatly within the realm of what Bennett (2009) defined as Virtual HRD (VHRD), “a media-rich and culturally relevant web[bed] environment that strategically improves expertise, performance, innovation, and community building through formal and informal learning” (p. 364). While VHRD has been discussed in the training and academic realms, little is written about the use of technology, specifically, mobile technologies, in data collection and analysis (Jones & Sinclair, 2011). This is especially alarming in terms of International HRD field research where these mobile and cloud applications have a higher potential impact for access to international populations in resource-poor environments (Bebell, O’Dwyer, Russell, & Hoffman, 2010; Couper, 2005; Seebregts et al., 2009) and where
cellular infrastructures are often more robust than those in resource-rich environments (Dillon, 2012).

In recent years an increasing number of researchers are finding advantages in using technology-based tools for the research process (Bebell et al., 2010). While technology has long been used to perform data analysis and Internet-based data collection, the proliferation of mobile computing devices, primarily tablet computers and smart phones, presents a wealth of new opportunities to field researchers. These mobile technologies combine Internet access, cellular technologies, Global Positioning Systems (GPS), digital imaging and recording with cloud computing which supports web-based collaboration, document sharing, and data storage and retrieval have the potential to revolutionize field research in HRD. Researchers in other fields have found benefits with using mobile technologies that include access to marginalized populations, reduced time, lowered cost, ease of data entry, flexibility in format, and ability to capture additional data in varied media forms (Couper, 2005; Granella & Wheaton, 2004).

It’s apparent that HRD can benefit from what has been learned through adoption of these technologies in other fields. Census 2010 introduced mobile computing into the census process, equipping 140,000 canvassers with handheld computers, which also allowed the assignment of GPS coordinates to every structure in the US (Lott, 2010). Libraries have studied using iPads for user data collection in what has been termed as guerrilla-style assessment (Jones & Sinclair, 2011). By far, the greatest interest in the use of mobile technologies in field research has come from the healthcare fields (Jones & Sinclair, 2011). This includes the use of Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs) to collect data on elder neglect by caretakers (Guadagno et al., 2004); to study lung health and HIV prevention and risk behaviors in South Africa (Seebregts et al., 2009); equipping global healthcare students with iPads to enable data collection and increased access to
low-resource populations (Duke Global Health Institute, 2010); and using cell phones to collect
economic data from households in rural Tanzania (Dillon, 2012).

A variety of benefits explain the interest in mobile technologies for field research. For
example, digital imaging technology allows for use of visual stimuli, Global Positioning Systems
(GPS) permit the collection of location and spatial data as part of the survey process and digital
recording of both audio and visual data allow for new ways of responding to and collecting data
(Couper, 2005). Research has also shown that mobile technology use can result in reduced time,
lowered cost, ease of data entry, flexibility in format, and ability to capture additional response-
set information (Granella & Wheaton, 2004; Seebregts et al., 2009). For these reasons and more,
New Media Consortium’s Director of Research, Keene Haywood predicted in 2010 that the iPad
would be hugely popular with mobile field scientists (para. 2).

Couper (2005) lamented on the concerns about the impact of technology upon research,
pointing out that what once could be done by one person now requires different people with
specialized skills which can contribute to less effective communication. Others caution on the
importance of understanding the reliability of technology use (Guadagno, et al., 2004) and issues
associated with uploading data, equipment loss and security, equipment compatibility, and
training of data collectors (Seebregts et al., 2009). The benefits to HRD of increased collaborative
research, access to marginalized populations, and data security alone make these technologies
highly desirable for both research and for practice.

Mobile and Cloud Computing Technologies: Jamaica 2012

Although progress is being made in Jamaica, the World Bank still considers it a
developing country. This is largely due to issues with employment, income, and education (The
World Bank, 2010). Although some of Jamaica’s infrastructure still suffers, the
Telecommunications Act of 2000 helped to increase competition in Jamaica’s telecommunications industry with the goals of increasing investment and the modernization of the telecommunications sector, lowering prices to telecommunications users, providing a wider variety of and increased quality in service offerings, and increasing economic growth (Jamaican FTC & OUR, 2007). As a result, as shown in Table 1, the penetration of Internet usage has climbed from 2.7% to 31.5% in ten years and the number of mobile phone subscriptions has now exceeded the country’s population (ITU, 2012b). Clearly, Internet use is on the rise and cellular access is ubiquitous.

The numbers in Table 1 support the potential for using mobile and cloud computing in resource-poor environments. In a 2012 Jamaican field experience, two faculty and two student researchers used mobile and cloud computing in ways that not only helped to secure and validate data, but also allowed for collection of data with more ease and security than imagined. Armed only with iPads, the research team was able to record interviews, take interview notes, record observational data, record data coordinates, and secure data seamlessly.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Percentage of Individuals using the Internet (ITU, 2012a)</th>
<th>Mobile-cellular Telephone Subscription per 100 Inhabitants (ITU, 2012b)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>14.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>22.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>6.10</td>
<td>47.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>7.80</td>
<td>59.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>68.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>12.80</td>
<td>73.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>16.40</td>
<td>84.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>21.10</td>
<td>99.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>23.60</td>
<td>100.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>24.30</td>
<td>108.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>27.67</td>
<td>116.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>31.50</td>
<td>108.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The primary data collection during the trip was completed through interviews. The team traveled from urban to remote parts of the island to interview people involved in workforce and economic development efforts. The primary applications employed were Notability (Version 4.3) and Dropbox (Version 1.48). Notability was created as an annotation tool that allows annotation of PDF files. Updates to the application now allow users to integrate handwriting, PDF annotation, typing, recording, and organizing (Ginger Labs, Inc., 2012). Dropbox is a cloud-based application described as a secure way to bring your photos, docs, and videos anywhere and share them easily (Dropbox, Inc., 2012).

The tools were used in variety of ways during and after the field research. For example, during interviews, as each interviewee was approached, he or she was first presented with an informed consent form stored in Notability. Using the annotation feature and a stylus, the researchers were able to get signed consent and immediately email or print a copy for the interviewee, in addition to storing a signed copy on the iPad. Next, interview protocols and observations forms were stored as Adobe pdf documents in the “Cloud” using Dropbox. The interviewer was then able to open each document on the iPad using through Notability, and make research notes right on the interview protocol. One of the most unique features of Dropbox was the ability to record the interview audio while typing or writing interview notes. This resulted in sets of interview notes that were synced to the interview audio. Upon completion of the interview, the researcher could go to any place in her notes and listen to the synchronized audio from that same point in the interview.

When a Wi-Fi signal was available, each researcher would upload their data to Dropbox. This included informed consent documents, handwritten notes, typed notes, and audio
recordings. Once in Dropbox, the data were safe from loss and then shared with the entire team using the Dropbox sharing features.

This presentation will describe a selection of readily accessible and affordable mobile and cloud computing technologies used for both qualitative and quantitative field research in a 2012 trip to the developing country of Jamaica. Discussion will be based on the implications for research and practice in Human Resource Development (HRD) within the realms of the need for 21st century competencies and the potential for increased research into resource-poor environments.
References


The air was still, hot, and humid. The sun pierced through the shimmering heat and the dry, brittle ground crunched beneath my feet. I could feel the dress I was wearing cling to my sweating arms, and I was grateful for entering the shaded, outdoor courtyard of the building. Climbing steps took effort in the heat, and there was some confusion about where we were to meet our interviewee. Back and forth we went, a small group of four white women led by our host, a Senior Administrator at the University of we were visiting in the Caribbean. There were very few students milling around; one on a bench here, another walking between air-cooled rooms there. It was quiet, heavy, empty, still.

We finally found the room, a long narrow space; windowless I believe, with a large oblong table. The air condition felt glorious and my sweaty skin delighted in the cool air. I felt a sense of excitement at this, my first actual foray into international research. This was to be our third and final interview of the day. While the second interview was a bit rocky at first, I was filled with a sense of good will and community, which was exquisitely nurtured by our host’s warm, engaging, and generous countenance. We set up—us four ‘girls’ from the United States—with our pens and papers and digital recording devices and iPads. We drank from our water
bottles and chatted about the Mona campus and about our future trip to Montego Bay (or Mo’Bay as we started to call it—speaking ‘their’ language helped me feel more connected).

Our interviewee entered after a few minutes. He was a black, black man. Tall. Funny, but I can’t remember what he was wearing. I wish I had taken better notes. He did not smile as he entered, and did not smile as welcomes and hellos were exchanged. His handshake was not firm. Our host made the introductions, full of warmth and appreciation, and turned to me for my explanation of our work.

It did not go well.

Here is how I remember it; partial, incomplete, with some errors for sure:

Me: “Thank you so much for agreeing to meet with us! {{high energy, eye contact}} We are so pleased {{big smile}} to be able to meet with you and learn from you about your views on collaboration. {{I’m getting no feeling of connection with this guy}} {{OK, focus on facts and purpose; maybe he’ll come around}} As you know, we’re here to understand how you make collaborative relationships with people from other countries. We are interested in the processes of collaboration, as well as your experiences of collaboration.” Pause. I think I say a few more words when he interrupts:

“You are interested in collaboration.” He sits up, like preparing to deliver a speech to a class; tone is slightly cool, as if disagreeing about something. “We have had many types of…” he goes on and on and on. {{Panic. I didn’t get IRB discussed or signed yet. Tape recorders aren’t on. Must stop him!}}
“Can I ask you to pause for a moment please?” He does. He looks at me. “We’re conducting research that must be in compliance with our school’s Institutional Review Board guidelines. (I feel proud that I am modeling the type of commitment to participant autonomy in front of my students.) Are you familiar with this? (Oh, crap, do I sound like a condescending Colonizer?)

I don’t remember his answer, or if he gave one even. I continue. I look at our Host for help and support, and back to Him. (I try to sound like I am being of service to research, to something bigger than I, to the pursuit of knowledge and ethics and goodwill.)

“In order to protect the autonomy of everyone involved in our study, we want to explain some elements of the study and your rights as a person who is being interviewed.” I describe the ethical issues and reach for the informed consent form. “Here is what we call the informed consent form.” (I hand it to him, he reaches for it but doesn’t take a look.) “This form indicates that we have spoken and you understand your rights as a participant in the study, and it provides you with the name and contact information of our school’s Research Director.”

He leans back in his chair, the informed consent form still at arm’s length. (I need to ask him to sign two copies. Going to ask now. This isn’t going to be good, my gut tells me. My gut was right.)

He: “So here are more forms, forms, forms… official communiqués from the organizers and powerful. We have forms, they are meaningless. The forms have nothing to do with collaboration; we don’t need forms for this. What am I to do with this form?” He peers over his glasses and looks at the document for the first time, while launching in to another lecture about the problems of administration managing faculty; about ineffective and unproductive processes
and practices that faculty have to comply with, and how faculty have to devise ways to circumvent control. He then starts talking about anti-colonialism and standing against….

O.M.G. This is totally out of control. In front of my students. Oh well, they’ll learn by my struggle. Ha! That is one way to pull this one out of the toilet!

At the same time I was worried about how incompetent I was looking, I was kicking myself for not reading more about cross-cultural research. Simultaneously, it seemed, I had several parallel streams of thought: How was I to know that asking to sign the informed consent form would trigger an anti-colonial tirade? He is disdainful of the forms, obviously. Why does he think I’m the enemy? I came here filled with good will and a generous spirit! I need to collect this data—this experience itself is data but the recorders aren’t on. Shit! If I don’t get the forms signed, we can’t use the interview data. How do I ask him to sign forms that he disdains? {{Is he always this difficult? Always this rebellious? What did I do to trigger this? What is it about us, white girls with technology?}}

I notice he stopped talking. Because I was in my own head, I have no idea if he’s asked a question or what. The pause continued.

Our Host sensed my consternation and loss of control. She stepped in, warmly and competently as always—as if we were on a friendly stroll in the park with trusted colleagues. She describes the objective of our visit, our hope to learn from them, our plans for developing a sustained relationship between our schools. While talking, she calmly looks at me, at him, back at me, as if inviting the two of us to look at each other. I sneak a peek, bravely I think. My face is hot, and I am grateful for her intervening in the conversation. I look at my colleagues; most are looking down or writing. They are certainly learning from my experience!
Our Host’s calming, affirming tone diffuses the tension and I am able to describe what the signature means. {{Don’t sign the damn form then, if you don’t want to. I’m pissed now.}} He takes his pen and, in my mind at least, diffidently signs and disrespectfully pushes the forms across the table to me. I note my feelings and acknowledge them, thank them for emerging, and take steps to refocus on the task at hand.

The tape recorders start, and I try to use the situation as a segue to the first question, but I’m not fully ‘back’ yet. He starts talking; lecturing again, pontificating even. I continue to make eye contact; nod appropriately. I want to connect to him, to demonstrate collaboration and partnership. At some point I ask the others to ask questions, and for a few minutes I am able to get more composure; get more breath into my body; and relax……{{time passes}}

That night, I collapse into the strange bed in the strange room in the strange house in the strange city I am calling ‘home’ for a week. I think of my dog first, even before my husband. My wee dog, Buddy, my shadow and my furry beast who sits by the front door when I go out without him. Is he sitting there now? I think of my cats, and my husband so far far away… and I feel pangs of missing them. I revisit/reflect on/re-experience the day’s events and feel both ashamed and grateful; brave and cowardly. I re-feel the tension and fear and remorse of the third interview. I fall asleep deeply in the strange, far away land of Jamaica.

Autoethnography

The research method selected for this study is autoethnography. According to Chang (2008), autoethnography is a research method that continues to become more influential in cross-cultural research. It is “becoming a particularly useful and powerful tool for researchers and practitioners who deal with human relations in multicultural settings, such as educators, social workers, medical professionals, clergy, and counselors.” (p. 49-50). An autoethnographic
account is not just a memoir or autobiography; it is distinguished by cultural analysis and interpretation of an individual narrative.

Ethnography, on the other hand, is not focused on an individual narrative. It views culture either as a collective whole (see, for example Geertz, 1973) or as internal to individuals (see, for example, the cognitive anthropological writings of Goodenough, 1981). Auto-ethnography is an accepted research method that provides a means to understand the interaction between self and collectivity through a cultural lens. For HRD researchers conducting international field research, understanding their cultural lens or way of being is one of the competencies needed for successful 21st century research and practice. This type of competency is called global awareness, or cross-cultural understanding, or any number of terms that seek to communicate the complex, invisible, multi-layered, and unspoken ways of being, understanding, and interacting with the world.

As hinted at in the narrative, this study adopts a critical, post-colonial perspective to understand the experience of conducting HRD field research in a developing country. The paper presented at the conference will include a cultural analysis not only of the researcher, but also about the interaction between researcher and researched. The goal of the analysis is to illustrate some of the hidden cultural challenges in conducting HRD research abroad, and to highlight the key competencies needed to conduct HRD research in the 21st century.
References


Paper Abstract #3

Preparing the Next Generation of HRD Professionals through International Field Experience

Laurie Brummitt
North Carolina State University

*Keywords*: international field experience, 21st century competencies, globalization, HRD

The development of globalization has posed a challenge to the next generation of human resource development (HRD) professionals (Hartenstein, 1999). In a global economy, HRD leaders are expected to develop a broad understanding of international issues, including labor markets, the processes of economic development, and the social and economic consequences of globalization (Marquardt & Berger, 2003; Bates, 2001; Hartenstein, 1999). Marquardt and Berger (2003) state, “HRD could be a crucial tool for building and maintaining the reservoir of skills needed for economic and social development in both developing and developed nations. In Singapore, Korea, China, Ghana, and Chile, for example, HRD has been a key part of the national strategy to foster sustainable economic development” (p. 83). Bates (2002) argues that HRD has become more than enhancing learning, human potential and high performance in the context of work related systems. Most important is the “capacity to enhance” the above listed aspects and to “contribute to sustainable human development” (Bates, 2002, p. 1). This presents an interesting call to action for HRD professionals to expand their role and competencies in order to “maximize the beneficial elements of globalization and limit its dehumanizing forces” (Marquardt & Berger, 2003, p. 283).

The literature says that HRD professionals must enact competencies such as, cross-cultural literacy, global awareness, higher-order thinking, and information and communication
technology (ICT). For this abstract, the focus is on cross-cultural literacy and global awareness. According to the North Central Regional Education Library (NCREL) two important competencies of the 21st century are cultural literacy and global awareness (NCREL, 2003, p. 15). Multicultural literacy and cross-cultural competence are two common terms used to describe cultural competency. North Central Education Library (2003) defines multicultural literacy as “the ability to understand and appreciate the similarities and differences in the customs, values, and beliefs of one’s own culture and the culture of others” (p. 15). Global awareness addresses a broader perspective, which is to recognize and understand the ways in which international organizations; nation-states, differing economies, sociocultural groups and individuals across the global are interconnected (NCREL, 2003, p. 15).

Trilling and Fidel (2009) define cross-cultural competence and having the ability to work effectively and remain open-minded with people from diverse backgrounds and cultures. Furthermore, they suggest accommodating culture differences will leverage innovation and creativity. They state that global awareness is comprised of an awareness and understanding of both global economic and social challenges. Moreover, Cooper et al.’s (2011) term, Critical Cultural Competence is defined as going beyond simply recognizing that diversity exists and actively searching for opportunities that promote reflection to help surface one’s deeply held beliefs about the world; uncover how they came to be; and to take action to reform these beliefs and transform environments. Cooper et al. (2011) briefly addresses global awareness by explaining that people’s access and more frequent exchanges with the global community have broadened our views.

Studies suggest that one way to obtain these 21st century competencies is by engaging in international field experience. Lee (2011) found that “International field experience provides an
opportunity to move beyond what Lee called the “comfort zone” to see the world from a different perspective,” (p.2). Through recognizing different perspectives one can uncover unconventional solutions to problems occurring in different settings. Thus, through International field experience, Lee (2011) found that those who participated learned more than their contemporaries and gained broader community and global perspectives (p. 2). This finding suggests that international field experience contributes to becoming more globally aware.

Likewise, Willard-Holt’s (2001) study suggested that international field experience can challenge what Willard-Holt calls ones’ stereotypes and preconceived notions and help one gain “empathy, flexibility, tolerance, self-confidence and patience” (p. 516). His study also found that interpersonal communication skills in culturally diverse situations are enhanced (p.516). As illustrated here, Lee and Willard-Holt’s research are examples of how engaging in international field experience can help one become culturally and globally literate.

In a world where globalization is inevitably affecting our communities and workplaces, the need for these competencies is evident. However, preparing the next generation of HRD professionals is still somewhat unclear. Hartenstein (1999), states, “The response of HRD to globalization should include preparing both HRD professional leaders and academic institutions relative to changes in curricula, teaching practices and research” (p. 83). Verma (2003) stated that cross-cultural education should “not just be another requirement that we place on schools and on further and higher education institutions, but as reflecting a set of values which informs all social institutions” (p. 23). Adding international field experience in HRD curriculum can help bridge the gap from theory to practice (Kachuyevski & Jones, 2011). However, incorporating this experience into HRD curriculum cannot be the only solution. Teachers also must be prepared to teach these 21st century competencies from an authentic understanding.
(Sanderson, 2008). Incorporating actual real world international field experience, a method that cannot simply be duplicated, is a ‘must have’ to teach the cultural and global competencies required for the next generation of HRD professionals.

While there are few examples of HRD students or professionals that have participated in international solutions to problems associated with globalization (Bates, 2002; Marquardt & Berger, 2003), Marquardt and Berger (2003) believe “Globalization has significantly influenced every aspect of the HRD profession, yet HRD professionals have played a relatively insignificant role thus far in affecting globalization” (p.283). In addition, they warn if HRD professionals do not expand their roles and competencies, the profession could become marginalized (Marquardt & Berger, 2003). Therefore, the next generation of HRD professionals must be committed to the cross-cultural and global awareness needed develop not only workplace learning, but political, social, environmental, cultural, and spiritual development of all citizens of the world (Hartenstein 1999; Marquardt & Berger 2003).

Developing an understanding of cross-cultural competence and global awareness, through academic research and practical international field experience, will better prepare the next generation of HRD professionals. The discipline of HRD needs to understand more about how HRD students learn, interpret, and make meaning of international HRD field experiences in order to best serve the profession. Towards that end, this presentation will tell the story of one positive, successful and challenging graduate students’ international field experience in Jamaica. The discussion will be based around the experiences gained and lessons learned while conducting HRD research and delivering HRD interventions in a foreign country. The experiences highlight the importance of cross-cultural competence and global awareness, and describe how 21st century HRD competencies are learned and enacted.
References


Planning International HRD Field Experiences: The Value of In-country Social Networks

Jennifer J. Stanigar
North Carolina State University

Keywords: international field experience, social networks, local knowledge

When considering the development of the next generation of HRD professionals, it is “incumbent on higher education to prepare students to be global as well as local citizens and contributors” (Hite & McDonald, 2010, p. 284). Having an international field experience opportunity can give HRD programs a point of attraction for students who wish to broaden their horizons through international research while earning their degree. International learning experiences provide graduate students with opportunities to develop intercultural competence, global perspectives, experience international travel, and enhance future career opportunities (Andenoro & Bletscher, 2012; Williams, 2005). However, planning enriching international field experiences creates a challenge for educators who wish to explore innovative means for preparing 21st century leaders (Andenoro & Bletscher, 2012). Individuals responsible for planning ought to possess global and cross-cultural awareness, as well as have the capacity to be a bridge between visiting students and faculty with the host country.

It is at moments such as these when there is considerable value to having someone on your research team who has in-country experience, local knowledge, and a social network in the destination country upon which to rely when planning overseas field experiences. People who possess these skills are perceived as organizational resources having a stock of human capital based on their unique local market and social network knowledge. Local connections provide a pool of resources that are invaluable to guide and direct those who plan such experiences. In-
Country social networks are strategic resources that can surface potential partnerships to be leveraged in planning and implementing an international HRD field research experiences. The familiarity simplifies relationship building and fosters cooperation, as well as creating capacity for future engagement. Being a foreigner does not necessarily have to be a disadvantage when planning international field experiences (Ghauri, 2004), however the planning is facilitated by the presence of previously established relationships in the destination country.

The problem is that there is no research that explores the value of in-country social networks when designing and planning international HRD field experiences. There are substantive articles within the management, leadership, and international education literature that discuss the need for cross-cultural experience and boundary spanning competencies in international education, yet no good roadmaps for making it happen could be found by this researcher. There are two questions that help to focus this research: 1. what is the role of in-country social networks to facilitate the planning of international HRD field experiences?, and 2. how can learning be integrated into the international field experience planning process to learn continuously from project experience and increase international collaborative capabilities in the future?

This paper is a personal case example that briefly outlines the steps taken to plan an international HRD field experience with a view to highlighting the value of in-country social networks during the planning process. The goal is to provide a quasi-blueprint intended to help HRD program directors/coordinators that are considering the inclusion of international field experiences for graduate students with a goal of collaborative research projects in the host countries. These guidelines are not comprehensive but can provide a starting point for future research in this area.
Case Study: Jamaica

As a graduate research assistant and doctoral student with international HRD aspirations, I have regular meetings with two faculty members in my department to discuss current grant projects, research ideas, and possibilities for doing international field research. It was at one such meeting that discussions were started to conceive of an international HRD experience for graduate students in our program. I had lived and worked in Jamaica for 20 years and therefore had a wide variety of academic and business contacts, as well as cultural and contextual knowledge that could be tapped for such an experience. Early planning meetings were spent considering different possibilities, partnerships, and engagement opportunities that we might find in a developing country setting. Between our meetings I conducted cursory research into what it would take to design the experience and began a parallel learning journey as the planning member of the research team.

Jamaica is a small island nation located in the Caribbean Sea. An island of this size is fairly easily traveled over the course of a couple of days. We wanted to spend time in both urban and rural parts of the island to see what kind of workforce development and economic development initiatives were in place. We formed a four-person research team for the pilot program, with the two HRD faculty members and two graduate students, myself included. Our first action step was to collaborate on a white paper that would outline the purpose of the experience, goals of our research, and student learning objectives. I prepared a shortlist of potential case study sites where we could conduct semi-structured interviews into workforce development initiatives and local HRD practices, as well as observe a variety of settings to add rich data to our study. Together, we determined criteria for research site inclusion, such as proximity, convenience, access, and the ability to identify and negotiate interviews with key
decision makers and stakeholders. Together we evaluated and selected participant sites while considering a tentative itinerary that would give us the most diverse experience we could conceive of in only one week. The white paper proposal and letter of introduction were emailed to initial contacts at a major university, as well as a select few in the public, private, and nonprofit sector. The calendar was set for the field experience to take place for a week in June 2012 after the end of the academic year.

Due to travel time and the need to include some downtime in the schedule, we settled on four research sites including a major university, a small private sector business, a nonprofit community development organization, and an entrepreneurial business incubator attached to an international nonprofit foundation. The main challenge was scheduling appointments with key contacts because our travel calendar was very tight and one cancellation would mean ¼ of our research would likely not take place. Additionally, some individuals did not respond to our initial proposal or follow-up emails, and although there was some disappointment about not getting access to sites such as the national training agency, we were very pleased with the willingness on the part of the other sites to work with us.

The design and planning of international field experiences and collaborative research may present challenges that place unexpected and unforeseen demands on the planning researcher. The opportunity to plan this experience improved my own capacity in the four competencies introduced in Table 1 (cross-cultural and global awareness, higher order thinking, information and communication technology) because I was able to identify potential barriers and adapt the experience with the help of my network in Jamaica. International research may also raise unique cultural and ethical issues. The potential variations in local conditions are dynamic
and numerous, such that it would be impossible to enumerate and provide recommendations to handle all of them, except at a general level.

Accommodation and transportation for the research team are logistical concerns for any international field research experience. Through local connections, I was able to secure the use of a roomy SUV and a four-bedroom home in the hills above Kingston where the research team could stay as a home base during the visit to the island, and therefore the cost of the trip was much more reasonable than had the team stayed in hotels every night. Other issues that require consideration include host country language, international travel planning, arrival and departure information, financial resources needed, currency exchange, immigration and customs, emergency contact information, a detailed itinerary showing research site, accommodations, meeting time and location, as well as building free time and travel time into the schedule with some flexibility. The research team was able to review all of this information prior to the trip and ask questions, as well as provide family and friends with emergency contact information. Other practical considerations for research include the time available for research at each site and planning the research design ahead of travel, including obtaining IRB approvals for all research. For example, the other graduate student wanted to gather data for her master’s thesis during the trip. Working with her before the trip provided a unique opportunity to select interview subjects that fit in with her topic and she was able to gain the necessary IRB approval for her research prior to the field trip.

Throughout my years of living and working in Jamaica, I had unique access to a number of academics, business people, and entrepreneurs. Combined with broad local knowledge and lay of the land, it was easy to visualize exactly how the experience would play out. Because of my understanding of the cultural context, the learning that took place during the experience was
richer because of the many opportunities to share little-known facts about the country and people. Relationship building is made easier when a member of the research team has inside knowledge or has local knowledge in the host country. There is the potential for enhanced quality of research because of the more immediate collegiality between the researchers and the participant sites.

This was one of the most valuable learning experiences that I could have had as a graduate student because I had the ability to directly apply HRD research and practice and build my global and cultural competence, as well as to share a beloved second-home with my colleagues and classmates. It is my intention to continue such work in the future to help others. This experience has created a unique learning environment for the research team, in addition to providing a direct application for me as the planning-student-researcher to “work from local knowledge and interests, bridge to other knowledge domains, and liberate local knowledge from specific situated embodiment” (Cavallo, 2000, p. 780).

Implications for this research include the continued need for HRD scholars and students to explore cross-cultural differences in research and practice. 21st century HRD professionals require cognitive and behavioral competencies that will help them leverage and act on local knowledge in order to achieve research and practice outcomes. HRD programs have international students that bring a wealth of cultural understanding and strong social networks in their home countries. One of the implications for HRD that this topic presents is the question of whether and how these in-country social networks can be leveraged to provide international HRD field experiences and research opportunities.

The many insights described throughout this abstract that have been gained from this research experience have the potential to help administrators and faculty of HRD programs who
wish to plan international field experiences take into account local knowledge and resource flows in international settings that can be accessed through in-country social networks.
References


