



## Post Fellowship Reporting - Project Summary

**Report Title:** From Ruins to Reality: Relevant Social Studies Curriculum in the Primary Classroom  
**Name:** Christina Korbakis

**Other Team Members:** Erin Moloney

**Program:** Chicago Program

**Trip Dates:** 11/30/-0001 - 11/30/-0001  
**Location Visited:** Mexico and Peru

**Post Fellowship Reporting Template:** PFR Template 01

**Project Summary:** As Chicago city school teachers, we recognized early on in our careers that our students' backgrounds were very different from our own. Although between us, we spoke other languages growing up at home, the culture and history we grew up with was the same as our suburbia friends. Our majority Hispanic students are speaking Spanish at home, often translating for their parents in English, yet don't completely identify with US pop culture and history. At the same time, they're unfamiliar with the rich history of their own people and countries. The non-Hispanic members of the community are also interested in the Spanish speaking community but don't often understand it. We wanted to help the entire school community make connections to the history and the people of their native countries as well as teach a more open-minded history of the Americas to the entire school community.

This summer we traveled to Mexico and Peru. We wanted to improve our Spanish language skills and learn about three remarkable civilizations, the Mayas, the Incas, and the Aztecs. In our school, students perform folk dances with roots to these cultures and still eat many of the same foods these cultures were the first to cultivate. We wanted to study them with the goal of bringing them alive in our classrooms as thematic units to study. We visited many of the great ruins including Chichen Itza, Tulum, Coba, Teotihuacan, Cuzco, and Machu Picchu. We documented the trip with pictures, and brought back artifacts and books to create units of study for our primary students.

**Career Impact:**

- \*Improved conversational Spanish language skills to facilitate communicating with the school community
- \*Learned and documented content rich vocabulary of the civilizations that will be used when teaching our students in the classroom
- \*Experienced in a well-rounded way 3 distinct civilizations by visiting ruins, local historical places, and talking with people from the civilizations today
- \*Produced a meaningful curriculum of the Americas including the Aztecs, the Mayas, and the Incas for primary students
- \*Gained a better worldwide understanding of history and its people, especially of people who preceded the conquests of America

**Classroom/Community Impact:**

- \*Students are now have the opportunity to learn about the history of the Americas, often the history of their own families and of the school community
- \*Students and their families are reading, sharing, and discussing authentic stories and legends in both Spanish and English
- \*Students across the primary grades are getting a curriculum that is scaffolded to their needs and builds upon grade levels.
- \*Students can analyze and compare different civilizations
- \*Produced a meaningful curriculum of the Americas including the Aztecs, the Mayas, and the Incas for primary students

**Open Response:**

- \*Formal curriculum of the Americas for teachers to use school-wide including accommodations and extensions for older students
- \*Generate a ongoing list of materials/resources available for teachers to use including videos, books, and maps available at public libraries and to purchase in both Spanish and English
- \*Create extensions of learning including projects like weaving, cooking and field trips that involve parents and the community
- \*Create letter exchange between students in Chicago and Peru/Mexico

**Quote:** Amazing!

Photos:



Christina at the Zocolo, the central square in Mexico City



Christina and Erin atop the Aztec Sun Pyramid, Teotihuacan, Mexico

Christina and Erin en route to a Mayan temple, Coba, Mexico

Erin, cliffside among Mayan ruins, Tulum, Mexico



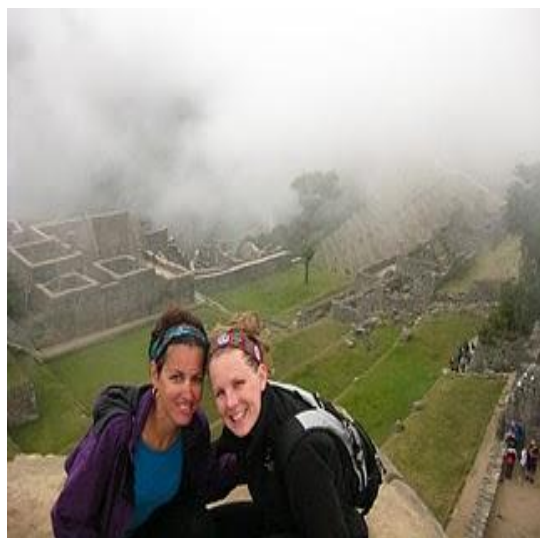
Christina and Erin, downtown Cuzco, Peru



Christina and Erin, Day 1, Machu Picchu hike



Christina and Erin, Day 2, Machu Picchu hike, Salkantay summit



We made it! Christina and Erin at Machu Picchu