



Post Fellowship Reporting - Project Summary

Report Title: Expedition South Africa **Name:** Anna Koch
Other Team Members:
Program: Chicago Program
Trip Dates: 11/30/-0001 - 11/30/-0001 **Location Visited:** South Africa
Post Fellowship Reporting Template: PFR Template 02

Project Summary: This summer I embarked on a two-week education tour that took me to six schools (and one after-school program) throughout three major cities across South Africa and ultimately changed how I view my role as a teacher in the Chicago Public Schools. I set off with the goal of learning more about the role of young people in the apartheid movement as well as current struggles for access to education in South Africa. I hoped that by being able to make connections between the challenges and obstacles that my students face and those of young people in South Africa, I would be able to help my students better understand how to overcome negative circumstances and to take ownership of their own educational experiences.

The opportunity to visit schools in Soweto, East London, rural Alice, and Cape Town was truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience that enabled me to gain perspective and deeper insight into the teaching profession. I met with educators and administrators to discuss the strengths and challenges facing South African schools. I found that many of the concerns -- including funding inequities, segregation, poverty, and violence -- are similar to those that we face in Chicago. Also, I spent a lot of time talking with students and asking them about their hobbies, interests, hopes, dreams, and worries, and found that these students reminded me so much of my own students in Chicago. The similarities -- not the differences -- between the students and their cultures, were striking. Lastly, the chance to meet and talk with teachers was incredibly valuable because I realized just how influential and important teachers are to their students and the communities that they serve.

Over the 14 day period I visited many museums, schools, and sights. In Johannesburg, my tour group and I visited the Hector Pietersen Museum, the Apartheid Museum, and the Kliptown Youth Program in Soweto. In East London, we were able to visit A.W. Barnes School, Bissiker High School and Sterling High School. In the Eastern Cape area, we visited two rural schools near Alice and toured the University of Fort Hare, a historically black college. Finally, in Cape Town we visited Robben Island, took a cable car up to Table Mountain, drove to the Cape of Good Hope and visited the LEAP Maths & Science School near Langa.

I am now eager to share these valuable experiences with this year's students and hope to make connections and inspire students to take ownership of their educations.

Career Impact: * I left South Africa feeling rejuvenated and excited to return to the classroom

- * I developed a deeper understanding of my role as a teacher and how I can inspire students to become more motivated to succeed despite the obstacles and challenges that they face
- * I realized that inequalities in education exist everywhere but good teachers can make all the difference
- * I developed a greater awareness of the global community, sensitivity towards diverse cultures and empathy for the daily struggles of people around the world
- * I brought back many chapter books as well as fiction and nonfiction picture books that I will use to teach students about the African continent
- * I will create a meaningful and engaging reading curriculum that focuses on motivating students to take ownership of their own educations and making connections with the world

Classroom/Community Impact:* Students are being introduced to South Africa through reading books, watching video interviews with South African students, viewing and analyzing artifacts, and listening to my stories about my travels

- * Students will be making connections between their experiences and those of students halfway across the globe through letter writing and e-mailing with students in South Africa
- * Students will become more culturally sensitive and globally aware as they learn more about the similarities and differences between kids in the United States and kids in Africa

Open Response: * I will be reading a variety of texts that deal with South Africa in guided reading groups and will use the ideas as a springboard for making connections

- * I am working to positively impact our school culture so that students and teachers feel empowered and committed to creating a

motivating environment and improving students' educational experiences

* I will be meeting with fellow teachers to share ideas on how to better incorporate African studies into the curriculum, especially in reading and social studies

* I will be collaborating with the social studies teacher to create a new, multi-dimensional unit on the history Africa

* I will create a meaningful and engaging reading curriculum that focuses on motivating students to take ownership of their own educations and making connections with the world

Quote: The opportunity to visit schools in Soweto, East London, rural Alice, and Cape Town was truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience that enabled me to gain perspective and deeper insight into the teaching profession.

Photos:

Excited to see the Indian Ocean.

Donating books to the Klijptown Youth Program in Soweto.

Having lunch with the principal at A.W. Barnes School.

Donating books for students at a rural school near Alice.

Petting a baby lion at the Lion Park near Johannesburg.

Talking with sixth graders at A.W. Barnes School in East London.

Meeting the kids at a rural school near Alice.

Visiting LEAP Science & Maths School near Langa.