

The Factors that Affect Reflection in Overseas Fieldwork

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Abstract: In this research, the authors clarify factors for designing learning environment that affect reflection in overseas fieldwork. In general, objective of the fieldwork is to provide experience in applying theories to the practical areas within their field of study. It is, however, reported that students do NOT always cognitively active during the fieldwork although behaviorally active. It is important to consider a learning environment that promotes both cognitively and behaviorally active. To suggest how to design such a learning environments, the authors clarify factors that affect reflection based on a case study implemented in Philippines. The authors analyzed the process and factors that students reflect in and on the activity. To clarify factors that affect reflection in overseas fieldwork, the authors employed group discussion after the fieldwork. The student participants gathered as to assess the learning environment of the fieldwork. First, they jot down about what they learned and illustrated the process and its' factors. Second, they individually identified factors that affected learning. As a result of the data analysis, three factors were clarified, (1) different opinions with other students, (2) comfortable atmosphere for discussion, (3) questions for researching.

Keywords: *learning environments, oversea fieldwork, Philippines*

RESEARCH BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE

In this research, the authors clarify factors for designing learning environment that affect reflection in overseas fieldwork. In general, objective of the fieldwork is to provide experience in applying theories to the practical areas within their field of study. It is, however, reported that students do NOT always cognitively active during the fieldwork although behaviorally active (Kishi 2013). It is important to consider a learning environment that promotes both cognitively and behaviorally active. To suggest how to design such a learning environments, the authors clarify factors that affect reflection based on a case study implemented in Philippines.

OUTLINE OF THE OVERSEA FIELDWORK

The fieldwork was conducted from February 11th to 16th for 6 days at NGO House of Joy in Mindanao Island, Philippines. Nine students- three of 1st grade, four of 3rd grade and two of 4th grade participated in the fieldwork under the supervision of an instructor (See TABLE1).

The purpose of the fieldwork is to understand a role of NGOs in developing countries. To figure out a role of NGOs, the students research about NPO House of Joy as one of case studies from different viewpoints- one from a child of primary school, another from a child of secondary school, the other from local staff and the other from Japanese staff. The students formed four groups according to the research targets with videos.

During the fieldwork, respective groups work individually, but gather together to reflect collaboratively every night for 1-2 hours after the daily activities. In the reflection session, respective groups reported what they did, felt and thought based on their research findings. The students reconstructed their ideas according to reports from other groups. After the reflection session, the students recorded their findings on e-portfolio individually after the reflection session (see PHOTO 1).



PHOTO 1: Activities in the fieldwork

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To clarify factors that affect reflection in overseas fieldwork, the authors employed group discussion after the fieldwork. On 2013 May 11th, the student participants gathered as to assess the learning environment of the fieldwork. First, they jot down about what they learned and explained the process the learning. Second, they individually identified factors that affected learning (see PHOTO 2). The data was collected from all student participants as shown in Table 1. The student participants have different experience in traveling overseas.



PHOTO 2: The activity of fieldwork and reflection after the fieldwork

TABLE 1: Experience of overseas fieldwork

Target	Student	Grade	Experiences of traveling overseas
M (Secondary student)	A	3 rd	Study abroad in Canada (2004 for 1 month) Fieldwork in Philippines (2010 for 10 days) Fieldwork in Thailand (2011 for 10 days) Fieldwork in India (2011 for 19 days)
	B	3 rd	Study abroad in the USA (2008 for 3 weeks) Study abroad in China (2011 for 3 weeks) Fieldwork in India (2011 for 19 days) Study abroad in England (2012 for 1 year)
	C	1 st	No experience of traveling overseas
J (Primary student)	D	4 th	Study abroad in Australia (2007 for 1 month) Fieldwork in Indonesia (2010 for 2 weeks) Fieldwork in Philippine (2011 for 2 weeks) Internship in Guam (2011 for 2 weeks) Fieldwork in India (2011 for 19 days)
	E	1 st	No experience of traveling overseas
Local staffs	F	4 th	Fieldwork in China (2009 for 12 days) Fieldwork in Cambodia(2010 for 2 weeks) Fieldwork in India (2011 for 19 days) Fieldwork in Thailand (2012 for 12 days)
	G	3 rd	Study abroad in England (2009 for 1 month) Fieldwork in India (2011 for 19 days)
	H	1 st	Study abroad in England (2012 for 2 weeks)
Japanese staffs	I	3 rd	Fieldwork in Thailand (2011 for 10 days) Fieldwork in India (2011 for 19 days)
	J	3 rd	Study abroad in Australia (2002 for 1 week) Study abroad in Germany (2011 for 1 month) Study abroad in Austria (2012 for 1 year)

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As a result of the data analysis, three factors were clarified, (1) different opinions with other students, (2) comfortable atmosphere for discussion, (3) questions for researching.

(1) Different opinions with other students: Different opinions with other students activated discussion in reflection session. Respective groups have their own information that other groups cannot obtain. Therefore, by sharing information from different standpoints promote students to understand deeply about the situation of House of Joy.

(2) Comfortable atmosphere for discussion: Students felt comfortable to discuss in an atmosphere where they did not hesitate to speak out. In the fieldwork, the students of different backgrounds gathered and work together. These differences make a power relationship among students. Although the Power relationship sometimes makes those in the weaker position, such as younger grade students, to hesitate to speak out, all students felt comfortable to discuss without any hesitation. As a result of analysis, there are two factors to make such a relationship. One is previous learning activity. In the previous learning activity before traveling to Philippines, the students gathered together to study and prepare for the fieldwork. Regular meeting for the previous learning enhanced reliable relationship among students by sharing common objectives and interest. Second is a role of a facilitator. Some students such as ST(G) and ST(K) experienced that they had hesitated to speak out in discussion in the previous fieldwork. Therefore, they knew how to activate them to discuss as they were facilitated by others in the previous fieldwork. The last is a role model. 1st grade students such as ST(C), ST(E) and ST(H) saw the experienced students struggling and confessing their failures and troubles honestly. Therefore, the students understand

(3) Questions for researching: All students reflected their activity from a point of their questions. All students were required to produce a video documentary based on their research after the fieldwork. Therefore, all students had their own question in advance and researched to make a video documentary. The students reconstructed their questions according to the progress of research.

REFERENCES

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