

Using stories of sojourner experiences to inform curriculum design

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Each year, teacher trainees (TTs) at the Faculty of Education at the University of Cordoba (Spain) apply to take part in a two-week practicum in the Western Saharan refugee camps in southern Algeria. They are motivated by the prospect of doing something that differs from the rest of their studies but they also have an altruistic desire to help those in the camps. Spanish, the TTs first language, is the medium of communication for the practicum but otherwise this sojourn in a developing context is outside their previous experience. As part of the assessment of the practicum, TTs individually write about their individual and shared practicum experiences. These stories have a particular audience (i.e. their tutors) - and function (i.e. reflections contributing to assessment) but nonetheless represent a source of TT-storied experience for the tutors. In our analysis of these stories, we note how an apparently similar / shared experience is often storied differently by different TTs. Such variation not only provides a sense of the complex relationships between lived experience and storied constructions of that experience but it also provides clues about TT's developing intercultural sensitivity and how this might inform their storying of the experiences. Taken together, these insights from our analysis of their stories and the current design of the practicum are encouraging us to reformulate the design to better facilitate their teacher development and their intercultural development through the sojourn experience.