

Discovering the World: MSU Language Collaboration Community Outreach Project
CeLTA Fellowship Report
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The *Discovering the World: MSU Language Collaboration Community Outreach Project* took place in Fall of 2014 and Spring 2015. It provided 8 hours of on-site multi-cultural/multi-lingual enrichment instruction to 1st-5th graders at Marble Elementary School on two separate afternoons during which school was not in session due to parent-teacher conferences and teacher in-service. 43 school children participated in the first session and 45 in the second session, with a significant number of children participating in both sessions. The project also provided over 8 hours of service learning/community outreach experience to international students in the English Language Center, who led the enrichment instruction, under the supervision of the program coordinator. Students from four different classes, totaling 67 students, from more than nine countries participated. These ELC students planned, practiced, and refined presentations and interactive activities designed to familiarize children with various aspects of their cultures and expose them to their languages, while simultaneously honing their own English communication skills. In addition, the coordinator worked with two less experienced ELC instructors, including one MA TESOL graduate teaching assistant, to help them to implement this project into their speaking/listening classes. The coordinator guided these instructors in best practices for conducting the service learning project, evaluating and guiding student presentations and activities to ensure strong pedagogical content and suitability to the elementary-aged audience, and establishing grading criteria and rubrics to evaluate student performance.

The program was exceptionally well-received by student participants, their parents, the Marble Committee for Academic Enrichment and the school principal, as well as by the two ELC instructors who participated in the project with their classes at the invitation of the coordinator. The coordinator was asked by the Academic Enrichment Committee to repeat the program again this year and organizers of Donley Elementary School's International Night asked her to consult on details for that event. The coordinator disseminated information about CeLTA language classes and camps as well, and encouraged parents to continue their children's multi-cultural and multilingual education, so the event helped to spread not only information about language-learning opportunities, but the CeLTA name. While the long-term impact on the children who participated may be difficult to measure, it is expected that those who participated, and especially those who chose to participate in both events, walked away from the event(s) with a stronger appreciation for cultural and linguistic diversity and a piqued interest in foreign language learning. The coordinator received numerous unsolicited comments via email from parents following the event, indicating not only that their children had enjoyed the course, but had been eager to share the cultural and linguistic knowledge they had gained. Some specifically mentioned interest in further language study.

My name is XXX and my daughter is XXX. . . I have been meaning to write you for a very long time...thank you for the wonderful Discovering the World day you put together! XXX had a great time and shared a lot about what she did and learned! Thank you for all your time, effort, and dedication!

I wanted to thank you for organizing this event. My kids had so much fun and learned so much. XXX especially did not want to go, but was thrilled to find African college students to interact with - she has had a couple of African foster brothers and really misses them, and it also helps her feel connected to her cultural heritage. Great event!

XXX came home very excited about the Discovery day - he really enjoyed himself. Thank you for putting that together. It was a really wonderful opportunity. Hopefully we can have him participate in one of the summer language camps.

Thank you so much- XXX had a wonderful time! When we got in the car after I picked him up he wanted to show me all of the things he made and got at the event, so he pulled everything out. Then, when we got home, he wouldn't let me open the car door until he had everything put back away because as he said, "the wind will blow away all my things from around the world!" Thanks for putting on this program!

[My son] loved the overall experience. The 2 young ladies from Saudi Arabia were especially good with the kids also. I know it's a lot of work for you so thank you from us (XXX and myself).

XXX absolutely LOVED the event you hosted at Marble. She showed me all of the things you all sent home and explained everything (including how she loved one guy's accent!).

Once again my girls were bursting with excitement to share with us all they had learned yesterday afternoon! Thank you so much for putting together such a wonderful program and offering it on a half day which is so helpful for working parents.

Thank you again for arranging such a wonderful event at Marble last week. My daughter was so excited to share all she learned, and I for one appreciate the massive undertaking you tackled. Great work, and thanks again!

Thank you so much for offering this activity again on the 1/2 day- my girls both REALLY enjoyed it this past fall and came home full of excitement and facts to share.

In addition to the outreach component of the program, several of the ELC student participants listed the activity as one of the most meaningful components of the course on course evaluations. The activity gave them an opportunity to provide a service to the community while testing their own language skills and reflecting on their communicative abilities with an authentic audience outside of the classroom. Moreover, this project impacted the more novice instructors involved in that it contributed to their professional development as teachers and modeled a service learning project that neither had previously participated in from start to finish, complete with lesson plan and assessment ideas.