



SCHOLARSHIP OF EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING

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My Case study: Students learn about Maasai Women observing historical ethnographies & a local non-profit called the Masai Girls Education Fund that helps girls gain access to education & teaches community members about girls.

- ▶ **Problem:** 1) Students do not consistently write detailed participant observations.
- ▶ 2) Students are intrigued by our social justice role, but do not always know how to problem solve for people.

- ▶ **Strategy** 1) I had them take detailed & copious notes on ethnographic films & write a number of short reports.
- ▶ 2) I challenged students to learn how the non profit provided assistance to the Maasai. I ask them to suggest how we might help as a class.

- ▶ **Results:** Student ethnographic observations greatly improved; some reactions were very measured, while others experienced living in similar situations, gave detailed reactions. A few students came up with great ideas on how to help mgef.

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Let me say first, that these were all good books. I really enjoyed reading them.

I loved Joshua Eyer's HOW HUMANS LEARN (pp 65-110)Page 65 – *I liked how the book focused on people's innate need to learn through play. I liked that he stresses learning about people, the significance of negotiating or the value of getting along with others. These all have lasting effects that help us as adults.*

- ▶ I enjoyed Derek Bot's main points that we need to do less lecture and more active teaching. Bot suggests we increase the teaching of history, race, culture women and gender
- ▶ I loved Geneva Gay's Culturally Responsive Teaching & how she spoke about involving students in learning; & then showing you are learning too. This book reminded me of how anthropologists work to become part of the community to understand the community's insider's view on life.

Give examples of your specific directions

- ▶ Students were instructed how to write a cultural essay with observations they made about life as a Masai girl and life as a women. *They specifically addressed their daily work, education, and power.*

- ▶ Examples of my student's reflections follow:



Two Student Reflections



- ▶ The MGEF (Maasai Girls Education Fund) foundation has worked to address issues of inequality in Masai culture. MGEF brings education to Masai women in order to aid them in female empowerment. **They also work to educate the community on some of the inequalities, women face that hinder their abilities to get an effective education, such as; HIV, teenage pregnancy, female circumcision, etc.**
- ▶ **Another student commented:**
- ▶ **my analysis of the MGEF's mission is going to be biased. I am not an anthropologist and & am not required to commit to not interfering with cultures. I think MGEF is doing is excellent work & represents a great step toward female empowerment in Masai culture.**

One student wrote of her personal & similar experience in Thailand...

- ▶ Maasai Reactions. *My siblings and I are the first generation in my family to attend school. We were sent to different boarding schools & we visited our family during the summer. I heard my grandmother say 'why do your parents waste money sending you girls to school? You're going to marry a man anyways and leave to live with him & care of his family, so why waste the money now?'*
- ▶ Fortunately, **my parents**, who do not know how to read and write **acknowledge the importance of education**. They told us that not knowing how to read and write is equivalent to being blind and deaf. *They wanted their children to be knowledgeable and independent. All of my siblings and I have a college degree and I am so thankful for my parents.*
- ▶ *I was born and raised in Thailand, and I witnessed my grandfather who had 3 wives....it was socially acceptable and the more wives, the more wealthy the husband was.* Next slide,
- ▶

Testimonial Continued

- ▶ **She Continues,**
- ▶ My entire family are farmers. At the time, bringing in more wives was for her to bear more children so that the children could help with work. Today, **my 2 grandmothers still live in the same house and share the same bedroom. They are best friends since they helped each other raise their children. As of today, the year 2020, polygamy is no longer legally practiced in Thailand.**



A reflection on MGEF's education effort



- ▶ **One student wrote:**
- ▶ **This allows women to become educated & gives them confidence to stand up for themselves.** In the future, women will start to choose who to marry, what age to get married, and whether or not to circumcise her daughters.
- ▶ **Another described:**
- ▶ Educating younger generations will change traditions. Personally, I think that the program has good intentions - I believe all girls should be able to go to school. However, I'm a bit worried that too much of their culture could change. As long as MGEF only assists with education and doesn't interfere with Maasai culture, I think that it's a great program.

What Assessment Techniques did you use?

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- ▶ I evaluated their content, writing, & inclusion of cultural attributes.
- ▶ **Those who wrote about activism and change** – *since this was the first time I had assigned this piece, I was really interested to see what they wrote wo/evaluating.*
- ▶ **Students really liked learning about distant cultures & they wanted to learn how to help others and create s social justice projects.**

Your final thoughts on your SET experience.

- ▶ *This was a wonderful course. I really enjoyed everyone here and I found the discussions engaging and very encouraging. You challenged us and your course gave me the freedom to teach the way I originally learned to teach so I thank you for that.*
- ▶ *Joan, you have been a great person to bounce ideas of and to get to know. Thank you very much for the time.*