



REFLECTIONS: GEEA PERU STUDY TOUR

In June of 2017, I was a participant in the Global Economic Education Alliance's Teacher Study Tour to Peru. The objective of this trip was to promote economics education, pedagogical philosophy, and methodology with American and Peruvian educators. Without a doubt, this experience has made a profound impact on me, both professionally and personally. Please find enclosed my reflections of this unforgettable experience.

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Somehow, I always knew I wanted to be a teacher. My own thirst for knowledge, coupled with a passion for igniting that same desire in others undoubtedly drove me into the world of education. But honestly, I will blame my father, a pilot and globe trotter in his own right, for instilling in me an appreciation for the world and its people. I have been teaching Advanced Placement World History in a large suburban high school in Fort Worth, Texas for five years now, and if anything, my curiosity and enthusiasm for understanding the history and interconnectedness of our world has only heightened.

I was overjoyed and absolutely thrilled to learn I had been accepted for the Global Economic Education Alliance's Teacher Study Tour to Peru in June of 2017. While the objective for this study tour was to promote economics education, pedagogical philosophy, and methodology with both American and Peruvian educators, this trip was worth so much more. As I look back on my ten day experience in this beautiful South American country, I recognize that this trip has had a profound impact on me academically, professionally, and personally.

Academically, of course, I have always had a long-standing interest in Peru. With this study tour, I had an otherwise impossible opportunity to learn more about the development of this nation and its unique culture. For example, I was able to visit the Museo Larco in Lima, which hosts an astounding amount of ancient Peruvian art and artifacts. I had many prior misconceptions about the Inca, including their use of human and llama sacrifice, as well as the extent of their spiritual rituals and traditions. I was also wholly unfamiliar with pre-Incan civilizations, such as the Moche and Chavin, and thoroughly enjoyed touring the exhibits, which is largely credited to Rafael Larco Hoyle, the "Father of Peruvian Archeology" and founder of the museum. I was excited to see a preserved *Quipu* (pictured below), an ancient device to record transactions and communicate information by tying knots.



Moreover, learning of the incredible engineering feats of the Inca and other ancient Andean cultures was absolutely fascinating. While in Cusco, we explored ruins and learned of the techniques and likely intentions of the ancient civilizations. For example, their temples and military compounds used seemingly flawless stonework, without mortar (*see below*)! It certainly

begs the question: how were these ancient civilizations able to accomplish this? Especially without draft animals! The precision and incredible intentions with their architectural work is astounding. Certainly, it supports the idea that enough credit has not been given to early civilizations in the Americas, as most of our history classes are heavily Eurocentric.



Aside from my interest in ancient cultures, I was also intrigued by the massive impact Spanish colonization had on Peru. The classic European architecture seen in Lima (and subtle touches in Cusco), is certainly a significant difference, and undoubtedly an interesting juxtaposition, from the still vibrant Andean cultures that exist today. This was evident when visiting Plaza Mayor my first day and exploring Cathedral Basilica of St. John (*see below*).



The impact of Spanish colonization certainly transcends its stunning architecture. As was seen in *Casta* paintings and even having trouble talking with some rural Cusco residents who only spoke Quechua language, made it abundantly clear that Pizarro's arrival to the Andean region left a clear ethno-religious foundation in the region that continues to effect the country politically, economically, and socially.

While guided tours and museum visits were unquestionably important, one interaction that truly made this visit unique and impactful was having conversation with Peruvian nationals. Through candid conversations with university students, Dr. Sicoli, and a variety of locals, I learned so much about the country and what makes it unique within South America. Learning about their healthcare system, economic struggles, diplomatic partnerships, social disparities, and religious influence has helped me discover new lesson plan ideas and engagement opportunities with my students.

Of course, my own academic interests intertwine with the academic interests of my course. AP World History has continuously been an ideal course for supporting international awareness and cross-cultural understanding; it challenges students to think conceptually about world history from approximately 8000 BCE to present; it provides us the opportunity to focus on the environment, cultures, state-building, economic systems, and social structures. And while over 20% of my course must be devoted to Latin America, I will undoubtedly be able to use examples from this trip to Peru in a variety of ways. Below I have included some learning objectives and ideas I would like to incorporate into my AP World History courses in the future:

- Students will analyze the impact of the environment and geology have on the economy. I will divide students into small groups and provide basic geographical information about their civilization. Somewhat similar to the game *Civilization*, students will need to develop their economic and political system based on their resources. Throughout the simulation the teacher will “hit”

students with a variety of environmental problems that they must deal with and show how it impacts their economic vitality (*i.e. Peru's recent flooding, past earthquakes, etc.*)

- Students will attempt to resolve and prioritize issues for a variety of nations, including Peru. The teacher will organize a model-United Nations set-up in the classroom; students will be paired off and assigned a country to research. They must analyze the high-priority issues of their country and determine the best methods in which to solve them. More importantly, they should decide how to work together with other countries (organizing trade deals, alliances, etc.).
- Students will analyze the impact of imperialism on a variety of modern-day nations, including Peru. Students should take a special look at religious and linguistic syncretism, as well as ethnic divides and education barriers.

Not only did this trip impact me academically, but it also impacted me professionally. Being able to visit schools, interact with the students, and observe classroom instruction has made a thoughtful impact on my own pedagogical philosophy. Ultimately, one of the most important things I learned through these school visits was experiencing what my English Language Learning (ELL) students must feel like in my classroom. Despite having translators and a limited knowledge of Spanish, I found myself struggling to keep up with what was going on in the classroom. This allowed me to empathize with my ELL students who struggle and become frustrated when they can't keep up with the rest of the class. I believe this experience has granted me greater patience and understanding with helping to facilitate the educational goals of my ELL students.



I hope to use these experiences to discuss the differences in the American school system, and will further allow me to promote study abroad. Moreover, I am excited to organize a professional development class for my school district to help implement South America, and

more specifically, Peru, into their classrooms. I am currently designing a plan that will target all areas of instruction (not just World History), and will hopefully be an approved instructor for Keller ISD's 2018 Professional Development Program.

Lastly, this teacher study tour experience had a meaningful impact on me personally. Education has, and always will be, my passion. This trip has brought together some incredible people from across the United States and connected them with an unforgettable opportunity with Peruvians and their astounding country. I have made several lifetime friends on this trip who brought a variety of unique and fresh ideas and methods that I will be able to implement in my own classroom. There is something about experiencing a country that is absolutely indescribable...you can look at pictures and read about it all in books, but to *see* it, really see it, *taste*, *smell*, and *hear* another culture, makes this experience so much more meaningful. As our current administration moves away from promoting the educational interests of our youth and rebuking global partnership, it is increasingly more important for organizations like GEEA to thrive. I hope the connection Dr. Brock and Dr. Sicoli have fostered between their respective universities continues to grow, and that teachers continue to feel supported and encouraged to bring the world to their students.



Thank you for making this once in a lifetime experience possible.