

Pre-service Teachers Exploring Possibilities: An Alternative Break Trip to Thailand

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Overview

I am in the process of developing a 2 week alternative break program to a school in rural Thailand and an accompanying 1 unit course specifically for future teachers.

Rationale

My goal is to develop an alternative break that is specifically designed for pre-service teachers and their interests. Many of our future teachers do not have the opportunity or finances to participate in study abroad or alternative break programs, yet these experiences are often transformational. The trip to a unique school in rural Thailand will take students outside of their comfort zone, challenge their beliefs about formal education and enable them to explore alternative possibilities. My hope is that the experience will inform how they approach their future profession.

Details

This project is being developed in collaboration with LMU's Center for Service and Action and with faculty and staff at the Mechai Pattana School. It has two major components:

- a 2 week trip to the Mechai Pattana School in Buri Ram Thailand
- a 1 unit course that will include a pre-trip orientation and a post-trip reflection.

If the course is successful it will serve as a model for others running alternative break programs. The pilot is anticipated to run in May 2016

Successes

- The initial meeting with Mechai Viravaidya went well and I have been invited to visit the school and begin planning with their staff
- LMU's CSA staff are excited to work on the project and very interested in potentially adopting the mini course as a model.
- Informal student polls have indicated significant interest in this type of program

Challenges

- I need to return to Thailand to visit the campus and begin planning with the Thai staff.
- I need to identify potential sources of funding for grants that will make this opportunity available to students of all socio-economic backgrounds