

Name: Greg Lemoine

1. Briefly introduce yourself and describe why you are seeking a position in international education. What makes you a candidate who will be successful in an international setting?

You should be excited to read this personal statement! It is exciting for me to write this once again. This is my second ISS candidacy. The first was in 2006 for the Bangkok fair, when I signed on with ISPP for 2007-2009.

The 2013-14 school year will be my thirteenth year teaching overseas. All of my teaching has been international but my training and certification is from Wisconsin. I absolutely love my career. Since I am single without dependents, I have the freedom to travel and teach around the globe. It has taken me a while to find my niche in education. I started out as a homeroom teacher in elementary. However, I soon found out being a single elementary teacher is not marketable. One of my greatest strengths in teaching has always been integration of technology. The specialty really chose me.

A key part of my experiences is a focus on the school, not the geography. The quality of the school and my relationship with my administrator are the two most important aspects of the recruiting process for me.

2. How do students best learn? What is your role in facilitating that learning?

The only way to answer a loaded question like that is to change the question. Change the question to “How does this student best learn?” Individualization. Reaching out to the individual student is the key. However, I have been focusing on coaching teachers to look at today’s students in other ways: as “digital natives” and “21st century learners”.

As a teacher, I have been modeling a lot of educational technology for my colleagues. Smart boards (interactive whiteboards) and mobile devices are excellent in the classroom but they aren’t just for the teachers. Teachers need to know basics, but the students should be actively using them too. (If the school environment has reached such a level. Otherwise, we aim for that.)

3. What can you contribute as a member of a professional learning community in an international setting?

I have a lot to offer in the international setting. Since my entire teaching career has been overseas, I have many experiences to share. My career has taken me to some hardship countries where I learned to be culturally sensitive to the host countries and yet remain patriotic as a US citizen. My identity has evolved as an international educator, a US expatriate, and a traveler (rather than a “tourist”).

International schools, in my experiences, require commitment on a larger scale than schools in the native schools of Canada, Australia, or the USA. Teachers are much more part of a “family” in the school community because we rely on the community for support in the local culture, teach a wide range of subjects to fill in for transitive import teachers, usually coach the sports teams, and spend a lot of time on different committees. I have been on committees for accreditation, technology, school improvement, special needs, new teacher training, and a lot more. Sometimes I feel like I live at school.

Learning the local culture and reaching out to the local staff is not something that import teachers always do. For me, it’s part of the excitement of living and teaching overseas. I am always happy when the school finally finishes the paperwork for work visas. Being able to stay in country for holidays is a real treat. Not that I don’t travel to other countries during breaks, but I enjoy the option to stay in the host country and see how they celebrate the bigger holidays. If there are at least one or two of us [import



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teachers] that really enjoy learning the host culture, the enthusiasm spreads to other teachers. I truly believe the retention of excellent import teachers is enhanced by positive local relationships and cultural awareness.

Teaching my fellow teachers is another contribution. I have been to a lot of regional and international conferences. I love to give Professional Development presentations. There are so many opportunities because using technology in education (I call it TEACHNOLOGY) is always changing at the speed of light. I have presented at every education conference I have attended. The preparation, of course, is with staff and administration at my school.

Overall, I am a teacher. Everything I learn has to be passed on to someone else or that knowledge is wasted. I really believe in that. Which goes for fellow teachers too. I am a “team player” on every staff that I have served on. That is the key to being successful as a staff. We look out for each other both at school and in the host cultures.

A few years ago, I found a quote that has guided me through my international teaching and travels: “Own only what you can always carry with you: know languages, know countries, know people. Let your memory be your travel bag.” ~ Alexander Solzhenitsyn