



Social Studies' teacher Chris Brooks lived every aspect of our Mission Statement's commitment "to challenge and expand the comfortable limits of thought, tolerance and performance," as he taught Business Ethics and Leadership Development courses for six weeks last summer at Swinburne University in Melbourne, Australia. As an adjunct professor at Northeastern University, Chris was selected from a highly competitive pool of candidates

to participate as an instructor in Northeastern's Global Leadership Program

"This international program, analogous to an MBA, is popular with students from India, China, Indonesia, Thailand, Nepal, Bangladesh, Germany, and England. They are eager to experience the American stance on leadership and ethics," says Brooks. "This opportunity to work with adults of vastly diverse backgrounds afforded me a perspective of so many different cultures and their worldview. This opportunity was a life-changing one for my students, and also a defining moment in my own teaching."

One reason that Northeastern cited for selecting Chris was the style of teaching and learning that Chris models at Souhegan. "They very specifically did not want someone welded to a lectern," says Chris. They wanted someone to connect several academic disciplines, to personalize the learning for program participants. They wanted to promote the use of small groups. This does not happen in many international universities. For instance, I had a German student who was shocked that I would answer his questions. That is not a style with which he was familiar. The deans at Northeastern are very familiar with our work here, and knew that I would use that background to connect with students who represented a wide diversity of skills and knowledge—not to mention differing degrees of comfort with the English language."

Chris was fascinated by some of the goals expressed by his students. "Some of my students were extremely poor, and would be the only members of their families to attend university. Others came from great wealth. I became friendly with a graduate student from India, who plans to build a progressive school in his country. He was mesmerized that our high school had such a forward-thinking philosophy. After I introduced him to the principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools, he said that he always knew deep down that schools could change. We have made tentative plans for him to visit the United States and our high school."

Chris says that several of the ideas he and his students discussed challenged him in ways he had not anticipated. "To raise ethical questions about choice and how we question our world took on new meaning when discussing a student who does not have the right to choose her spouse. Her brother will make that decision for her. My role was to ask questions that would allow her to ask her own questions. I recognize that I have a Western model of ethical considerations, and ethics is

particular to culture. I had to navigate two worlds, sometimes many worlds, in that one international classroom.”

Chris has been invited to return to Australia, but he will delay another visit for a few years. His work in Souhegan’s Summer Institute is vital to him. Chris says, “I want to expand the world for my students in Amherst. I want to link my students to the questions being asked by students of the world. The future depends on the questions we pose. It is my job to help my students pose questions that will lead them to their futures.”