

Journal of Global Initiatives: Policy, Pedagogy, Perspective

Volume 14

Number 1 *The Impact of Communication Technologies
on Study Abroad*

Article 4

6-14-2010

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Recommended Citation

Goen, Todd L.; Billinson, Jennifer R.; and Manning, Linda D. (2010) "The Process of Successfully Integrating Communication Technologies into Short-Term, Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs: Reflections from the Field," *Journal of Global Initiatives: Policy, Pedagogy, Perspective*: Vol. 14 : No. 1 , Article 4.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/jgi/vol14/iss1/4>

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The Process of Successfully Integrating Communication Technologies into Short-Term, Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs: Reflections from the Field

Todd Lee Goen, Jennifer R. Billinson, and Linda D. Manning

Abstract

As advances in communication technologies (CT) continue to shape modern life, it is critical that study abroad professionals and faculty leaders contemplate the ways in which such technologies impact study abroad. This essay provides an argument for the value and utility of such contemplation through an in-depth examination of a short-term, faculty-led study abroad program and the three faculty who lead it. The authors provide reflective summaries of their own experiences with CT and study abroad and discuss the ways in which changes in CT resulted in changes to their own study abroad program including the integration of CT into academic components and logistics of the program. The essay concludes with practical advice for exploring the ways in which CT might effectively integrate into study abroad programs.

Despite claims that communication technologies (CT) have an adverse impact on education (Huesca, 2013), evidence suggests advances in CT also support student growth while studying abroad (e.g., Shao & Crook, 2015) as well as internationalization efforts on the whole (Goen, 2015; Leask, 2004). Further, as Kelm's (2011) article entitled *Social media: It's what students do* indicates, contemporary students are digital natives for whom the CT many faculty perceive as recent developments are integral components of their lives.

Faculty, regardless of whether or not they lead study abroad programs, need to reflect on and (re)consider the ways in which CT foster student learning (Titarenko & Little, 2017). Study abroad is essential to preparing students for a global world (Ramírez, 2013), and faculty leaders and study abroad professionals must attend to the impact of CT on this important element of modern tertiary education. Thus, this essay offers a rationale for critical reflection on the impact of CT on study abroad, an overview of a faculty-led study abroad program utilizing CT to achieve academic and logistical goals, reflections from faculty leaders on their own experiences with CT abroad, reflections on the integration of CT into the curriculum of a short-term faculty-led program, and some advice for faculty leaders of such programs.

Impact of CT on Society

For many, the term CT evokes images of mobile technologies, software programs designed to facilitate easier information exchange, videoconferencing suites, and a bevy of other web-based technologies. However, development of technologies designed to facilitate travel and decrease the gap between humans across the globe permeates human history. The wheel, the ship, the steam engine, the airplane, postal services, telephony (with transatlantic cables), the Internet, as well as a host of other technological developments changed more than methods of travel and ease of information access. For example, they changed education systems, organizations, economic markets, and international relations. Indeed, the shrinking distance between humans across the globe began millennia ago, and the development of modern CT merely accelerated a marathon to a sprint.

While the merits and dangers of CT, such as social media, continue to be debated, their impact on greater society is uncontested. Research points to changes in interpersonal communication (Valkenburg & Piotrowski, 2017) as well as emotional and psychological impacts for users of social media (Miller et. al, 2016). Social media platforms and tech companies are now major players in the media marketplace, prompting discussion of how to regulate these powerful internet entities (Chander, 2013). At an institutional level, education is not the only area where the impact of social media is apparent. The rise of participatory content in news-gathering (Nadler, 2016) as well as dissemination (Bivens, 2014) continue to alter mainstream news media. Political campaigns worldwide have moved to digital spheres, and leaders are expected to be digitally literate and to interact with constituents via these platforms (Farrar-Myers & Vaughn, 2015). Social media significantly impacted movements for social justice and protest—the United States has seen several instances of “hashtag activism” forcing conversation in the public sphere, including the #MeToo movement and #BlackLivesMatter (Woodly, 2018). Internationally, scholars attribute social media as a contributing factor to successful revolutions (Rahaghi, 2012), such as the “Arab Spring,” though its impact is contentious (Herrera, 2012). The widening of the presence and scope of social media may contribute to the rise of a new form of “informational warfare,” altering previous conceptions of what it means to actually be at war (Prier, 2017). As this paragraph indicates, CT now pervades most aspects of modern existence in ways that were unimaginable a few decades ago. Thus, CT are now integral components

of educational experiences (both on-campus and abroad) with which educators must grapple.

Impact of CT on Education Abroad

As CT such as social media clearly permeate most aspects of modern life, it is imperative study abroad practitioners examine the ways in which these technologies affect study abroad. There is a small, but growing body of literature exploring the impact of CT on study abroad across a variety of fields and disciplines such as business (Deans, 2012; Kelm, 2011), professional writing (Ballentine, 2015), communication (Levine & Garland, 2015), second language acquisition (Dewey, 2017; Dressler & Dressler, 2016; Gómez & Vincente, 2011; Martínez-Arbelaiz, Areizaga, & Camps, 2017; Shiri, 2015; Warner & Chen, 2017), and peace studies (Carmichael & Norvang, 2014). Extant research explores a variety of CT such as Facebook (Back, 2013; Warner & Chen, 2017), Twitter (Ellis, 2014), and blogs (Douthit, Schaake, Hay McCammant, Grieger, & Bormann, 2015; Downey & Gray, 2012). Further, as the pervasiveness of these technologies is a relatively recent phenomenon (van den Boomen, Lammes, Lehmann, Raessens, & Schäfer, 2009), much of the current literature on CT and study abroad focuses on the development of pedagogical tools, assignments, and best practices for implementation (Carmichael & Norvang, 2014; Douthit et al., 2015; Ellis, 2014).

Beyond the aforementioned academic focus, research also suggests CT support students in a variety of ways as they acclimate to life abroad. Students may use CT (e.g., social media) to assist with language acquisition (Shao & Crook, 2015) outside of formalized instruction as they build friendships and professional

relationships with peers who are native speakers of their target language, and may continue their use of these technologies upon return to the home country to maintain relationships as well as language skills (Shiri, 2015). They may use their phones and apps to assist with travel and logistics (Godwin-Jones, 2016). Maintaining near constant communication with family and friends while attending university is now a norm in the home culture as a result of these CT (Hofer, Thebodo, Meredith, Kaslow, & Saunders, 2016), and students increasingly use the same technologies for relational maintenance while abroad. Use of CT for social support while abroad is increasingly common (Mikal, 2011), which has the potential for both positive and negative effects on study abroad outcomes. Coleman and Chafer (2010) note homesick students may use telecommunication technologies to interact with home in an attempt to mitigate their homesickness. While such actions have the potential to mitigate homesickness, they could potentially increase these feelings as well.

While scrutiny of CT in the context of study abroad is consistent since the turn of the century, technological changes producing greater portability continually shape questions of impact. Kininger and Belz (2005) noted that early modern CT (e.g., instant messaging, email, blogs) tethered students to the physical desktop/laptop computer or classroom facility, which limited interaction in the physical world of the study abroad program. While advances in CT increased both use and dependency on social media, the portability of current technology holds the potential alter education abroad programming to provide a richer experience for participants beyond the traditional classroom. The change in mobility in the educational context mirrors changes in travel, such as the rise of interactive travel

(Germann Molz, 2012). Smartphone apps designed to reduce the need for guides, travel agents, physical maps, and other traditional travel necessities (Godwin-Jones, 2016) serve to democratize knowledge and personalize travel experiences as individuals can now engage in self-guided tours with a plethora of information (e.g., historical, cultural) at their fingertips. Changes in the development of education abroad programming align with these larger trends. Overall, the aforementioned literature demonstrates modern CT clearly impact study abroad, and it is critical faculty leaders and program administrators consider the ways in which these technological advances further study abroad goals and outcomes.

Program Overview

This essay focuses on a short-term, faculty-led program that aims to improve students' intercultural communication competence. Goen directs the program; Manning and Billinson alternate as co-leaders. Each program is 30-32 days in length with classes/excursions Monday through Thursday, which allows for three three-day weekends for students to travel independently in small groups. The 2014 and 2015 programs were in Brussels. The university provost ordered the relocation of the 2016 program to The Hague following the March 22 Brussels attacks. The 2018 program was in Luxembourg as will be the 2019 program.

Participating students enroll in two, three credit hour courses, Intercultural Communication (INTC) and Communication and Film (CFLM), making them eligible for national scholarships and federal aid. Our program is institutionally unique as all other faculty-led, summer programs are three credit study tours. We require 13 hours of pre-departure orientation designed to provide students with

background information about the location, to prepare them for travel, and to introduce them to the courses they will take. The program combines pre-departure academic work with classroom experiences and excursions while in-country focused on developing students' understandings of cultural differences and the communication skills necessary for effective and appropriate cross-cultural interactions.

INTC focuses on providing students with an understanding of the way in which culture influences communication behavior. Specifically, it examines how history and identity contribute to language, and explores the ways in which differences in languages shape the communication process. Students spend a significant portion of their in-country experience participating in excursions designed to elucidate the history and cultural background of the location and interacting with communication professionals whose work entails intercultural communication. The major assignments for the course are a series of 10 short essays that ask students to reflect on their experiences, communication challenges, and other intercultural experiences as well as a presentation exploring the similarities and differences in communication behavior between the program location and their home country.

Students' reliance on CT as well as the integration of these technologies into their lives while abroad is a component of course content and discussion as it impacts the ways in which they encounter the local culture as well as their experience of cross-cultural phenomena (e.g., culture shock). This represents a significant change for the instructor over time as his experiences abroad as well as his initial experiences leading study abroad did not include significant integration

of CT. Thus, part of the continual revision of this course is to determine the ways in which ever changing uses of CT shape the cross-cultural experiences of student and to integrate those into the course discussion.

CFLM is a writing intensive course where students explore film theory, narrative and visual story-telling, and learn to analyze these elements by watching films selected to enhance the intercultural element of the study abroad experience. This class centers around a specific topic in film (past themes explored Western European environmental documentaries, contemporary mainstream Western European cinema, and classic and contemporary films examining Belgian family units). A film studies course provides unique challenges for a month-long study abroad trip, namely how to un-tether from a dark, campus screening room or a traditional classroom. CT are beneficial in these efforts.

Changes in infrastructure and increased access to digital streaming content allow us to choose internationally accessible films. While copyright and legal barriers to certain material remain, changes in CT occurring since the program began mean that students can easily watch films on their own time, without needing a laptop with a DVD drive or for faculty to transport several physical copies of films. Better streaming capabilities and connectivity to sites like YouTube and Kanopy dramatically increase the capabilities for showing examples for discussion and analysis in the classroom. One of the most significant assets to the pedagogy of this course in a study abroad setting is the ubiquity of the smartphone (i.e., iPhone) as well as free and accessible WiFi. The ubiquity of smartphones allows students to

create high quality visual images—photos and videos, which is central to understanding communication and film.

Authors' Reflections on their Experiences with CT Abroad

The call for this issue reflects a desire to consider the ways in which advances in CT impact study abroad. As reflexive faculty leaders, we understand our own experiences abroad with(out) communication technology provide the framework through which we understand our students' experiences. To that end, we provide a brief summary of each of our experiences with CT while engaged in study abroad as students as well as faculty leaders. We present these summaries in chronological order by initial experience abroad as a means of capturing the development of communication technologies over the 30-year period represented by the three authors' experiences abroad.

Manning

I voted in my first presidential election in November 1988, which was memorable as a “first” and by the fact that I did it through absentee ballot mailed from Paris. I spent my junior year studying abroad in France (1988-1989). I remember watching coverage of the U.S. presidential election from a European perspective. I also remember news accounts of the downed flight over Lockerbie, Scotland, in December 1988, which gained salience in my life because my family was flying from the U.S. to see me for Christmas.

In the late 1980s, people used snail mail, telephones, and pagers to stay connected. While in Europe, I kept in touch with my friends and family via snail mail. I vividly remember going to the tabac and asking for “jolis timbres” (pretty

stamps) to affix to my lengthy letters written on airmail onion skin paper. I grew up in an age where kids had stamp collections and prized the unusual ones that did not have a monarch's head—how many 21mm by 24mm portraits of a young Queen Elizabeth does a person really need? I made long-distance calls using a phone card—again, thank you, tabac. These calls were made from a public payphone on the street outside the apartment in the 16th arrondissement where I lived with a working mom and dad and their two children. The time difference was a huge issue; I didn't want to be standing out on the street at 11 p.m. or midnight to reach people in the U.S. after work.

Most of my school assignments were handwritten. I bought fountain pens, refill cartridges, and lined notepads like my French friends. I occasionally used my host family's computer. I remember being intrigued by the layout of the French keyboard. I printed papers on their daisy-wheel printer.

I travelled through Europe on trains using my Eurorail Youth Pass and planned my trips using my paperback copy of *Let's Go Europe 1988*. I also bought a small, red leather map book of Paris by arrondissement that included metro lines. To figure out how to get from 41 rue Descartes to 3 rue Fagon I had to read a map—Google didn't plot a route for me. I captured memories using a camera with 35mm film, film that I worried about being ruined by x-rays when my bags went through airport security screening. I printed rolls of film out when I returned to the U.S. I had a year's worth of experiences that I didn't "see" until I got home.

When I reflect on my study abroad experience, I feel like I am writing about some quaint time in the far, distant past. The time difference between the U.S. and

Europe seems to be the one point of common ground between my experiences and those of my students. I co-led my first trip in the summer of 2014 to Brussels. During that trip and in subsequent trips (to Belgium in summer 2015 and Luxembourg in summer 2018), I called my family from the comfort of my hotel room using my iPhone and an international calling plan. I emailed my colleagues, family, and friends. I FaceTimed, Skyped, and Messaged with my husband and son. I sent one digital postcard on a lark. I took photos using my phone and posted them to Facebook. I worked digitally—assigning and grading student work through Blackboard.

Goen

I studied abroad during the summer of 2000 (between my first and second years of my undergraduate career), when I participated in a short-term, faculty-led, service learning program in Geneva. I was abroad for three weeks without the benefit of the CT that permeate modern study abroad experience. During my time abroad, I emailed family two to three times (whenever I could use the computer of the organization with which we worked) and made two or three brief (15 minutes maximum) phone calls home using an international calling card I purchased while abroad (using the phone of the same organization) as these were the only CT prevalent at the time (and email was relatively recent—it was still *e-mail*). I kept a small notebook to log my observations and captured memories on a few rolls of 35mm film. While I owned a cell phone, I did not take it abroad as the technology was relatively new and not prevalent throughout the U.S., let alone Europe, and the concept of an international phone plan was nonexistent for someone of my social

class. While instant messaging was the newest technology, this was not yet functional for me due to the time differences and the fact that the few members of my family who did have home internet access used dial-up (a concept foreign to today's students).

My first experience as a faculty leader was in the summer of 2011 at a large research institution when I took a group of students to Brussels, where my institution maintained a campus. While all students possessed laptops, most of the social media platforms in existence today were nonexistent then or were significantly less pervasive. The university issued students local mobile phones (not smartphones) with a few minutes and limited text capabilities for emergency use. Students rarely used these technologies, and even students with smartphones did not purchase international plans as they were prohibitively expensive. As a faculty member, I had an international plan for my phone (reimbursed by the institution), but the availability of data was inconsistent. WiFi was also inconsistent with regard to availability as well as functionality, and the property where we stayed offered hardwired ethernet connections. To keep in touch with friends and family in the U.S., students primarily used email, chat applications, and video/audio applications (e.g., Skype) for contact. However, student contact with family and friends at home was limited as the technologies existed, but the infrastructure, capacities, and features of these technologies were still in development at this time in history. Virtually all participants had digital cameras to document their experiences as well as notebooks for documenting their experiences during excursions, etc.

My most recent experience as a faculty leader was summer 2018 at a medium-sized public liberal arts institution taking students to Luxembourg. All students traveled with laptops as well as mobile phones, and most of the students had international data, text, and/or calling plans. Students who did not possess these plans made heavy use of readily accessible free WiFi connections in public venues, restaurants, etc. Only one student carried a digital camera (consistent with all trips since 2015) and most students had a small notebook for documenting excursions (suggested by faculty), which they only used for excursions with limited mobile access or when their devices' batteries died. In addition to using their devices to maintain contact with their families and friends, students used their devices to document all aspects of their program (e.g., photos, notes) and even completed assignments on their devices while transiting. The completion of assignments on their phones was something new for the 2018 group, and intriguing as it allowed students to capture thoughts somewhat in real-time, but left little room for deep reflection. Further, students actively used social media and CT to maintain contact with families and friends in the U.S. during their time abroad.

Billinson

As a scholar and professor of digital culture, I am constantly referencing my own experiences with technology as an undergrad to juxtapose my current students' realities. The shift in technology and digital culture that has taken place since I studied abroad in 2004 is a perfect example of the change that has occurred in the past 14 years.

During my semester interning at *Time* magazine in London, I had a rented flip phone that had capabilities to call overseas, but was to be used only in emergencies; I used old-school calling cards when I wanted to call home. I communicated with my family and friends mainly through email via laptop, but was confined by geographic barriers limiting content that I could access and websites I could visit. While MySpace did exist at the time, the social media behemoth of Facebook (that drastically shifted norms and practices) had not yet taken off. I used a Flickr account as a place to upload photos taken by my digital camera, and shared the password with friends and family so they could share my experiences in (almost) real time.

What strikes me more than the changes in the actual technology is just how much my cultural experiences were impacted by having limited access to American media, something to which the students I take abroad to Western Europe can no longer relate. While I was able to keep up with American journalism (largely through my internship), I felt isolated from American popular culture. Deprived of *Survivor*, my flat mates and I watched the British reality TV programs through an old TV set in the living room. Because we didn't want to miss it and had no way to watch it after the fact (YouTube was two years from being invented and streaming content in its infancy), we stayed up until midnight to see the Super Bowl air live, tuning in as two very confused British play-by-play announcers tried to make sense of Janet Jackson's now infamous performance. The experience of feeling lost in entertainment media for the first time in my entire life (I come from a home where *People* magazine was omnipresent) was an experience that absolutely contributed to my desire to look at popular culture critically in graduate school.

I participated in a study abroad trip as a faculty member in 2015, and 11 years felt like a lifetime ago as I watched my students text their parents, take notes on tablets and phones, and translate text and get directions with a few swipes on a screen. They didn't have to wander through The Hague and discover restaurants on their own; the Yelp app took care of it for them. They could even live-stream their experiences as they traveled, a technology that didn't even exist two years prior. And I felt tinges of jealousy as I realized they could curate playlists on iPhones to listen to on long train rides, remembering my rush to burn CDs before my trip and the feel of my enormous Discman bulging out of my coat pocket on the tube.

It's worth noting that my first experience as a student abroad took place after September 11th when much of the United States' focus turned to large-scale acts of terror, and during the Iraq war, as international criticism of the American-led efforts mounted. While students' safety during an abroad experience has long been a concern for parents and universities alike, this time period of heightened alert gave me glimpses into what has solidified into a sad reality that programs must address head-on. At the time, we didn't have the digital tools at our disposal that our students possess to stay in contact with loved ones, or for our group members to stay easily connected with each other.

Differences between Faculty and Students' Experiences

As a GenXer and two Xennials, we experience the world quite differently than the digital natives we teach and take abroad. As our aforementioned experiences show, we navigated an international world without the technologies that permeate modern societies. Thus, our understanding of what it means to interact in

international environments is different from our students'. Understanding the divide/disconnect is important for leading a study abroad program with digital natives. We grew up in a world where map reading was a necessary skill, yet few of our students possess this skill. Indeed, we purchased maps for the first few groups we took abroad, but no longer do so as students often find them confusing and do not use them. While we might consult an app for a timetable, we are just as comfortable walking up to a timetable posted on a train platform. Yet, many of our students require detailed instructions in order to read posted timetables. When we lose WiFi or participate in excursions where technology is verboten, we do not experience the same feelings of disconnectedness/fear of missing out (FoMO) or withdrawal as our students. Tasks that appear natural to us are foreign to our students.

The shift in our student population in some ways is quite abrupt. Much of the divide we describe was not present in 2011, when Goen first went abroad as a faculty leader. Indeed, there can be substantive differences in not only the type, but the function of the use of CT within a couple of years. From 2016 to 2018, we noted a change in the way in which students used Instagram. Our 2018 students posted less than our 2016 students. We spend a significant portion of our time as faculty leaders analyzing the extent to which the challenges our students face are the result of cross-cultural differences or generational differences. Like all faculty, there are times we engage in periods of lament for a time that was, but we recognize our job as faculty leaders requires us to determine the desired outcome underlying our

objects of lament and to create methods of accomplishing these outcomes with digital natives (and often with CT).

Communication Technology and Academic Components of Education Abroad

The fact that all three authors work in a Department of Communication (one of us with expertise in social media) makes us hyperaware of the role CT play in the educational environment. As such, reflection on the ways in which our students use CT and the ways in which we can integrate these into or utilize them in the educational components of our program is and has to be our norm. Below we offer a few examples of how we use CT to enhance the academic components of our program as well as the role reflexivity plays in their development.

Framing Excursions

Framing Excursions is an activity grounded in Goffman's (1974) framing theory, which we use for the CFLM course. Goffman suggests people tend to perceive events in terms of natural events (e.g., a thunderstorm) or guided doing (e.g., raising an umbrella). Insofar as a hallmark of study abroad is lived experiences in contexts and setting unfamiliar to the student, framing excursions is an activity that allows students to foreground and deconstruct the unfamiliar. Constructing a visual representation of course material is one technique for encouraging students to consider content, and perhaps more importantly, the relationships between knowledge content and context. Visuals are especially relevant to the study abroad experience as they help students relate new material to previous knowledge and make conceptual connections that aid students in transferring knowledge to novel

situations and applications (Nilson, 2010). One of the changes from our first faculty-led program to our most recent is the development of this assignment, facilitated by increasing pervasiveness of mobile technologies.

To complete the assignment, students take pictures during excursions/free travel periods of moments that illustrate course concepts. This pedagogical exercise (a) supports the notion that students have the largest learning gains when they create their own visual representation of a course concepts (Nilson, 2010), and (b) deepens students' understandings of framing theory, which suggests how something is presented to the audience influences the choices people make about how to process that information (Goffman, 1974).

Specific directions for the assignment are as follows:

1. Take a photograph of something that catches your eye while on the excursion. You may include a series of photographs if you believe that is the best way to capture the phenomenon that has intrigued you. *N.B. If an auditory experience catches your attention you may include a sound file.*
2. Explain (in no more than two paragraphs) why you chose this image and how it illustrates and/or emphasizes course concepts.
3. Explain why you framed the image the way you did. Use course vocabulary to explain the image.
4. Explain how certain events might influence your understanding of the framework.

The organizing principles are that students focus on a course concept and write about how they understand that course concept in light of the study abroad experience. In the context of study abroad, framing excursions gains the most salience when students consider notions of intertextuality—the use of texts to create new texts. Over the course of the program, as students acclimate to constructing

visual images and navigating the unfamiliar, they begin to develop cultural literacy—the knowledge and ability to make sense of situations (Schirato & Webb, 2004).

Video Clips

Because students now study abroad with video recording capabilities on phones that also provide increasingly user-friendly editing software, in the CFLM course, students are easily able to complete a project requiring a five- to seven-minute film scene. The project description is as follows:

You have spent a lot of time watching and analyzing movies (for this class and in your life in general). You have been living in a European city for a few weeks and certainly encountered culture clashes and witnessed and experienced rituals and cultural norms that were alien to you. You might have noticed a change in your behavior—how you move in the city. You might have noticed a change in your relationships with other people on the program. The goal of this assignment is for you to capture the essence of your study abroad experience in a short scene. What resonates with you about your experience in this city? What are you going to take away from your study abroad experience? In short, please take what you have learned from writing about film and apply it to your own filmic creation.

Students have the option to explore any film techniques and story-telling varieties (including experimental, more abstract approaches) when completing this assignment. Because the technology is so user-friendly, we find that even students with no filmmaking experience are able to quickly pick up on the basics and successfully complete the assignment. In addition, students can gather footage throughout the trip, which encourages them to think about film concepts and visual communication throughout their excursions and personal exploration. Thus, all aspects of the study abroad program now become possible content for this

assignment. The final component of the CFLM course while abroad is a screening of all the video clips students created, which students then critique by comparing and contrasting them with the films they watched for the course as well as the course content.

Instagram Assignments

In 2016, we began incorporating Instagram into various components of the program. Along with an official hashtag for each program, we encourage students to post images from excursions, as well as their independent weekend travels. The result in the initial year was nearly 1,000 posts, and included engagement with some of the services we utilized as part of the program and activities in which we participated. Students used the program hashtag to post and promote on their own accounts.

Since students routinely post to Instagram, this is an easy way for faculty members to document student experiences (note: students have the option to create a separate Instagram account if they do not wish to share their personal account). One example of how we use Instagram to accomplish a course goal is a scavenger hunt. To acclimate students to their new home, to build their familiarity with local public transportation, and as to assist their adjustment to a time zone different, we often begin our first day in-country with a scavenger hunt. We divide students into groups and provide them a list of various landmarks throughout the city. Students complete the scavenger hunt by taking a photo of their group at each landmark and posting it to Instagram using the program hashtag. Although not a graded assignment, the team completing the scavenger hunt first receives a prize (typically

T-shirts). Students often report this as a favorite activity because of its utility—they learn how to navigate the city, get to know some of their classmates, and can safely make mistakes in navigation. More importantly, it builds confidence in students' navigation abilities, and as postings are typically public, it also builds parental confidence that students are safely engaged in experiential learning on their first day in-country.

Independent Travel

As previously mentioned, our program provides students three three-day weekend opportunities for travel in small groups within Europe. While some may view this as an add-on to a study abroad program, we integrate it into the educational component of our program. As the program goal is to increase intercultural communication competence, students need to engage in cross-cultural communication without the safety net of our presences.

For a portion of the INTC class prior to each weekend, students engage in a mini pre-departure session designed to help them understand what cultural differences and communication challenges they might experience in their destined location. The INTC class following their return includes a debriefing component designed to help students process their weekend experiences through the lens of course content. It is not uncommon for the debriefing sessions to last a full two and a half hours. It is in the debriefing sessions where students make personal connections with the content of the INTC course, which increases overall engagement in the course. In our experience, a significant portion of students' intercultural learning takes place during these weekend travels. Students have a

variety of intercultural encounters (some positive, some negative) that demonstrate course content in ways that connect personally with them. The personal connection and increased engagement promote positive learning outcomes, even if the encounter was negative.

Given the unique nature of this component of our program, and our campus population and its significance to our desired learning outcomes, administrators and parents have concerns about student safety and our ability to respond to an emergency should one arise as we are not physically with the students during these weekends. Although we were able to satisfy these concerns when we proposed the program, it continues to be a concern of many parents and administrators. Increasingly pervasive CT have been beneficial to our ability to continue to include independent travel in our program. In 2014, students provided their location for their travels, but we had limited resources for real-time communication. Students participating in the 2018 program downloaded WhatsApp, providing virtually 24/7 contact with students regardless of where they travel independently. This use of CT increases our ability to respond quickly in the event of an emergency as well as allay concerns raised by parents and administrators.

Limited/Zero Technology Classes and Excursions

Although CT are clearly changing the ways in which we interact with students and they experience their time abroad, it is also critical to consider situations/contexts in which CT cannot or do not integrate into the study abroad experience as well as situations in which the ways in which we incorporate these technologies into our lives limits their use while abroad. In the INTC course, we

connect students with professionals engaged in intercultural communication practices in their daily activities. These are individuals employed in business, service industries, government, and/or international institutions. We typically visit the U.S. Embassy and at least one international institution (e.g., European Commission) in the location of the program, giving students an opportunity to interact with public affairs officials and staffers who engage in intercultural communication on a daily basis. However, these locations typically restrict the use of mobile devices (students often cannot even bring them on-site).

In these contexts, students must rely on paper methods of documentation, and over the past few years, we note a considerable shift in students' reactions to this type of experience. The first time we took students abroad, they simply accepted the idea that phones and cameras were not permitted in certain locations. With more recent groups, excursions such as these require faculty members to discuss technology restrictions well in advance as well as to provide rationale for such restrictions. For many contemporary participants in our study abroad programs, this is their first encounter with the idea that many individuals spend much of their workday disconnected from their mobile devices, and introduces them to new and diverse requirements for skills associated with intercultural competence (e.g., what strategies does one use when s/he cannot simply perform a web translation on a mobile device?).

Additionally, with the time difference between our location and the location of our university (which is in the same time zone as most of our students' friends and families), we observe a natural regulation of CT not present in our on-campus

classes. When students begin their classes with us each morning, their friends and families are, for the most part, asleep. Throughout most of our day and evening, our students' friends and families are at work. Thus, students who desire to maintain contact with the home culture can do so, but often the time difference naturally sets some parameters for availability and connectedness on the part of our students. Interestingly, we observe fewer technology-based distractions in our classes abroad than in our on-campus classes because the time difference results in decreased possibilities for interaction and it is clear most students are using these CT for real-time interactions with their families and friends in the U.S. We enjoy this from an instructional perspective as our students are more likely to engage the material rather than be focused on their phone throughout class and because we do not have to regulate the use of technology while we are abroad in the way we do on campus.

Communication Technology and the Logistics of Education Abroad

Beyond the academic, we note some other changes to our study abroad program due to the result of advances in CT we consider to be important considerations for faculty leaders.

Recruitment

While CT impact the academic components of study abroad as well a host of other practices while abroad, they also have a direct impact on the recruiting and public relations strategies associated with promoting study abroad. Social media is now an effective way of documenting and promoting study abroad experiences. As previously mentioned, beginning with our 2016 program, we created hashtags for each group we took abroad and encouraged posting to Instagram using the group

hashtag. In recruiting for all programs since 2016, we provide the hashtags to prospective students and parents to provide them some insight into the experience students had while abroad. In 2018, our campus study abroad office granted the program director access to its Instagram account while abroad. He posted 10 photos to this account using the program hashtag. The administrator of the study abroad office's Instagram account noted its weekly impressions more than doubled from its typical weekly average during the period the he posted to the account. Impressions dropped to the normal range the week after the program. Thus, social media postings for recruiting purposes for our program also support institutional recruiting and public relations initiatives related to study abroad. Additionally, we note anecdotally that the pervasiveness of CT increases the likelihood of some students studying abroad.

Though social media may be useful for recruiting and public relations purposes, the selection of the social media platform is critical to the success of these efforts. Most of our students no longer use Twitter (even if they have an account) and many use Facebook solely for maintenance of familial relationships. We are working to adapt to new platforms as our students adapt. Currently, Instagram is the most viable social media outlet for recruiting and public relations on our campus, but this is potentially in flux. Our 2016 group posted 940 photos to Instagram (including a few faculty postings). Our 2018 group posted 57 photos to Instagram (10 of which were from the program director). When we asked the 2018 group about this discrepancy, we discovered a substantive change in the way in which the 2018 group used all social media. While they used to post to Instagram, they are much more likely to

review what others post and they are less focused on platforms encouraging permanence and more focused on platforms encouraging connections and communication (e.g., more likely to use Snapchat). We are exploring this further with the 2019 group because if this trend holds, we may see a decline in the use of CT that leave a permanent (or semi-permanent) digital footprint, which in turn, may shift their utility in recruiting.

Maintaining Relationships

Related to recruitment concerns, social media and a variety of other CT provide possibilities to maintain relationships at home in relative real-time while abroad, something many modern students and parents consider a prerequisite for enrolling in study abroad. Social media often help students combat the fear of missing out by encouraging them to create it for others in the home country (Hetz, Dawson, & Cullen, 2015). CT may provide for increased social support and the creation and maintenance of new support networks, which Mikal and Grace (2012) claim have the potential to bolster confidence as well as increase risk taking on the part of students. Sandel (2014) notes this level of social support and connectedness is important to students' cross-cultural adaptation.

Our anecdotal evidence is consistent with the aforementioned social support and relational maintenance literature. Like many other programs, one of the recent features of our contemporary study abroad experiences is daily (and often instantaneous) contact with family and friends in the home culture. While this may be productive for some learning outcomes (Sandel, 2014), it can often be problematic for faculty leaders as students may seek advice or support from family

and friends before they seek it from faculty leaders. Indeed, it is both possible and probable that administrators on the home campus learn about a problem, issue, or concern before faculty in-country with the student do. While familial relationships and friendships are more important than students' relationships with faculty leaders, these individuals rarely possess the cultural knowledge, in-country experience, or understanding of the entirety of the students' experiences when they offer advice or support to students studying abroad. Thus, the information and advice they provide is often contradictory to best practices in the host culture, which poses a number of challenges for faculty leaders. This is one area where the change in study abroad resulting from increasing use of CT presents a challenge for which we do not have a clear or concrete method of adaptation. Starting with our 2018 group, we now invite parents to the first (and only the first) orientation session in an attempt to address some of these concerns. However, we understand we will never eliminate this challenge; we merely seek to mitigate it as much as possible. Future considerations also include the use of CT to live stream the initial orientation session for out-of-state parents.

Program Administration

A number of CT are now available to campuses and study abroad personnel offer increased efficiency with certain aspects of program administration. Improvements in CT provide afford greater ease in developing and managing contacts (e.g., LinkedIn), delivering course content and assessing student work (e.g., learning management systems), maintaining financial records, and a host of other educational and logistical tasks. For example, advances in CT mean apps and

camera phones can now facilitate financial recordkeeping. Rather than maintaining paper receipts, our credit card provider now offers an app whereby we can take a photo of a receipt, upload it to the app, and attach it to an entry on a statement. This allows real-time documentation of expenses visible to in-country personnel as well as personnel on the home campus. This means we can now engage in on-time processing of financial statements regardless of the length of the program abroad (i.e., credit card statements can be processed when they come due rather than when program leaders return to campus). This increases efficiency and decreases costs as we no longer need to maintain paper records, mail documents to our campus to ensure we meet statement deadlines, or reserve space in our luggage for receipts.

Conclusion

From the current, but limited research available on the topic, it is clear study abroad professionals and faculty leaders cannot ignore the impact of CT on study abroad. As evidenced by our own experiences and program development, reflexive practice is critical to successful and meaningful integration of CT into study abroad programs. The majority of faculty leaders and study abroad professionals have radically different experiences with CT than the students they serve. Thus, it is far too easy to minimize, ignore, or even attempt to negate the changes CT bring to study abroad as understanding and adapting to these changes is a continual task. Irrespective of one's personal views on the utility of CT for study abroad, they are now reality. This essay offers a glimpse into how one short-term faculty-led program is adapting to the new world order of pervasive CT in study abroad. While our experiences are consistent with the extant literature and further demonstrate a

myriad of ways in which CT shape study abroad, they are not applicable for all study abroad programs or professionals. To that end, we draw three conclusions of use to all faculty leaders and study abroad professionals contemplating how to harness or mitigate the impact of CT on study abroad.

First, effective integration of CT into study abroad requires in-depth observation and understanding of the ways in which students use CT. This may seem simple, but requires both exploring students' lived experiences as well as engaging in meaningful conversations about the ways in which they integrate CT into their lives. While familiarizing oneself with the research on CT is important, the experiences highlighted in this essay demonstrate the pace of development of CT far exceeds the publication of relevant research. Platforms change. The ways in which students use platforms change. Meaningful use of CT in study abroad this semester may be pointless in two years. Thus, reflective observation of students' use of CT is one of the most useful methods for understanding what might be most effective for a given population. This is an ongoing process requiring continual reflexivity and refinement on the part of program leaders.

Second, it is imperative faculty craft assignments and activities integrating CT into the study abroad experience to promote learning outcomes and exploit their ubiquity. As Kelm (2011) notes, students use and will continue to use CT. While some may decry such use (Huesca, 2013), the adage "if you can't beat 'em, join 'em" seems appropriate when considering the role of CT as it relates to the academic components of study abroad. Ubiquity mean students are going to use CT; therefore, the role of the faculty leader is to determine how best to integrate CT into

assignments and learning objectives, and to engage in continual curricular refinement to maximize outcomes. This is merely a call to the hallmark of quality education: self-reflexive and adaptive teaching praxis.

Finally, faculty leaders and other study abroad professional need to help students explore the ways in which CT *both* aid and hinder cultural adaptation. It is far too easy to tend toward the extremes: CT as the panacea for or the ultimate barrier to cultural adaptation. CT are merely tools for human use. Cultural adaptation remains the fundamental goal of study abroad. Tools aid and hinder that goal, and students need help processing the ways in which those tools aid and hinder the goal. Students need to understand that CT alter human experience, and the ways in which they alter the experience abroad are different from their home cultures. Faculty need to be reflexive about their own experiences, deliberate in their use of CT, and conscious of their engagement with students if students are to process the role CT play in study abroad and competently adapt.

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