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## Impact of Student Leader Role on a Study Abroad Trip

Anna Jones  
jonesak@bgsu.edu

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Impact of Student Leader Role on a Study Abroad Trip

Anna Jones

Honors Project

Spring and Summer 2018

Bowling Green State University

## Literature Review

Integral to the development of any course, whether it is going to be taught in a middle school, high school, or a college setting, are the pedagogical foundations and required course text selections. This research looks specifically at a college-level course associated with the EDTL 4900: Ireland! Crossing Borders and Building Bridges study abroad program. The ideals of expeditionary learning guided the development of the course assignments and curriculum, the choice of field experiences, and the teaching styles that were utilized while abroad. Further, this course specifically was designed as an Expedition Inside Culture (EIC) experience. Educational trips with this branding and foundations in expeditionary learning began over twenty years ago. Bowling Green State University Interim Provost, Dr. John Fischer, and Jagellonian University Professor and sociologist, Dr. Grzegorz Mazurkevich, created the text, *Designing Authentic Education for Democracy*, that outlines the aspects of a course that utilizes an EIC curriculum. The resulting course is geared towards understanding and developing relationships between education, leadership, and democracy. In this book, expeditionary learning is defined as “the situation where learning experience becomes possible due to scientific exploration of different geographical locations, exploration of ourselves and through travel”(24). Involvement in expeditionary learning is like a “workshop for the mind,” meaning that it is a method of inquiry and research which allows the individual to engage in working towards pre-determined goals with a large amount of variability in the outcome. Possible outcomes that could develop as result of the in-depth discussions while on expeditions may include “partnership, openness, and honesty.”

The *Expeditionary Learning Resource Manual* was created by a group of previous EIC participants and teachers following the conclusion of their expedition trip to Michigan. The author's of this manual suggest that there are three conditions for a trip in order for it to meet the requirements and be designated an EIC program. The first requirement is collaboration; this qualification is met through tasks that are designed to encourage the sharing of ideas between participants and the participants' willingness to engage with one another. The second, authentic dialogue, is fulfilled by all of the traveling participants being open and honest during discussions, which is termed in the text as "real participation." The final requirement is that teachers and students act as co-learners. Notice in the previous descriptions of the requirements, the term used to refer to the people fulfilling the first two requirements is "participants" which includes students and instructors, not just students. Through engagement in EIC activities, both teachers and students are questioning, discussing, and learning. In addition to serving as a source of the requirements for an EIC, this manual also outlines with great detail the activities and discussion approaches that can be utilized during an expedition. These are centered on the ten principles of expeditionary learning and are designed to ensure that students engage in all ten of the expeditionary learning principles on every trip. The overall objectives of an EIC trip are to "raise awareness of problems related to world integration, increase the visibility of values that will influence the quality of cooperation in the future, increase the understanding of stereotypes and biases, and finally, to build capacity to analyze and interpret complex issues." The EDTL 4900 course itinerary, syllabus, and experiential activities are built upon the ideas from both of these texts and strive to reach the objectives of expeditionary learning.



An understanding of the ten expeditionary learning principles is essential in order for students to engage in meaningful conversations, both leading up to and while on their expedition. The ten principles include: self-discovery, curiosity, responsibility for learning, empathy, success and failure, collaboration and competition, diversity and inclusion, the natural world, solitude and reflection, and service and compassion. It is noteworthy that these principles directly align with the overarching aims that Bowling Green State University has set for study abroad trips. These student learning outcomes include civic engagement, intercultural knowledge and competence, and lifelong learning. Most directly, civic engagement connects to the principle of responsibility for learning and service, intercultural knowledge and competence relates to diversity and inclusion, empathy, and curiosity, and lifelong learning correlate to solitude and reflection and self-discovery. With the nature of the course and the experiences, it is inevitable that there will be additional and varying relations beyond these direct connections for each student participating in the trip.

Course texts that are utilized with a course following the EIC framework are chosen very selectively and are intended to cover a variety of aspects of the culture and the country or countries that trip members will be traveling to. The selected texts aid in setting-up a knowledge framework for the students. Selection topics include past historical events in the destination country, sources of conflict in the country's history, language, and cultural history including folklore and traditions. For this course, all of these categories were considered when choosing selections about Ireland. The first text selected was previously mentioned, *Designing Authentic Education for Democracy*, and was intended to allow students to understand the framework and design of the course.

*The Course of Irish History*, artfully written by Trinity College professor T. W. Moody and University College at Dublin Emeritus Professor F.X. Martin, gives a detailed outline of the history that has occurred in the land now known as Ireland starting in 6000 B.C. The structure of the book, with each chapter devoted to one time period, allows for a chronological understanding of the events that have occurred in the past that have triggered the current social, political, and cultural climates in Ireland. In this course, a few carefully chosen chapters were used to cover the topics of geography, history of prehistoric Ireland, the Famine (1845-1850), and the Easter Rising (1891-1921).

Beyond historical events, insight into Ireland's cultural history related to folktale, fairy tale, and music was equally pertinent to the student's base understanding of the country. Listed as both an ALA Notable Book and an ALA Best Book for Young Adults, *The New Policeman* is a mesmerizing novel which utilizes the magical roots of many Irish fables to create a mystical world where conflicts arise over a key focus of our course content, time. The plot line is based upon the idea that there are two worlds: one that is supposed to be present time yet the characters feel as though they are running out of time and the other a fairy world that is supposed to be eternal, but the characters are beginning to show aspects of aging and the presence of time. The conflicts revolve around solving these issues of time that are occurring in both worlds and the realization is eventually made that time is leaking out of the normal world and into the fairy world. Kate Thompson's work served as context for discussions students engaged in with locals throughout their travels and as a basis for discourse during academic sessions. The conflicts center on two of the topics related to the architecture of expeditionary learning: time and the interactions between the past, present, and future. In addition to the ten principles, there are

additional topics that are often the focus of the day-to-day activities during an expedition, the themes for each day. While the principles determine the overall form of an EIC, these topics determine the content that is discussed while abroad. The principles serve as the foundation which can then be elaborated on and informed by the topics. For example, in this context, the concept of time connects to the principles of self-discovery and success and failure throughout the plot. The concept of time is also often linked to a responsibility for learning because there is an expectation for citizens to understand what has occurred in the past through learning about history, to help frame and mold our decisions in the present, which therefore impact the future.

The final required book, *Bog Child*, served as a reference for the border conflict between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and for the types of events that occurred in the bogs along this border. Author Siobhan Dowd grew up in London raised by her Irish parents. She wrote this Carnegie Medal-winning novel to explore her cultural background. This book touches on the expeditionary learning topics of conflict, which connects to the collaboration and competition and diversity and inclusion principles, and human rights, which directly relates to the principles of empathy, compassion, and diversity. In addition, the character's actions within the plot demonstrate the overall theme of the course—choosing to act—and served as a model for the culminating final project that students completed. Paired with this text was a radio show podcast that shares a first-hand account of a survivor of the hunger strikes. These sources were paired together to give students a more in-depth personal understanding of this time period and the struggles the Irish were facing.

Beyond the required texts, additional reading suggestions were made in order to allow students to pursue their areas of interest more in depth. Although this course was being offered

through the College of Education and Human Development, students outside of this college have the unique opportunity of still being able to attend, which allowed attendees to come from a variety of backgrounds in regard to their majors. Additional texts offered more in-depth looks at topics including the historical period surrounding 1916 and the Easter Rising (i.e., *The Easter Rising: A Guide to Dublin in 1916*), Irish literature (i.e., *Collected Poems* by W. B. Yeats), Ireland under the influence of the Union (i.e., *A New History of Ireland*), and Ireland's influence on Western culture during the Dark Ages (i.e., *How the Irish Saved Civilization*). By reading these recommended texts, students have the opportunity to gain additional insight into a subject are of their interest which may follow as a topic for their culminating Choosing to Act project. The student was able to make more deep and meaningful connections with the day to day expeditions with each additional reading they selected because they will have more historical context to connect with.

### **Methodology Review**

Due to the fact that this research-based study was grounded upon the reflections completed by the student leader on their role of being a student leader and on how this trip impacted their future in the field of education, it is important to recognize that a standard scientific method process would not be appropriate to analyze these reflections. The following paper is an analysis based upon the experiences the student leader had while abroad taking into the dual role the student leader had while experiencing the expeditions and culture of a new country and leading a group of students through their first venture abroad. Due to the need for a

reflection-based way of analyzing the student leader's experience, the process of autoethnography was selected as the method of research for this study.

Autoethnography itself is a combination of characteristics stemming from the methodologies of ethnography and autobiography. The most common criticism of autoethnography is that it does not meet the requirements of autobiography or ethnography (Butz and Betsio, 2009). It is often compared to these two methods because autoethnography is a combination of the two, however it is its own separate category with its own unique characteristics and qualifications. This criticism comes from a lack of understanding or knowledge about this being a method of its own. The overall category is unique in that it is a span of approaches that ranges from being close to that of an ethnography to being close to that of an autobiography. How far the individual completing the research removes themselves from the practice that they are studying determines where the study falls within the range of autoethnographies. In this research, the distance of removal of the student leader falls within the region designated a personal experience narrative as the researcher will take on dual identities of both a researcher and a participant which will allow the student leader to reflect on their life circumstances while abroad.

To explain more in depth why this methodology was utilized, it is imperative to understand the breadth of areas that an autoethnography has the potential to cover. As a new and up-and-coming method for research, autoethnography has most often been utilized with research related to the social sciences. Within this umbrella category are many contexts and approaches that have been tried. One specific example is that of a doctoral student who utilized autoethnography to enhance her dissertation research by allowing her to reflect on her own

biases and accepted stereotypes that may have affected the research she completed using other methods of research. Throughout the process of autoethnography common practices involve journaling, reporting, and evaluating the researcher's feelings associated with different experiences.

It is clearly evident that this is a very broad methodology with a multitude of different directions and approaches that could be taken. For this study, the outline created by Melissa Tombro in *Teaching Autoethnography: Personal Writing in the Classroom* was used to serve as the framework for the process and steps of the research that was completed. This source was selected due to the style it was written in; it is written as a curriculum for how to teach autoethnography in a classroom and therefore was in a familiar format to the student leader and was very readable and easy to digest. Also, due to the fact that it is written to be implemented in the classroom, beyond just the framework of how to produce an autoethnography, there were additional exercises and activities that could be completed in order to practice writing different elements of an autoethnography prior to applying them to this research. The outline that Tombro provided and that was utilized in this research is as follows:

1. Develop and understanding of the meaning of “I”
2. Practice observation and writing from other viewpoints
3. Keep a journal
4. Identify the audience
5. Consider and create subtexts: “created by being specific about experiences and observations.” Idea that there will be multiple themes running through the research
6. Research and engage in experiences

7. Consider yourself as a character “self-as-character”
8. Other considerations while writing: memory, space/environment, use of devices/technology
9. Feedback and peer review

The final piece that needed to be considered to complete this research was a way of not only qualitatively recording the experiences of the student leader throughout the journey leading up to and while abroad, but quantitatively measuring the changes that occurred as a result of the travel. Two rubrics created by the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU) were selected to serve this purpose: the Intercultural Knowledge and Competence VALUE Rubric and the Global Learning Inventory Framework. The former of the two will be utilized to evaluate how effective the trip was at meeting the international perspective requirement outlined by Bowling Green State University for all study abroad courses. The rubric itself identifies the areas of a program that offer opportunities for global learning and the areas that still need improvement by evaluating the program’s connection to the five dimensions of global learning. The latter will be utilized to identify the changes within the study leader herself.

The two rubrics were selected due to their development by AACU and their prior uses in similar research. AACU has focused on improving undergraduate education since its founding in 1915. Over the past 103 years, the organization has grown to now be composed of 1,400 public and private universities and community colleges. Through publications, research, meetings, and programs, their goal is to refocus undergraduate education on quality, equity, discovery, and innovation. Both of these rubrics have been implemented to complete research in recent years and the publication “On Solid Ground” is a research study evaluating the effectiveness of the

chosen rubrics. The rubrics were evaluated based on the perceptions of validity of designated scorers from over 4,200 organizations and over 2,800 colleges and universities from which four main conclusions were drawn. The data is descriptive in nature, the data is categorical, the categories are arranged in developmental order and the data is not reflective of a true scale with equal intervals (McConnel and Rhodes, 2017). These conclusions aid in the interpretation of results and the understanding of the data after a program is evaluated by the rubrics.

### **Pre-trip Analysis**

Prior to the beginning of my involvement with pre-trip sessions, I evaluated myself and the course using the Global Learning Inventory Framework and the VALUES Rubric. By completing these rubrics I was able to record an initial starting point to which I could compare the effects of the trip on myself as an individual and on the course as a whole. The Global Learning Inventory Framework gave insight to the trip's ability to meet the requirements set by the institution for a study abroad trip. In particular, the scores evaluated from the rubric were used to evaluate if the trip fulfilled the role of giving students International Perspective and therefore satisfying this graduation requirement. The scores recorded in the VALUES rubric were utilized to identify the changes in myself as a student leader. I selected to use only eight of the sixteen individual rubrics that compose the VALUES rubric that relate to different areas of a student. The eight that were chosen were distinguished as the most applicable to a study abroad experience from the perspective of what the course's intentions and goals were.

To score the Global Learning Inventory Framework, I first connected the Campus Culture domains to aspects of the trip. Only four of the five domains seemed applicable in this situation.



The Mission, Leadership, and Advocacy domain in this study is associated with the overall mission of any EIC trip and the mission of the teachers for this particular expedition. Only the General Education aspect of the Curriculum domain was utilized to evaluate the curriculum and academic sessions of this course. The Student Life and Campus Culture domain is equated to the free time students had while traveling. The final domain, Faculty/Staff Development, was evaluated based upon the trip's effect on the leaders.

These four domains were evaluated across the five dimensions identified on the Global Learning Inventory which include Knowledge Building, Social Responsibility, Intercultural Competencies, Experiential Engagement, and Human Capital. Each of these dimensions was an essential aspect of the education abroad experience and came together to create a well-rounded and meaningful experience. The Knowledge Building domain ensures that students obtain an understanding of global processes and interdependencies, develop multiple world views, and engage in conversations about ethical and moral questions considering viewpoints from different cultures. Social Responsibility encompasses students' ability to ask critical questions about global power relations, view these questions from multiple viewpoints, and see interventions in global social problems as plausible. Closely aligned to the goals of EIC, Intercultural Competencies is comprised of a student's ability to authentically listen to others in order to interpret aspects of other cultures and to ultimately work respectfully with others to act upon shared concerns. Experiential Engagement requires that students are involved with hands on experiences that foster deeper learning, development of varying viewpoints, and partnerships with new communities. To engage in the final dimension, Human Capital, students must gain a more complex understanding of their place in the global community and differentiate between

types of diversities to allow them to work with a variety of types of people (Assoc. of American Colleges & Universities, 2009).

Each of the intersections, between a domain and a dimension, were evaluated based on their breadth, connection to the institution, and on their depth, the degree to which their new learnings applied across the institution or at home. The breadth could be defined as isolated, meaning that individual activities were completed separately and connections were not drawn between them, or defined as integrated, meaning that the initiatives within the course were connected and the objectives of the course were connected to objectives of other courses. Further, to be considered integrated, these connections were noted and made obvious to students. Depth was considered either superficial, meaning that there was minimal reflection and students were not prepared for the experiences they would be introduced to, or embedded, meaning that the overarching themes of the course were seen throughout the entire course and were continually reflected upon throughout the travel.

I will now explain the evaluations I gave for each domain across each of the five dimensions. The Mission, Leadership, and Advocacy domain, with the exception of the Human Capital dimension, was given “integrated” and “embedded.” Human Capital was denoted as “isolated” and “superficial” due to the fact that the course design and mission did not emphasize the teacher’s reflections and increased understandings. In addition, the professors each had a thorough understanding of their place in the global society prior to their involvement with this experience, so it was inferred that this trip would have minimal effects on their views. The Curriculum scores were more diverse across the five dimensions; each dimension will be looked at independently. The Curriculum based on Knowledge Building was given “integrated” and

“embedded” even though there were concerns with the ability for the connections designed within the course to come to fruition. Social Responsibility and Experiential Learning dimensions were also denoted as “integrated” and “embedded.” Intercultural Competencies was considered “isolated” and “superficial.” Although this was a core piece of the EIC objectives, it was not often reflected on or connected to between lessons, rather it was an expectation that was expected to be minimally discussed. Human Capital in the Curriculum domain was also considered “isolated” and “superficial” due to the lack of relating topics being focal points of discussion and reflections. Individuals may tend to evaluate this sub-category on their own, but the course did not prompt students to think about. As to be expected with the free time on the trip (Student Life and Campus Culture), Knowledge Building was considered “isolated” and “embedded” due to the non-academic focus, but high ability for application upon returning home. Social Responsibility and Experiential Engagement were considered “integrated,” due to the interconnectedness between the student’s interests that they pursue during this time, and “superficial.” The Intercultural Competencies and Student Life intersection was denoted as “integrated” and “embedded” because the real world situations students faced during free time would be applicable to both the academic lessons that they covered and to their lives upon returning home. Finally, Human Capital was scored as “isolated” and “superficial” as it was not an area that students would focus on during this time. The final domain to be considered was Faculty and Staff Development. Knowledge Building, Experiential Engagement, and Human Capital were denoted as “isolated,” due to the separated nature of the activities for the teachers, and “embedded,” due to the lessons learned being applicable to their lives as they returned home. Social Responsibility was considered “integrated,” as the responsibilities of the leaders were

connected from one activity to the next, and “superficial.” Intercultural Competencies was evaluated as “isolated” and “superficial” due to the lack of focus in this area for the teachers; it was expected that the teachers would demonstrate this and teach upon it.

Overall, these evaluations demonstrate the course’s aim was to have activities, academics, and free time integrated especially for the students. The students should have been able to draw connections between activities completed during pre-trip sessions and the beginning of the trip to the activities they engaged in at the end of the trip and upon return. For students, the knowledge that they built and the experiences they had should have been applicable to their lives and they should have sensed a greater need to become socially responsible and interculturally competent with the individuals that surround them. Based on these results, the expected area that students would lack the most development in was Human Capital, as the activities and mission of the course were not designed to lead to discourse about global power inequalities. The scores for staff and faculty vary slightly due to the isolated nature of their experiences from one activity to the next. This separation was necessary in order for the leaders to separate the either positive or negative results from one academic session to the next and to enter to each new situation with a fresh mindset.

To analyze the changes within myself as a result of this experience, I also completed a base analysis using the VALUES rubric. Based on their relevance to the trip and course, I elected to use eight individual rubrics that each have their own set of standards that were evaluated on a scale of 1 to 4 with 1 being benchmark, 2-3 being milestone, and 4 being capstone level performances. Civic Engagement is defined as promoting the quality of life within a given community and is evaluated on factors including diversity of communities, analysis of

knowledge, civic identity, civic communication, and civic action. My self evaluation rated my level of Civic Engagement as a bench mark two, reflecting a curiosity of other cultures and the beginning stages of making connections between my fields of interest and the community based upon requirements of the courses I had previously taken. My overall score of Creative Thinking was a benchmark three with evaluations based upon taking risks, problem solving, embracing contradiction, innovative thinking, and synthesizing. My strengths and higher scores within these areas were in solving problems, due to my logical methods of thinking, and in embracing contradictions, due to my incorporation of varying perspectives as I approach situations. Weaker subsections included synthesizing, because I have not yet connected ideas as a coherent whole, and in innovative thinking, as I often experiment with creating a new idea or product, but have not acted upon these initial brainstorm. My strengths in developing a specific position on issues, well informed conclusions, and critical consideration of problems led to a score of a milestone three in Critical Thinking. This reflection demonstrates a moderately high performance level associated with comprehensively exploring issues and ideas before formulating an opinion. The Global Learning rubric evaluates an individual's engagement with complex global systems through which they should be open-minded to diversity and understand how their actions affect their communities. Based on the factors of global self awareness, perspective taking, cultural diversity, personal and social responsibility, and understanding global systems, I evaluated myself at a milestone level two. This reflects a basic understanding of global institutions, solutions to global problems, and influences of human actions on the natural world. On the Inquiry and Analysis rubric, I scored a milestone three reflecting I had a moderately high level of performance associated with the systematic process of exploring issues through collecting and

analyzing evidence. This process includes the selection of a topic, background knowledge and research, design, analysis, and the drawing of conclusions. Integrative Learning reflected my connections to the experience, connections to my discipline, transferability of the experience, ability to communicate in order to enhance meaning, and skill in self-assessment and reflection. The rubric was difficult to score prior to the experience as I was coming from the perspective of what I would expect from the experience. The strongest performance area that I anticipated was in my ability to communicate what I would learn in a meaningful way as I knew this was a major factor in the culminating assessment, the Choosing to Act project. Based upon the Intercultural Knowledge and Competence factors of cultural self-awareness, knowledge of cultural worldview frameworks, empathy, verbal and nonverbal communication, curiosity, and openness, I scored a milestone two. This reflects an identification of my own cultural biases and cultural differences in communication. It also reflects strengths in curiosity, shown by asking deeper question about other cultures, and empathy, shown by recognizing emotional aspects of multiple world views. My final evaluation was using the Foundation and Skills for Lifelong Learning Rubric, on which I scored a milestone three. Similar factors are taken into consideration as those associated with the Intercultural Knowledge and Competence rubric including curiosity, initiative, independence, transfer, and reflection. This evaluation reflects my undertaking of ongoing purposeful learning by exploring topics deeply, going beyond classroom requirements to pursue educational experiences, and reflecting on prior knowledge that could bring clarity to the meanings of the broader perspectives I have developed.

In summary, these seven rubrics show there was room for improvement within all seven of these areas that could result from traveling to Ireland. Scores of two demonstrate more room

for growth in areas of Civic Engagement, Intercultural Knowledge and Competence, and Global Learning. Stronger areas included Critical and Creative Thinking, Life Long Learning, and Inquiry and Analysis shown by an overall score of three. Strengths in these areas align with my overall very structured lifestyle, mathematical mindset, and logical thought processes that are apparent in my day-to-day life.

### **Post Trip Analysis**

#### Rubric Analysis

To begin reflecting upon the transformations that occurred as a result of this study abroad experience and as a result of the acting in the role of student leader, each VALUES rubric was assessed to identify the changes that occurred. The first rubric assessed Civic Engagement. Across the board the my scores improved especially in the areas of analyzing knowledge and commitment to one's civic identity and participation. This could be contributed to the involvement with Amnesty International while abroad and the my new interest in bringing this to our college campus by starting a chapter. In addition, during our study Ireland was closing in on an important referendum vote on abortion; my peers and I were able to see citizens from a variety of backgrounds and age groups civically engaged as they campaigned for or against the vote.

Minimal developments were shown in my Creative Thinking scores. Improvement was shown in areas of innovative thinking and synthesizing information as I reflected on the rubric that I am now more able to create my own unique ideas and synthesize information into a coherent whole. These changes could be contributed to the need for my need to be able to react

instantaneously as obstacles occurred while traveling especially regarding living arrangements and time schedules. Creating new ideas and being able to look at situations as a whole to develop a plan became a necessity. These changes are also contributed to the ability to reflect upon the whole experience and analyze the different parts of the role of the leader as a coherent whole.

Upon reflecting on the Critical Thinking rubric, I identified one setback in the scores I gave compared to those given prior to the trip. In the student's position sub-category my score decreased to reflect an ability to take into account the complexities of an issue and acknowledge other's viewpoints. This decrease is as a result of my acknowledgement that there are many facets that must be taken into consideration during an analysis such as this one, and it is near impossible at this point to be able to identify all of the limitations of my position or to synthesize all of the positions of the invested parties. The development of a larger perspective throughout the trip resulted in a realization that my lens was narrower than previously acknowledged. Although this was reflected in a decrease of rubric score, this is a positive realization as it allows for more accurate reflections of the experience.

As to be expected, the majority of sub-categories on the Global Learning rubric reflected an increase of performance level. This seems appropriate as I was able to explore another culture and gain a new perspective of the global community. Rubric area scores that reflected this included global self awareness, cultural diversity, personal and social responsibility, and understanding the global systems. Overall this can be summarized as an increased ability to acknowledge my position in the context of the global community and the impact that my actions can have on this community. These changes were inspired mostly by the interactions I had with locals and the actions I saw citizens of Ireland taking. In both of these situations the passion of



the Irish about their own country and preserving the global community were noticed to the point that it inspired changes within myself.

Changes shown on the Inquiry and Analysis rubric reflected an overall increase of confidence and performance associated with exploring a new topic and researching a new idea. In particular, the post travel rubric evaluation demonstrated that I was more able to synthesize information from relevant sources to reveal significant insights and identify and discuss limitations and implications of the research that is completed. These changes were largely due to my experience walking through the research process associated with this project. In addition, the pre-work required in order to successfully plan lessons and execute a study abroad experience, allowed for exuberant amounts of practice collecting and synthesizing background information.

The post reflections based upon the Integrative learning rubric reflected this to be one of the largest areas of growth as a result of this experience and one of the strongest areas of performance. The scores showed I am more able to synthesize connections outside of the classroom and connect these ideas to my study within the field of education. Further, I can envision my future self and the path that I will follow within these diverse contexts. These two facets are imperative to the success of my future career in the field of education as much of the responsibilities and actions taken by exceptional teachers involve the integration of outside knowledge into the classroom and the ability for the teacher to plan, execute, reflect, and then improve upon themselves. These changes came as a result of the responsibilities associated with holding the student leader position and the insight I gained into planning a study abroad experience and teaching a course.

Scores on the Intercultural Knowledge and Competence rubric reflected more defined positive changes as sub-category scores changed by two points. Developments were in the areas of knowledge, cultural self awareness demonstrating a new found ability to articulate my own cultural rules and biases, and attitude, openness to initiate interactions with those culturally different from my self. This growth could be contributed to the ability to fully submerge myself in another culture which allowed for a greater level of understanding of those that surrounded me as well as myself. The remaining categories stayed stagnant and reflected little overall change as a result of this experience; however, they were integral to having a meaningful experience while abroad.

The final rubric, Foundations and Skills for Lifelong Learning, demonstrated a growth in the my initiative, independence, and transfer. This is demonstrated by my increased ability to generate and pursue opportunities to expand my knowledge and skills, pursue interests independently and outside of the classroom, and connect previous learning to my recent experiences. These are all essential attributes of ensuring that the lessons learned while abroad would be utilized in my day-to-day life and my professional life. The developments in these areas resulted from the constant push throughout the trip to be reflective on our experiences and connect our experiences to our own lives. Making the material applicable to myself helped me to be able to connect it to the previous knowledge I had within the field of education. Further, the action of studying abroad pushed myself to pursue knowledge about my passions and interests in the field of education which allowed me to develop my initiative and independence.

The analysis of the changes identified from each individual rubric overall reflect a dramatic increase in my performance levels in association with the VALUES rubric. These

developments give evidence to the benefit of studying abroad at some point during a student's collegiate experience. They also validate the benefits of taking on the role of a student leader as many of the developments were attributed to the responsibilities and lessons learned from taking on this role.

In order to reflect on the effectiveness of the class experience as a whole, I also completed post trip evaluations utilizing the Global Learning Inventory Framework. Fewer changes were made to the original scores given to each intersection of domain and dimension, so I will reflect upon the changes rather than each intersection individually. Overall the trip was a more integrated experience than I anticipated with changes from "isolated" to "integrated" in both Knowledge Building and Experiential Engagement for faculty and staff. This resulted in 14 of the 20 intersections being evaluated as "integrated" in my final evaluation. My ability to see the faculty and staff perspective of the journey through the responsibilities associated with being a student leader allowed me to realize that their experiences were more interrelated than I originally expected as they constantly reflected on each activity in order to connect the activities and lessons and evaluate what could have been done differently throughout the course.

The intersection of the Curriculum and Intercultural Competencies score was shifted from "embedded" to "superficial." This was a result of the ideas relating to Intercultural Competencies, including listening carefully, interpreting others cultures, and acting tolerant towards others, frequently being focal points of discussion in the context of this experience, but these same topics were never applied to our actions at school or as we returned home. The final change noted following the trip was the shift of score from "superficial" to "embedded" for the Student Life and Campus Culture (free-time) and Social Responsibility intersection. This was

change resulted from the students' ability to observe the civically engaged Irish citizens and the students' desire to act in similar ways once they returned from the trip. This desire was shown in the students' culminating Choosing to Act Projects as many of them centered on ways of engaging citizens or on ways of educating our youth on how to become more engaged.

The final evaluation scores that reflected these changes as well as those areas' scores that reflected the anticipated effect demonstrated by the pre-trip scores show that the course is effective at growing international perspectives of all parties involved. A total of 14 of the 20 intersections were considered "integrated" and 13 of the 20 "embedded." Trips such as this one should aim to be "integrated" and "embedded" across all intersections, although it is noted that any would trip would never be able to reach such level of perfection due to the number of variables associated with a trip abroad. The high number of intersections and the noted growth of this trip support its ability to go above and beyond the requirements set out by Bowling Green State University by developing faculty as well as students' global perspectives and therefore meets this graduation requirement.

#### Acknowledgement of Limitations

I acknowledge that through this research process I played a dual role: that of a student participating in the experience and that of a leader guiding my peers on the trip. These perspectives allowed me to gain insights that I would not have otherwise been able to have as only a student or only a student leader; I was able to hear the opinions of my peers by engaging with them during free times and in our dorm rooms. I was also able to see the behind the scenes planning required of the leaders. These perspectives led to my realization that I could not, in this

short of a time period and with only my own reflections, take into consideration all of the variables that may have effected my reflections or the trip's outcome.

Through the reflections I have made and the conclusions I have drawn, I have addressed the impact that a study abroad trip had on a pre-service teacher, the impact the student leader role has on developing a student across eight different areas, and the effectiveness of this trip in particular at meeting the International Perspective graduation requirement set by Bowling Green State University. Additional areas that raised questions, but that I was not able to evaluate in this study, include the impact of previously traveling on an EIC trip, the personalities and diversity within the group of students that attended the trip, the mixing of students from two colleges (Bowling Green State University and Akron University), and finally the level experience of the trip leaders considering both their proficiency with the course content and their comfort level with traveling.

Additionally, there were a few factors that were observed and considered, but that complicated my ability to analyze and draw conclusions based on my observations. The first struggle that I faced began as soon as I started using the research methodologies associated with autoethnography. Research based on my own reflections posed the issue of taking into consideration metacognition, my own awareness of my beliefs and perspectives and my ability to reflect upon them. In this context, I had to think about both the implications of the experience itself as well as the effect of writing and articulating these reflections had on my ability to be present during the experience. Along these lines, I was continuously aware of my role as both a student and a teacher for the course. Through my reflections I considered how seeing both the teacher perspective and student perspective of the trip effected my experiences. These dual roles

complicated my relationships with other trip attendees because from the eyes of other leaders I was viewed as a student and from the eyes of my student peers' perspectives I was looked at as a teacher. The complexity of this position and the interactions that resulted was a major point of consideration as I recognized the implications this trip had.

The final points of consideration that effected the conclusions I drew were the factors that effected the trip as a whole and the execution of the trip. The areas that future research could be completed in include the role of technology, previous travel experience of all attendees, and the length of the program. Technology was utilized on this expedition to connect the two college campuses during pre-sessions. In our situation, technology was intended to help build relationships, but often resulted in complications and minimal success. Previous travel experience or lack of experience of both the leaders and the students could have resulted in different perspectives, reactions, and discussions. Levels of expertise with travel could have contributed to an increased comfort level with exploring new destinations and therefore deeper culturally based conversations with locals. On the opposite end, those who had not previously traveled could be more open-minded to the situations that they would encounter. The length of the study abroad program also often causes questions to arise. This program lasted twelve days and based upon my evaluations supports that short term programs, such as this one, have a meaningful effect. The impact level could also be effected by factors other than length such as the chosen day-to-day expeditions, the level of student engagement during class sessions, and the rigor of the program. In this study, each of these three factors of a study abroad trip was observed, but not directly reflected upon.

Implications of the Results

Upon returning from this trip and reflecting on the two expeditions that I have had the opportunity of participating in, there are a few direct implications that I anticipate occurring in my future classroom. Having now had a multitude of experiences with experiential learning, I value the lessons obtained through getting outside the classroom and experiencing the world. There are essential life lessons and skills that can be learned in these settings that I firmly believe cannot be learned in the classroom. Some of these include social skills, especially with strangers and those who come from a different cultural background, navigating without instructions, being conscious of how money is handled and how much money is spent. Although experiential learning that would focus on these skills may be near impossible to implement during the school year as they are not a part of curriculum standards, I would like to implement experiential learning by planning lessons that would take my students out of the classroom. This could be in the form of field trips, outdoor lessons, or lessons in different spaces within the school building. In addition to getting outside the classroom, I envision applying experiential learning in my classroom by bringing the outside world into the classroom in the form of speakers from different sectors of the work world or activities that model and imitate real world scenarios.

By learning about the principles that EICs promote, I have come to understand the importance of the teacher being a student and participant in the classroom. Within this experience, students and teachers engaged in meaningful discourse to think about thought provoking issues related to democratic education. Todd Whitaker is a former middle school and high school principal who now is a professor of educational leadership at University of Missouri. He is also the author of over forty books relating to the subjects of educational leadership and

teacher motivation. He is most famous for his national best seller *What Great Teachers do Differently* in which he articulated that one characteristic that sets great teachers apart from good teachers is their ability to acknowledge that they are continuing to learn in the classroom just as much as their students are. As the leaders did on this trip, teachers and study abroad experience leaders should not only promote lifelong learning to their students, but should believe in being life long learners themselves. Through this development in understanding, I will approach my classroom in a way that I do not view myself as more knowledgeable than my students; rather, I will take an approach of sharing the knowledge that I have with my students in exchange for growing and learning from their knowledge and perspective.

In addition to the implications within my classroom, there are also applications of the results of this trip within the study abroad office and future study abroad programs. Due to this being the first time that the role of a student leader has been documented, it will serve as the foundation for the development of this role and for students to have the opportunity to act in this role in the future. Through the perpetuation of this role, the study abroad office as well as the study abroad programs will be strengthened by offering a leadership opportunity to students. The impact that this leadership opportunity could potentially have will depend on its ability to spread across other study abroad programs. Despite the fact that many of my responsibilities were dedicated to implementing the EIC curriculum, it is clear that this role could be applied to any abroad experience including those offered through organizations that Bowling Green State University has partnered with. The additional assistance to the trip leaders with planning leading up to the trip and with minute details while traveling would be extremely valuable and would allow for the leaders to dedicate more of their time to the course curriculum and experience



development. This relief of responsibilities and time constraints would ensure the trip could run smoother and with a stronger course curriculum and academic experience for participating students than it would without a student leader.

**Guide for Future Student Leaders:** see the following seven pages

# Study Abroad Student Leader Guide

## Reflection Based On Expedition Inside Culture (EIC) to Ireland

Created By: Anna Jones

June 10, 2018



## Introduction

The following document is a reflection of the role of a student who took on the position of a student leader on an EIC trip to Ireland in the Spring of 2018. The document is intended to help guide future student leaders who choose to take on this role in association with study abroad trips. This is not a job description nor are the responsibilities listed guaranteed for another student who takes on a similar role. Rather, the purpose of this document is to help prepare another leader and give him/her some insight into what he/she should expect as he/she takes on this role. Every leader will have a different leadership style, different relationship with trip leaders, and different expectations that he/she is held to which will frame his/her role and therefore this document is provided as a guide rather than a mandate. Note: the bullet points listed in *italics* are roles that student trip attendees identified as essential for the student leader to exhibit.



## Qualifications

Prior to taking on this position there are a few requirements that the potential student leader should possess. Although these recommended qualifications are not set in stone, they are attributes that based upon the experiences of previous leaders, are highly encouraged traits for a future leader to possess in order to optimize potential success in this role.

- Have previously traveled on a study abroad trip; ideally the previous trip would have a similar curriculum to the trip the leader would be going on
- Be at a minimum going into their third year of college, meaning they would act as a leader the summer following their second year or later

- Possess critical character traits including being flexible, responsible, independent, resourceful, and open-minded
- Able to work well with others, including their peers and adults; take constructive criticism and feedback in a positive light and act on advice quickly
- Study aligns with course content and major should fall within the college that is hosting the trip; if the College of Education is hosting the trip the leader should be an Education major or a major that falls within that college.
- Take the course associated with the trip and complete all assignments and projects as all other students are expected

## Pre-Trip

As a student who has previously traveled abroad, you will serve as a valuable resource to students who are interested in participating in your trip and to the faculty members who are the leaders of your trip. Prior to leaving on your trip, you will be involved in the planning stages required to coordinate a study abroad program and which span a broad range of topics. These may include, but are not limited to, day-to-day schedule, hotel arrangements, course content, selection of course texts, excursions and expeditions while abroad, and course shell/group communication methods. You will also serve as a resource for students to contact as they often feel more comfortable asking questions and expressing concerns to a peer.

Some possible responsibilities you may have within the semester leading up to your study abroad trip:

- Recruit trip attendees through distribution of trip information and attendance at information and recruitment sessions
- Develop an online Canvas shell to be utilized for the course which will involve the creation of assignments, sorting of modules, and uploading of files
- Be involved with curriculum planning and schedule planning for educational sessions and expeditions while abroad. These may be executed in the form of conference calls, Skype calls, or in-person conversations and become more frequent as the trip nears
- Investigate financial support and scholarship options and communicate available resources to other trip participants

- *Assist and be available to help trip attendees with applications and questions regarding the trip; may take the form of office hours during the final weeks leading up to the sign-up deadline*
- Communicate with trip attendees about upcoming sessions, reminders, and assignments through email and group message (WhatsApp or GroupMe are good resources for this)
- Read all required and recommended course materials to have an understanding of how the lessons within the course connect and how each selected text supports the planned curriculum
- Plan and execute pre-trip sessions:
  - Consult on what materials will be covered in each of the pre-trip sessions including what readings should be required to be completed prior to sessions
  - Teach one to two pieces per session
  - Create PowerPoint presentations, Kahoot quizzes, and other technological presentations to be utilized during sessions
  - Assist with acquisition of materials and preparation of spaces prior to the start of each session

## While Abroad

At this stage, the students and leaders are familiar with you, so your emphasis will shift from recruitment and making the group feel comfortable to ensuring the trip is running smoothly. In all aspects of the expeditions one of the major responsibilities of the student leader is to communicate with the group and with the people you encounter to ensure the group stays on schedule and the participants maintain positive attitudes. It is essential for you to stay positive, calm, and collected even when faced with difficult decisions or “curveballs.” Beyond the responsibilities listed, throughout your time abroad you will serve as a point of information for students and will often receive questions about the day-to-day itinerary and the course assignments/sessions.

Some possible responsibilities you may have while on your study abroad trip:

- Upon arrival at restaurants for meals, discuss with the workers of the restaurant to determine the options for ordering and communicate those options to the group
- Assign hotel rooms and communicate instructions to the group upon arrival at the various hostels, bed and breakfasts, and hostels
- Word of the day / food for thought: have an EIC / content vocabulary word prepared for each day with a definition and explanation for how it relates to the day's activities. Potentially include a question for students to think about related to the chosen word
- Plan for sticky situations and tight timing (i.e. checking out of hostels and breakfast at hostels) when possible by creating schedules or sign ups
- Discuss daily schedule each night with other leaders and participate in all decisions related to the itinerary; for example, deciding whether or not to stop at an additional sight during a long drive
- Send reminders each night or as needed in the group mode of communication (WhatsApp / GroupMe)
- Be the voice of the student group to the leaders on the trip, especially during discussions related to changing of schedules or plans. Be aware of the opinions of other students and always be listening to and checking in on fellow students
- Be responsible for a few activities / aspects of sessions. Lesson plan and be prepared to lead the group in the parts that you select to take on
- *Be a mediator between students and between the students and the leaders*
- *Be knowledgeable about assignments and the itinerary in order to serve as a source of information for your peers*

## Post-Trip

The post-trip responsibilities will vary the most from leader to leader and trip to trip. A lot of the courses of actions are determined by discussions or ideas that arose while abroad or that you would like to see implemented as part of your choices to act and pay it forward following your experience upon your return home. With that being said, there are a few items that are expected that will stay relatively consistent across most trips:



- Send reminders to the group about assignment due dates and the post-trip session
- Help to organize the potluck/ what people intend to bring
- Check-in with leaders to ask about further duties or responsibilities that they would like you to take on in preparation for the final meeting
- Debrief with leaders in a conference call or in-person meeting
- Possible additional areas of responsibility that came up while abroad: creating a club (Amnesty International) or on-campus campaign the following semester, republishing the EIC handbook to adjust for changes and additions that occurred on the trip

## How to Prepare and What to Expect

Advice from a fellow leader: There are so many variables when developing a trip and traveling abroad. To name just a few: the students who participate, the leaders who create the course, the objectives of the program, the location of study, and the length of study. Therefore, it is hard to elaborate extensively on what situations may occur during your time as a student leader. However, from my personal experience I will try to share a few pointers on how to best prepare for and carry out this role.

In preparation for this role, I would recommend educating yourself to the best of your ability on both the format of the trip (EIC) and the content (in my case, Irish history). I read all of the required and recommended texts, as well as did my own research on each city that we would be traveling to. You can never be too prepared! This includes reading the EIC handbook. The activities in the handbook are extremely useful if there are ever gaps to fill or adjustments that need to be made in order to stay on schedule because the EIC leadership building activities are easily interchangeable. It is extremely helpful to have a base knowledge of all of them.

When communicating with leaders, communicate your responsibilities through multiple medias; if you discuss a task that you will take responsibility for to complete over the phone or in person, then follow the initial conversation up with an email. This helps to ensure that all of your responsibilities are in writing and helps to form a paper trail of what you have accomplished as a part of this role. This also ensures the

expectations you are being held to are clear and that you and your leadership team are aware of them.

When communicating with the other students, ask questions and listen more than you tell or direct. Because you have traveled previously, it is easy to forget how nervous the students may be and how much they may not know about traveling to a different country; be helpful, but not overbearing. A continual flow of small pieces of information and reminders will serve your fellow peers better than a long lecture on what to expect ever would. This is true during the time you are traveling abroad as well; constantly be checking in with the members of your group and ask how they are doing, how they are feeling about assignments, and what they think of the journey thus far. Not only will this make you more relatable, but also it is feedback that you can potentially share with leaders to make adjustments on the fly or to trips in the future.

Finally, overall it is imperative that you use your voice and share your opinion. There is no one else on the trip in the same position as you. You are the only one who has traveled abroad on a study abroad similar to the one you are preparing for. You have a different worldview than the rest of your leadership team due to your age and your current life experiences associated with being a college student. Keep your end goals in mind; there may be times that you become frustrated or that the each leadership team member's ideas are not quite aligning with each other. Ultimately this is a learning experience for all parties involved and the positive experiences and amazing memories that will result far outweigh any of the trying times you may face.



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