

Journal of Global Initiatives: Policy, Pedagogy, Perspective

Volume 14

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

Article 1

7-2019

Full Issue - JGI v.14, n.1

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/jgi>

 Part of the [International and Comparative Education Commons](#), and the [Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Commons](#)



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License](#).

Recommended Citation

(2019) "Full Issue - JGI v.14, n.1," *Journal of Global Initiatives: Policy, Pedagogy, Perspective*: Vol. 14 : No. 1 , Article 1.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.kennesaw.edu/jgi/vol14/iss1/1>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Global Initiatives: Policy, Pedagogy, Perspective by an authorized editor of DigitalCommons@Kennesaw State University. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@kennesaw.edu.



KENNESAW STATE
UNIVERSITY
DIVISION OF GLOBAL AFFAIRS

*The Impact of Communication Technologies
on Study Abroad*

Guest Editor: M. Todd Harper

JOURNAL
of **GLOBAL**
INITIATIVES
POLICY, PEDAGOGY, PERSPECTIVE

2019
VOLUME 14
NUMBER 1



Special Issue:
***The Impact of Communication Technologies
on Study Abroad***
Journal of Global Initiatives
Volume 14, Number 1, 2019

Contents:

- | | | |
|------------|--|--|
| 1 | <i>Introduction to the Special Issue</i> | M. Todd Harper |
| 12 | <i>Digital Identities and Study Abroad:
Teaching Intercultural Competence
through Social Media Literacy</i> | Annie McNeill Gibson
and Emily Capdeville |
| 42 | <i>The Process of Successfully
Integrating Communication
Technologies into Short-Term,
Faculty-Led Study Abroad Programs:
Reflections from the Field</i> | Todd Lee Goen,
Jennifer R. Billinson,
and Linda D. Manning |
| 76 | <i>Blogging in a Study Abroad Class to
Promote Active Learning and Student
Engagement</i> | Ann Marie Francis |
| 96 | <i>Google Maps as a Transformational
Learning Tool in the Study Abroad
Experience</i> | Jessica Stephenson,
M. Todd Harper, and
Emily Klump |
| 119 | <i>Considering the History of Education
Abroad Programs to Create
Assignments Serving Both the
Academic and Professional Needs of
Students</i> | Lara Smith-Sitton and
Joan McRae |
| 149 | <i>About the Contributors</i> | |

Introduction

M. Todd Harper

The idea for this special edition of the *Journal of Global Initiatives* on the impact of new communication technologies and media on education abroad arose not only from my own fourteen years of experience teaching and directing study abroad programs to Greece, Turkey, and Italy; it also stems from my many conversations with other study abroad faculty and professionals. Indeed, study abroad faculty and other international educators around the world have witnessed dramatic changes in the ways that students, faculty, and staff communicate, interact, research assignments, and conceive of multimedia projects during study abroad experiences.

On my first program to Greece in 2005, students were asked to bring writing materials to complete their assignments, and while one or two students might have brought laptops, there was no internet service in either the hotel where they stayed or the classrooms where they learned. If students wanted to contact their parents, they either had to purchase a phone card or go to the local internet café.

When I began directing Kennesaw State University's Summer Program in Italy in 2010, more students were travelling with their laptops, searching out internet "hotspots" throughout the small Tuscan town of Montepulciano, often near cafés and restaurants that offered some wireless service. Although some would email assignments to faculty, who taught in classes without any internet service, most

students still completed their assignments on paper, primarily resorting to their computers to Skype with friends and family back home or to play internet games.

As the Summer Program in Italy grew, Kennesaw State University decided to invest in the renovation of six classrooms in a 12th-century fortress that included fast wireless service that connected to the main campus in Kennesaw, large display monitors where faculty could connect their laptops, and a computer classroom. By 2015, when the renovation was complete, faculty were requiring students to bring laptops or tablets to research and compose written assignments as well as multimedia projects, such as PowerPoint presentations and digital movies. Students who would once Skype parents and friends with their computers were now using relatively inexpensive phone plans on their smartphones, the same phones that they would carry with them to take digital photos and film digital movies, map out their destinations through a GPS system, and connect with their faculty and fellows through programs like GroupMe and WhatsApp.

At the writing of this introduction in 2019, our computer classroom is awaiting the installation of more sophisticated software to be used by our computer science majors and engineers. Similarly, students who once competed with one another for best photo through our Educational Abroad contest—sending printed copies of their photos upon return from the program—now post pictures to the program’s Facebook page and Instagram account in real time. These platforms not only become the site for the photo contest to take place, but they also become a means for advertising the program for next year’s students. Indeed, several faculty have incorporated these and other multimedia platforms into their assignments.

Kennesaw State University's facility in Montepulciano offers state of the art equipment that allows students to research and complete a variety of multimedia assignments, equipment that many other study programs, even those run through our education abroad office, do not necessarily have. However, all of our programs have seen some change in their relation to technology, even if it is limited to faculty and students bringing laptops, tablets, and smartphones. If nothing else, the majority of Kennesaw State University faculty who direct or teach a program in any part of the world (and, we have over 36 homegrown programs that travel to Central and South America, Africa, Asia, and Europe) often assign pre-departure work that can be submitted through the University's courseware package. Likewise, where these same faculty, who might have once requested mainly handwritten assignments at the end of the program, they can now require multimedia assignments be sent electronically any time before, during, and after the study abroad experience.

Of course, this special issue is neither about my experience, nor even really the history of how new communication technologies and media have shaped education abroad within the last fifteen to twenty years. Rather, it examines how faculty teaching abroad as well as the offices that organize and run those programs can better incorporate new communication technologies and media into their programs. Each article examines how an education abroad office, a program, or a teacher adopted some form of new communication technology to enhance their students' understanding and experience of the host culture. A central assumption underlying many of these articles is that new communication technologies and media do more

than enhance or augment existing practices, but that these new technologies, in fact, change the way we think, perceive, and even experience our reality.

Scholars have long theorized the impact of new technologies on literacy and cognition. Eric Havelock (1982), Walter Ong (2013), Greg Ulmer (2004), and Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin (2000) have each argued that changes in new technologies along with their impact on literacy effect the manner in which we think. The advent of writing, for instance, allowed for more sophisticated reasoning since a reader could return to the written text if she were confused or did not understand its meaning the first time. (Of course, multiple oral texts that were often ritualized, such as the Nicene Creed, included complex theological ideas. However, these complex texts needed to be repeated numerous times before their full meaning could be comprehended—hence, their need to be ritualized.)

In regards to new media, Ulmer (2004), Bolter and Grusin (2000) have argued that recent advances in electronic technology have changed the way we experience texts. The electronic text, especially texts with hyperlinks, allows for both linear and non-linear readings. A reader might linearly read from the first to the final word, or she may jump in and out of various hyperlinks to texts that are outside the primary text or places within the primary text. J. David Bolter and Grusin (2000) takes this one step further, arguing that the most recent multimedia texts often incorporate remediated forms of literacy. For example, in order to read a Word document, we must “scroll” down the page, or if we want to pull up a program on our computer, we click an “icon.” Bolter’s reasoning can be applied to the host of video, audio, and photography that we now attach to our multimedia projects.

More than cognition, the rise of new technologies of communication has affected the way that students experience their studies abroad. At the most basic level, these technologies have shrunken the world, providing students with myriad ways to connect with and learn about different peoples, cultures, and countries as well as multiple ways for students to remain connected with family and friends at home on a daily, if not hourly, basis. From some perspectives, this presents a problem. The constant ability to interface with one's own culture through one's own language makes something like cultural and language immersions—hallmarks of a strong foreign language program—difficult. When a student is uncomfortable speaking a foreign language, she may now simply dial home and speak to her parents. When a student is having difficulty finding the correct word or phrase, she now may Google Translate it. This leaves many foreign language faculty feeling as though their students will never be able to move beyond the influence of the home culture. However, such criticism often fails to reflect upon the way that it essentializes cultures, pretending as though culture would remain untouched had these technologies not appeared.

In article one, Annie McNeil Gibson and Emily Capdeville discuss the role that advisors can play in helping students negotiate their intercultural competence and online identities through pre-, during, and post-study abroad. They assert, “Not only must we reimagine the role of advisors as an educational one rather than a logistical one, but we must also reimagine the spaces and ways in which educational advising can take place while also acknowledging the connection between online identities and physical ones.” Later, they observe, “Because intercultural learning and

competency development is inextricably linked to self-awareness and personal identity knowledge (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012), the connection between the ‘real self’ and the online virtual self during study abroad must be valued and explored.” Gibson and Capdeville offer a number of suggestions for advisors to work with students during their pre-, during, and post-study abroad experience. The cyclical experiences of students, for instance, can be used to enhance pre-departure training programs. While students are on their study abroad program, advisors can help guide reflections on the images that they post on platforms such as Instagram or Facebook. Finally, upon return, advisors can encourage students to think about how they have broadened some of their online networks. For Gibson and Capdeville, the ability of the advisor to work with students in an online format and with their online identities can help students develop an awareness and sensitivity to the host culture without falling into the traps of seeing oneself as a savior or Orientalizing the host culture as exotic and other. Todd Lee Goen, Jennifer R. Billinson, and Linda D. Manning outline a variety of reasons and strategies for integrating new technologies into study abroad programming. We live in a digital environment, and the students that we direct and teach on study abroad programs have, for the most part, only known that environment. Faculty must deliberately attune themselves to how students use newer communication technologies. As Goen, Billinson, and Manning observe, “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 [communications technology] into their lives.” Not only are technologies constantly changing, but the ways in which they are used by

students is changing as well. For example, they note how the current generation of undergraduates no longer use Facebook or Twitter as often as they do Instagram. More importantly, faculty must be willing to integrate newer communication technologies into their assignments and activities on the program. To this end, they review literature on integrating these technologies into a study abroad program and then offer a variety of assignments that they use on their short-term study abroad program to the Hague. These assignments include a framing exercise, wherein students are asked to take photographs and then to reflect upon how they selected, framed, and then took the photograph; a video-clips assignments that asks students to reflect upon their own video clips in the same way that they analyzed movie scenes throughout the semester; and an Instagram assignment that encourages them to upload to a shared Instagram account. In each case, Goen, Billinson, and Manning require students not only to engage within these activities, but to use them as a means to thinking about the relationship of their own experience to these newer technologies. Goen, Billinson, and Manning also examine the variety of ways that a program can use new communication technologies to promote itself to future participants.

In article three, Ann Marie Francis argues that blogs function more than online journals. Their reverse chronology, their capacity to archive material, and, most importantly, their ability to allow reader comments opens up the possibility of interactive exchanges. Speaking on their interactive capacities, Francis notes the dynamism of these exchanges:

The discussions are not limited to the original author and a single reader; instead, readers of the blog may have a conversation between themselves without the original author providing any input other than sharing the original blog post. The comments eventually become an archived part of the blog that allow the original author of the blog and other readers to refer back to. And because the blogs allow for others to comment on them, they encourage authors of blogs to do more than just post new and updated information; rather, blogs are designed for authors and readers to exchange ideas through comments and online discussions, making the blog a live, interactive document that explores opinions, thoughts, and perspectives.

The blog, which creates “a live, interactive document that explores opinions, thoughts, perspectives” becomes especially attractive for teachers and students on a study abroad program who can use them to further the active learning and student engagement that is already present within the study abroad experience. In her own study abroad classes, Francis uses blogs as both a journal for students to record and reflect on their experiences as well as a place to explore and explain the relationship of class concepts to various field trips. In discussing her own experience, she notes her successes, especially in terms of the way that students were able to interact and benefit from one another’s blogs, as well as some of her challenges, most notably poor internet access and a student who struggled because she did not have the correct technology to do the assignments. (The student thought she could use her iPhone as a laptop to upload text and photos to her blog.)

Jessica Stephenson, myself, and Emily Klump provide another take on journaling in article four. With the advent of GPS systems and tracking, they describe their Google Maps project, which was conducted during a Great Books study abroad program to Italy. Stephenson and Harper asked students, including Emily Blount, who reflects on her own project, to pin the various sites that they would visit in Rome, Florence, Orvieto, Siena, and Montepulciano, where the

program was based. For each pin, students uploaded information about the site as well as their photos and textual reflections about visiting the site. Students then used their Google Maps as a heuristic to write a longer, more reflective paper on their journey. In developing the project, Stephenson and Harper, borrowing from Edward Soja's concept of "thirdspace" (1996), hoped that students would come to understand how their own presence at these sites contribute to multiple interpretations of a living space, as well as geometric and attributive space.

In the fifth and final article, Lara Smith-Sitton and Joan McRae argue that study abroad experience listed on a resume has become more important to employers who are increasingly looking for employees that understand and can compete within a global market. However, from the perspective of the student, it is not enough for the student to have an experience, but rather that that student can articulate the significance of that experience in an interview or work setting. Smith-Sitton and McRae provide two assignments that help to make and then articulate connections between their study abroad experience and their future careers. The first assignment is a journaling assignment with a video biography. Students are prompted to record their experiences using a series of interview-style questions as a heuristic. From their journal, they then create a video biography of their experience that can then be added to a LinkedIn account as a resource for future employers. In a second assignment, foreign language students are asked to translate Wikipedia entries from French (in this particular case) to English. The assignment takes the students from producing documents for a classroom setting only to translating needed information on a public platform.

In the end, these five articles merely scratch the surface for what has been done and what can be done using new CT. Much scholarship in this area still remains. In addition to developing new pedagogies, important research needs to be done regarding issues of access. Increasingly, faculty are requiring students to bring laptops and other mobile devices in order to complete assignments, raising questions of whether this is practical or even ethical. (Can a laptop or mobile device be considered a hidden cost, for instance?) Moreover, many programs still face issues with internet access, either because internet service is scarce or because an internet subscription can only be obtained by someone from the host country. Finally, additional work needs to be done on how new media can shape a student's experience and understanding of the host culture. While the five articles in this issue theorize this change as well as provide anecdotal evidence, additional research could help the field begin to measure the effects of new CT on student experience. That said, these five articles offer a meaningful foray into a broader conversation about how study abroad directors and teachers can incorporate and utilize new technologies to theirs and their students' understanding of new and different cultures.

References

- Bolter, J. D., & Grusin, R. (2000). *Remediation: Understanding New Media*. Cambridge, MA: MIT University Press.
- Havelock, E. (1982). *Preface to Plato (History of the Greek Mind)*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press.
- Ong, W. (2013). *Orality and Literacy: 30th Anniversary Edition* (3rd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge Press.

- Soja, E. (1996). *Thirdspace: Journeys to Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell Publishers.
- Ting-Toomey, S., & Chung, L. C. (2012). What is intercultural communication flexibility? and What are the essential cultural value patterns? In S. Ting-Toomey & L. C. Chung (Eds.), *Understanding Intercultural Communication*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. 22-63.
- Ulmer, G. (2004). *Teletheory*. New York, NY: Atropos Press.

Digital Identities and Study Abroad: Teaching Intercultural Competence through Social Media Literacy

Annie McNeill Gibson and Emily Capdeville

Abstract:

Social media platforms are contemporary spaces where selves are revealed and exposed in reciprocity. By imagining digital communication, technology use, and online representation in the same vein as we discuss the experiences of the physical self, the ability to adapt across cultures becomes a skill to hone online as well as in person. As such, digital media is a prime learning tool that practitioners in the field can utilize to reach their target student population no matter their physical location and during each phase of the study abroad process. In this way, study abroad offices can fulfill a mission that goes beyond the logistics of travel in order to concentrate attention on the development of student intercultural competencies.

Online spaces are the new frontier where study abroad educators can guide intercultural learning content for students engaging in study abroad. This paper will explore the importance of social media and digital spaces for identity and intercultural competency development among this generation of digitally engaged university students. While digital technologies have tended to be seen as an add-on responsibility for study abroad offices, these platforms can be reconceptualized as important tools for communicating learning content to reach students no matter where they are in space and time, whether they are studying abroad or on the domestic campus or whether they are engaged in the pre-, during, or post-study abroad phase. A learning-centered framework within the administration of study

abroad offices provides potential to incorporate intercultural learning objectives into the day-to-day office practices that compliment and extend the work of faculty committed to enhancing intercultural competence and responsible global citizenship. Digital media provides a platform for study abroad advising staff and student leaders to intellectually engage with students at all stages of study abroad through online platforms without dramatically increasing the office workload. Addressing technology use in students' international experiences validates the importance of online identities in the narration of self, encourages students to draw connections between online identities and academic curriculum, and educates students on narrating identities in interculturally competent ways.

Leveraging Social Media to Integrate Intercultural Competency Development into Study Abroad Learning Agendas

The study abroad office is often the initial interface for students that are planning to undertake a term studying, living, and learning in a foreign location. Historically, the majority of interactions that students have with the study abroad office, be they in-person or through email, happen during the pre-departure phase of study abroad. As application deadlines near, droves of high-need study abroad students frantically search for an advising appointment for assistance related to the logistics of researching programs, filling out applications, and applying for visas. This leads staff to often feel like travel agents or logistics technicians rather than educators or mentors.

Study abroad advising does not have to be restricted to the prescriptive activities of helping students complete applications and book airline tickets. Marc

Lowenstein explains that academic advising can be similar to teaching. By his analysis of a learning-centered approach to advising, the excellent advisor plays a role with respect to a student's entire curriculum that is analogous to the role that an excellent teacher plays with respect to the content of a single course (Lowenstein, 2005). In the case of study abroad, as staff are required to encounter study abroad students before, during, and after their international experiences, these offices are uniquely positioned to also guide students in developing their intercultural competency skills in order to help them draw connections to the components of their academic curriculums that are enriched by navigating different cultural perspectives around academics and selfhood.

According to Hammer (2012), "building intercultural competence involves increasing cultural self-awareness; deepening understanding of the experiences, values, perceptions, and behaviors of people from diverse cultural communities; and expanding the capability to shift cultural perspective and adapt behavior to bridge across cultural differences" (p. 116). Ting-Toomey and Chung (2012) extends this understanding to its application during the communication process, "the symbolic exchange whereby individuals from two (or more) different cultural communities attempt to negotiate shared meanings in an interactive situation within an embedded societal system" (p. 24). According to learning models of intercultural communication, the ability to create shared meanings competently is dependent on both parties developing "a keen sense of adaptability and imagination when connecting across cultures" (Ting-Toomey & Chung, 2012, p. 37).

The Georgetown Consortium Study (2009) laid out that the highest impact practice to increase students' intercultural competency is cultural mentoring. Anderson, Lorenz, and White's 2012-2014 study of 27 instructor-led short-term study abroad programs then expanded on this to reveal that "frequent and spontaneous facilitation is the most important variable to guide students intercultural learning. In their study, the three groups with the most pre-to post-Intercultural Development Inventory gains all incorporated this process holistically into their study abroad programs" (Anderson, Lorenz, & White, 2016, p. 12). Combining the conceptualization of advisors as teachers with the current research in study abroad indicating the important role of mentorship in the intercultural development of study abroad students, the Tulane University's Office of Study Abroad, guided by a Director of Study Abroad with a faculty appointment and teaching and research responsibilities, underwent a culture shift in its mission from a logistical one to an educational one, training staff and student workers to think of their roles as that of educator first and logistician second.

Tulane's Office of Study Abroad approached the learning period from pre-, during, and post-study abroad, similarly to a faculty member approaching the development of a course. Together, the office developed overarching learning goals to put into practice the research that indicated that self-analysis and mindfulness are key in the development of individual's intercultural learning (Ting-Toomey, 2012) and that this knowledge is most successfully developed through mentorship with frequent and ongoing reflection (Anderson, Lorenz, & White, 2016). Tulane's education abroad learning goals direct staff and peer advisor interactions with

students to help configure a teaching strategy to support student development in place-based awareness, self-awareness and critical reflection, flexibility, and adaptability.

Tulane's model of semester and year-long study abroad is based on a wide array of programs through direct enrollment as well as through third-party providers, all with varying degrees and often unknown amounts of cultural mentorship on site. Because Tulane's office has minimal influence on course content during the study abroad semester, applying the frameworks of intercultural competency in the digital realm via the website, social media, and the application process are paramount to effective and appropriate mentoring of students to develop connections between lived experiences, coursework taken abroad, and their own intercultural development in a co-curricular pre-, during, and post-process. Learning goals implemented through creating positive intercultural mentorship in the digital arena are a way to assume a role in student intercultural development regardless of program model or course.

Tulane University's learning goals that govern the work of the Office of Study Abroad are as follows:

Students studying abroad must demonstrate the ability to:

- Articulate personal and academic goals for study abroad, investigate all available program possibilities in relation to those goals, and understand how country and program-specific resources and limitations might impact the study abroad experience.
- Pursue these personal and academic goals in the face of uncertainty by assessing local resources and making adaptive solutions to practical challenges that arise before and while living and studying abroad.

- Acquire, synthesize, and apply knowledge that is region and country-specific, and that facilitates engagement with academic, civic, and professional cultures distinct from the United States.
- Empathize with and understand differing ways of living, communicating, identifying, interpreting, and belonging in the world.
- Apply these skills gained through study abroad to future intellectual, civic, professional, and personal endeavors.

Setting learning goals such as the above for the study abroad experience allows a faculty-led, administrative office to approach in-person advising, informational sessions, pre-departure orientations, and re-entry events in a learning-centered manner rather than simply as Q&A logistics sessions. The work conducted in the office is guided by the objective of increasing the intercultural competence of the students it serves. Crucially, it also provides the foundation for the development of a digital media strategy that expands the reach of the office's learning goals, allowing intervention in student learning despite their participation in dozens of different programs all over the world.

The potential of increasing intercultural competency at the university at large has a ripple effect with the potential to spread beyond the reach of the small physical office space. By using social media in the study abroad office, these administrative units can support the educational objectives of students that participate in study abroad programs beyond the physical space of the advising office. A digital office presence can spread out the dissemination of information throughout a student's four-year undergraduate career, providing opportunity for reflection during the pre-, during, and post-phases of study abroad and can provide mentors in the study abroad network with the resources to relate the meaning of study abroad to the rest

of the undergraduate curriculum. Most importantly, social media integration into the learning content of a study abroad office engages with the full-life experience of students who are already linking their online and offline identities as they develop their intercultural competencies.

Physical and Online Identities Intersect

Scroll. Click. Follow. The average U.S. student spends eight hours a day online (Kuh, 2001). Research suggests that they are most likely to be using social media sites that allow them to post pictures and videos, such as Instagram and Snapchat (Knight-McCord, et al., 2016) and are least likely to use social media for professional networking or to organize media into different categories. Current university undergraduates are using social media to bridge the gap between in-school and out-of-school learning by finding opportunities for connection between their academic curriculum, their personal interests, and the online communities and networks in which they are engaged (Ito, et al., 2013). Students are doing more than connecting their digital and physical experiences of the world, however. They are also doing the meaningful work of identity development.

Students are narrating, creating, and affirming key facets of their identity through their engagement with digital spaces. Orsatti and Riemer (2015) maintain that “The non-essentialist notion of identity stresses the social, and multiple nature of identity. A lineage of thinkers that has contributed significantly to establishing this view employs the concept of *narrative*, whereby the creation of identity is seen as a matter of narrating one’s life against the canvas of the social world and the shared stories that characterize our relationships with others” (p. 6). The narration

of self that takes place online against the backdrop of other stories intersecting in these digital spaces is the practice of identity-creating storytelling as described by Orsatti and Riemer (2015).

That this identity work is being done in the digital sphere is confirmed by Adriana Cavarero's work, *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood* (2000), in which she explores how our conceptions of the self are fostered through and borrowed from narratives provided by others. Cavarero's insight is that we are narratable selves, we are exposed to tales of ourselves and others from birth, and we rely on mutual exhibition of narratives of the self for personhood. In short, recognition and identity stem from relational storytelling premised upon a view of humanity that is interactive, interdependent, and reliant on forms of togetherness. Thus our own tales are not enough. We are reliant on the narratives others have told us about ourselves in order to understand and create ourselves as we move onwards. Put most simply, we cannot remember or express our toddling selves with the clarity of a tale told by someone present, and such stories are crucial for the formation of identity and our ongoing relationship to ourselves. In essence, the basis of intercultural learning is to acknowledge this sense of interdependence among diverging narratives of our own identity as well as that of others and to recognize the importance of this interdependence in the digital as well as physical worlds.

This relational storytelling and identity creation is no longer limited to the stories we tell about each other in physical space; it takes place in the ever-present online space as well. Posthumanists would argue that whether or not you actively engage technology, the human condition itself means an embodied understanding

of our extended technological world (Pepperell, 2005, p. 34). For example, we must contend with the fact that, according to the Pew Research Center in 2018, 95% of adults in America over the age of 18 own a cell phone and 92% of Millennials own a smartphone. Even if we ourselves or our counterparts abroad do not engage technology at this rate, we must consider the experience/use of technology and the meaning of it on the narratives of all of us. Rather than considering online identity, built through a series of narrations against other selves in that same sphere, as being singular and separate from their physical one, Erik Qualman (2017) has argued that our online and in-person identities are multifaceted and intersect. With the use of technology in our everyday worlds, interactions have the potential to continue far beyond the time and space of the isolated events. As students upload, watch, and interact with media online, the audience, time, and space becomes infinite. The technological environment is part of the cultural environment that our students navigate during study abroad. Developing intercultural competency today means thinking about how narration of self is complicated by the intersecting digital platforms that new experiences across cultures create.

Recognizing that students are intrinsically using social media to make bridges between lived experiences and critical reflection reveals a potential blind spot where students may not be fully realizing their intercultural learning opportunities in the digital realm as well as a resource for educators to facilitate conversation and reflection about study abroad. This expansive usage of digital platforms must be considered when conceptualizing methods to increase educational connections between students and instructors. Not only must we reimagine the role of advisors

as an educational one rather than a logistical one, but we must also reimagine the spaces and ways in which educational advising can take place while also acknowledging the connection between online identities and physical ones. Online interactions act as an impetus for future offline activities, an integral part of present experiences, and a mechanism for nostalgia for events gone by” (Davis, 2014, pp. 506-507). As Jenny Davis explains, online and offline are distinct yet inextricably intertwined. As Kendall (1998) argues, cultural meanings of race, class, and gender flow into online identity meanings and offline interactions often privilege information gleaned through online identity performances. Rather than separate spheres, social life moves fluidly within and between the physical and the digital – neither more “real” than the other. In this vein, Deuze (2001) argues that networked individuals live not only with but also through and in media, leading to his designation of social life in the contemporary era as “media life” (p. 138).

This research underscores the imperative of and the opportunity for study abroad offices to utilize digital spaces to increase teaching opportunities and devote resources to establishing an online presence as part of advising and outreach. Because intercultural learning and competency development is inextricably linked to self-awareness and personal identity knowledge (Ting-Toomey, & Chung, 2012), the connection between the “real self” and the online virtual self during study abroad must be valued and explored. Experiential learning also requires reflection about oneself in conjunction with experiences out in the world. The traditional study abroad model is based around the idea that face-to-face interaction provides the most learning opportunities for students. However, if we conceptualize that U.S.

university undergraduates today embody their identities in online spaces as well as in person, then the study abroad experience has an online footprint. Some research suggests that students may be using online social networks to translate face-to-face interactions with individuals from the host country (Mikal, 2011). However, other research has found that conversely, students that rely heavily on electronic support networks from home are not connecting and forming supportive networks with individuals from their host country (Mikal & Grace, 2012). Because both of these anecdotes are true, study abroad offices can and should intervene in the digital space to guide how students use these digital networks, helping them utilize the online space to achieve the former rather than the latter. Declining to engage with students in this space can inhibit student development and intercultural growth.

Study abroad as a physical experience forces a student to react and reimagine identity through the encounter with the new, the different, the other. But the digital facet of their identity does not necessarily have the same mandate. The physical enters a space of intercultural encounter, whereas the digital is able to remain as inter- or monocultural as its user curates. As such, digital spaces can allow students to perpetuate the monocultural aspects of their identity, contribute to voyeurism or superficial experiences of the other, and encourage students to narrate the other in inauthentic ways just as easily as it can facilitate intercultural exchange. Facebook, Google, and other online search engines are programmed to help us find like-minded information and keep us from breaking into zones of discomfort. However, learning to engage interculturally in our digital spaces are ways of deepening our ability to adapt across cultures. Orsatti and Riemer (2015) argue that,

identity formation is inherently bound up with and achieved through the ways in which we engage actively and practically with the world and with the technology that is embedded in our practices. In doing so, the way in which this form of identity formation happens is not cognitive or thinking; it is “our most basic ability to live in and cope skillfully with our world” (Hoy, 1993, p. 173). Consequently, who we are is a reflection of how we engage in our everyday activities practically (Blattner, 2006, pp. 88-91). (p. 8)

Barbara Hofer has argued that the use of technology while abroad can provide an unnecessary cushion that protects students from having to engage in culture shock while abroad and, thus, limits their intercultural learning (Keck, 2015). However, these limitations occur if students engage in monocultural engagements in their online spaces, focusing only on online connections with people and experiences back home or similar populations in-country, rather than exploring their present world abroad. If educators train students to see their digital and physical spaces as intertwined and as equally important to intercultural competency development, the digital space can be reimagined as a space to enhance intercultural growth rather than simply a barrier to culture shock. By talking about digital communication, representation, and technology use in the same vein as we discuss the experience of the physical self, adapting across cultures becomes a skill to hone online as well as in person.

Observations from the Field on Guiding Digital Identity Reflection during the Study Abroad Process

Leveraging Staff and Student Leaders to Teach Responsible Social Media Use in the Pre-During-Post Study Abroad Cycle

The transformation of study abroad staff from primarily that of administrator to also serve as educators may be a significant culture shift for study abroad offices. The development of learning goals and an educational strategy are just the first steps

in this transformation. Staff and student peer advisors must themselves receive training and learning-centered mentorship so that they can successfully carry out and incorporate the office learning goals into existent in-person programming and student outreach, such as advising, information sessions and pre-departure orientations as well as translate this information into the digital realm. Preparation for this work includes developing staff and student worker:

1. Knowledge of intercultural competency theory;
2. Knowledge of identity development theories; and
3. Experience with social media platforms and content creation/curation.

This training is part theoretical and part practical. Staff benefit from training to deploy social media platforms in educational ways because they are learning about student development theories, expanding their professional skill set by increasing their fluency with digital technologies, and embodying a more rewarding educational role rather than a logistical one. Employing student workers to manage social media alongside them also offers advantages to the selected student. This professional opportunity introduces them to the field of international education as a potential career path and helps to develop the capacity to conceptualize and implement meaningful projects that contribute to the office's mission while also building his or her skill set as a peer mentor. Finally, student workers who are also study abroad alumni are empowered to carry out the educational plan of the study abroad office through social media which continues and deepens the student worker's reflection process and intercultural competence begun while abroad.

At Tulane our investment in staff professional development around intercultural competency theory translated into sponsoring advisors to become qualified administrators of the Intercultural Development Inventory as well as supporting and incentivizing them to engage, present, and publish in professional conferences that would deepen understanding of the values of Tulane's learning goals and intercultural competency and provide new frameworks for implementing identity-based mentoring in in-person and online platforms. Our office strategy is defined by the investment in students' digital identity development as an equal facet to their in-person or physical identity, underscored by the necessity of coaching interculturally competent digital behavior. As the research underscores, the line between the digital self and the physical self is blurry; these two identities are in fact reflections of each other rather than separate and singular entities. As such, the office takes responsibility for educating students on interculturally appropriate social media use just as we take responsibility for educating students on appropriate in-person behavior while abroad.

Study abroad offices can strive to co-exist with students in digital spaces to guide their undergraduate experiences prior to, during, and following their time abroad. Research shows that intercultural competency development outcomes are higher if students receive educational interventions before, during, and after their experiences (Fantini, 2004; Hoff & Kaplar, 2005). Employing this cyclical vision of our students' experiences, we can use social media to enhance the in-person work that is traditionally done during information sessions, study abroad fairs, and one-on-one advising. If we further acknowledge the advantages of engaging students

online, offices can create a strategy to think about social media and other digital platforms as important spaces for the development of their intercultural mindset and as opportunities to intervene digitally during study abroad when in-person interactions are impossible. Internet use enhances the reach of education abroad offices to provide virtual support and curated information for students into the digital spaces that they naturally inhabit. By validating the importance of intercultural digital identity development, the use of online platforms and the time spent maintaining them can be viewed as valuable office practices that strengthen the work of study abroad staff as educators.

Staff and student workers can be trained on the type of content and engagement that should exist in this digital sphere. By employing this model, offices are able to generate an enormous amount of content, and staff and student workers are able to receive valuable professional experience in digital content creation and curation while developing avenues for learning at all phases of the study abroad experience. Finally, the content created online produces valuable analytics with insights about the number of students who engage with learning content. This information can both be used to measure the success of office initiatives and to communicate the importance of global initiatives to the undergraduate experience with important stakeholders.

Pre-Abroad

Study abroad offices often conceptualize pre-study abroad research as reading a book or listening to music from the host country, but, in fact, our students are often engaging with the host country online in more dynamic ways than is likely

imagined. In the pre-study abroad phase, students often research a potential study abroad location by following other study abroad students in their digital networks who may be in that location, understanding the host country from a perspective similar to their own. Rather than ignoring this activity, staff and peer advisors can engage the student in this digital arena. An office's learning goals can be achieved by conducting research in the traditional methods listed above but also then probing students to use social media to research and interact with local institutions, organizations, and people in their potential study abroad locations, even interacting with them in that space through comments and likes or other electronic communication.

The student worker can model this behavior on the office's social media sites and the staff can incorporate the encouragement of this learning behavior in advising appointments and pre-departure sessions. Rather than ignore the fact that students often reach out to study abroad returnees in the digital space, educators can coach students on how to interact fruitfully with host country natives as well, helping students develop a digital identity that will include the footprint of engagement in intercultural exchanges with people and institutions in the host country. Online activities, such as following local music listings, liking a local university club, meeting a student from their host country in a virtual forum, or researching nonprofit organizations that work on a theme of their own interest can foster a significant level of engagement with the host country even before they set foot in country. This activity pushes students to start to achieve the learning goal to acquire, synthesize, and apply knowledge that is region and country-specific, and

that facilitates engagement with academic, civic, and professional cultures distinct from the United States in their online world, preparing them to do so in person.

While Abroad

While abroad, social media can offer both pitfalls and opportunities. Intervention on behalf of the study abroad office can mitigate the negative aspects of social media use and leverage the opportunities to achieve intercultural learning objectives. One such opportunity arises when students use social media to post photos and captions about their experiences. This posting activity can be viewed as tantamount to the journaling and reflection that is encouraged as part of a plan for intercultural competency development (Williams, 2009). But, the potential also exists for student reflections about intercultural exchange to be detrimental if the reflection is done without guidance and if the narration of self and others has not been fully developed. For example, the critique of reflection without intercultural awareness in digital spaces is made clear in the popular Instagram account “Barbiesavior,” which critiques the white savior complex often associated with study abroad and international voluntourism and illustrates what can go wrong when reflections on experiences abroad are polarizing rather than bridging of cultural difference.

Navigating these pitfalls requires an approach that: 1) develops the reflection skills to narrate student engagement with local experiences abroad; 2) encourages an understanding of digital media usage in the host country as part of cultural competency gains; and 3) reinforces a student’s awareness of his or her power and privilege when representing other cultures on a social media feed.

Study abroad offices can use guiding prompts to help students abroad reflect on their engagement with the local study abroad experience through Instagram takeovers of the office of study abroad account. As explained in the example below, when an Instagram takeover is guided correctly, it allows students to both produce more thoughtful posts about their host country and teaches skills about engaging and narrating in online spaces that will affect the narrative the student is sharing on their own digital media feed and will impact the lived experiences that the student will have in the host country moving forward.

The key to maximizing such online intercultural learning is to train student leaders to recruit their peers abroad to participate in the takeover and then offer guidance to maximize intercultural reflection for that student during the takeover activity. In the *Day in the Life* Instagram series at Tulane's office of study abroad, for example, when a student agrees to participate in a takeover, the student worker then guides the specific types of photos and captions that the takeover student will produce.

All of the prompts during the takeover include the following:

1. Students share images of their local, lived experience that highlight their intercultural learning process. The student worker makes suggestions, such as: What can you share about your daily experience that demonstrates how your host culture is different or unique from the experience that domestic students may be having in the U.S.?
2. Students share images that reflect the local culture beyond voyeuristic tourist images. The student worker establishes a dialogue with their peers to inform choices about the type of representations of their host country culture that they will share with a wider online audience.

3. Students include captions that reflect the interaction between themselves and the culture that they are showcasing. The student worker creates models of captions that portray deep insight of local context as well as an acknowledgement of the power and privilege of the student who posts.

The takeover achieves advising goals as well by giving prospective study abroad students a curated insider view of their peers' semester abroad. This content, grounded in the office's learning goals, both helps the study abroad student reflect on their intercultural experience and models the type of in-person experience we hope all study abroad students have, one that critically reflects on the place, the people, and the culture of their study abroad destination as well as the meaning of their role in it. This guided reflection helps train study abroad students to think about their experiences *in conversation with* the local culture while also modeling meaningful reflection for future study abroad students who are consuming the content.

Because the guidance comes from a peer, it seems to be fun and interesting, rather than prescriptive education. Often, we find that lecturing on intercultural learning is perceived by students as "getting in the way" of the enjoyable aspects of study abroad when culture-general frameworks are not successfully integrated with local culture-specific examples. Peer interaction during the takeovers allow students the ability to create culture-specific examples from their everyday experiences of the general frameworks that we hope they explore. Additionally, it may lighten the load on staff: the work is getting done but the staff is not doing it alone, the students are, thereby potentially solving capacity issues. Finally, this type of student-

generated, student-centered content also helps maintain a reputation as a student-friendly office which generates future online and in-person engagement.

The second potential pitfall in using online networks while abroad is when students' social media usage in-country does not adapt to social media norms in their host culture. Just as objective and subjective expressions of culture may change in a students' physical experiences abroad based on host culture norms, successful intercultural competency development would indicate that those expressions should also change in their digital space.

In-person interactions in a host country require students to investigate how their expressions of identity, language use, style of dress, etc. may conflict or conform to those same expressions of host country nationals. Students should also be asking questions about their own social media usage and that of their counterparts abroad in order to be cognizant of possible dissonances between the two. In doing so, students become aware of the ways that their technology use can enhance or disrupt their intercultural engagement while abroad. Students must first understand *how* their host culture uses social media and digital spaces. Only once they understand the norms of usage can they incorporate their digital identities into that local context more adequately. In some locations, this is a matter of safety. For example, in the case of studying abroad in much of the Middle East, students who are LGBTQ must think carefully about what they will disclose about this piece of their identity both in person and online. Even if not for reasons of safety, however, when a student learns the norms of usage in their host country they will have better luck adapting. Knowing how local events are broadcast and communicated in the context of their

host culture allows students to find, follow, and attend events more fully informed regularly. Learning the platforms that locals use to connect and meet to work on projects allows them to be more likely to insert themselves into study groups with host country nationals.

Once students recognize that engaging with people, businesses, and organizations in their host culture online will not happen in the same way as it does in their home culture, new avenues open up through which students can explore their host culture on a deeper level. Cuba, where author Annie Gibson worked as faculty resident director on semester and summer programs for Tulane University from 2011-2016, is a clear example of the need to include a sense of digital media literacy even in spaces where students' first interpretation may be to interpret it as being void of connectivity. For students to truly become culturally competent in navigating Cuban culture and social life, they must learn to interrogate the meaning of their own perception of its absence and seek to understand what fills the void. While it may be easy to realize that Cuban businesses do not use Instagram to advertise, part of learning to operate effectively within the Cuban cultural context is to then understand the platforms that are being used to disperse information in its place and the ways in which technology takes on different forms in the Cuban context to fit that social reality.

Though social media platforms exist in Cuba, public access to the internet just began to be available for public usage at WIFI hotspots in designated public parks and plazas in 2015 (ETECSA, publication year). Prior, access to WIFI for the general public was available only for those with connections to high powered

people or businesses allowed limited hours of connectivity or through individuals who had developed creative ways of tapping clandestinely into state-approved internet connections. Cuba has notoriously poor internet connectivity and all internet usage has been regulated by the state-owned telecommunications company, ETECSA. Transition to public WIFI access in Cuba has physically transformed the geographies of Cuba's cities. Students studying in Cuba who learn to navigate access to information as Cubans do will learn about "*El paquete semanal*," a weekly one terabyte collection of digital material collected through the Cuban diaspora abroad and then distributed on the underground market in Cuba as a substitute to broadband internet, which continues to be expensive for the general population. "*El Paquete*" continues to be a primary source of information for millions of Cubans and only becomes visible to students as they come to understand Cuban mechanisms for mass communication. Also, as public broadband internet becomes more available, access to the paid WIFI hotspots in plazas and street corners scattered throughout Havana become recognizable and interpreted in a new way once students understand the background of that social space and its social norms. The first interpreted absence of connectivity then reveals complex social networks that bring the act of intimate connections to friends and family abroad via cell phones and computers or advertising for businesses and social events into the public arena. Students learn to navigate where they can purchase the cards to connect to WIFI as well as who in their neighborhood is distributing the hard drive of the "*paquete semanal*." Their digital media fluency in a Cuban context develops along

with their ability to navigate a dynamic private market, its idiosyncrasies, and the close connection between public and private life in Cuba.

The third potential pitfall of social media use is that in narrating their study abroad experience, students may represent their study abroad to an audience back home in ways that can sometimes be irresponsible or inaccurate. Edward Said's groundbreaking theoretical study famously revealed East Asia to be an assemblage of mental maps and socio-cultural attributes constructed, represented, and consolidated through the discourse of orientalism, a large-scale enterprise which, ultimately, served to define and consolidate Western identity, since "European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self" (Said, 2003, p. 3). Studies have explored how the field of study abroad itself can reaffirm the very stereotypes that engagement across cultures is supposed to mitigate, reinforcing Western stereotypes of the other as explained by Said (Caton & Santos, 2009). Mukherjee and Chowdhury (2014) employed orientalism as a framework to conduct qualitative content analysis of flyers advertising study abroad opportunities sponsored by U.S. social work schools, arguing that orientalist stereotypes are prevalent in the marketing strategies of study abroad offices and that this has negative impacts on student learning outcomes.

We cannot afford to ignore social media activity in digital spheres simply because we don't understand it or don't have the capacity to handle it. We must become serious about digital media literacy for students, faculty, and staff. Because social media requires us to populate and narrate our lives and the lives of others in

a public forum, we must recognize that ourand our students'interactions in such spaces matter now that we are all in a position to narrate the other to infinitely large audiences. By acknowledging and addressing the implications of narrating the other in digital spaces, we develop the expectation that our students will as well.

Students often post quickly without time for reflection while tired, sick, experiencing culture shock, and faced with unfamiliar surroundings. To counteract this tendency to post irresponsibly and teach responsible narration practices, study abroad offices should consider editing their own marketing practices and model desired posting behavior so that it becomes a normal influencer in the posting strategy of the students that engage with the office. In the vain of social media influencers, staff and student workers can be harnessed to post in such a way that takes into account the potential stereotype reinforcement that Said cautions against. Rather than romanticizing the encounter with "the other" and advertising study abroad as a method to learn only about the self, staff and student workers can be tasked with conceptualizing ways to reframe study abroad to accentuate other mental models of conceptualizing the world and highlight the adaptive behaviors necessary for engaging in productive intercultural encounters. When we prepare students to understand the emotional markers of culture shock and provide them positive models of interculturally competent digital identities, they are more likely to develop a critical digital identity for themselves.

By returning to the foundation of the learning goals established by the office, staff and student workers can brainstorm how study abroad is an experience that changes both the self and the residents of the host culture, in both potentially

positive and negative ways. The content that is funneled into the office's social media sites can encourage students to consider these positive and negative effects of study abroad. Staff and student workers can also be trained to identify dos and don'ts of social media posting. Do the office's marketing materials reinforce the notion that study abroad is an exotic encounter with an other? Does the content on the office's social media feeds reinforce that same notion? If so, how can the content be modified to demonstrate an authentic, researched, and empathetic encounter during study abroad? While office staff may not have the bandwidth to revise all marketing materials and social media content, student workers can be trained to assist.

Using these digital spaces allows the office to model appropriate, interculturally sensitive content to prospective study abroad students and the university community at large. Not only does this behavior send a message to prospective students that social media is a tool that needs to be used responsibly, its accessibility also renders it available to those in the host culture. The message is that study abroad is not treated as an experience of objectification but one of rich cultural exchange and thoughtful encounters.

Upon Return

Finally, upon return from abroad, students can utilize social media to contribute to the achievement of the fifth learning goal outlined earlier in this paper, "apply(ing) these skills gained through study abroad to future intellectual, civic, professional and personal endeavors." Through social media, students can maintain their connections made while networking in their host country by creating and

maintaining digital linkages on social media long after study abroad is over. When students return from abroad, they should ask themselves if their social media was marked by the experience, if their time abroad has added new people in their online friend network, and if there are any ways in which their online identity has now changed since studying abroad. These connections made while abroad in physical and online spaces have the potential to develop new intercultural relationships on these digital platforms, allowing for an integration of their study abroad identity into their now reimagined “home” identities. Rather than experiencing complete disassociation following their study abroad experience, engagement with digital spaces in productive ways may reduce some of the impacts of return culture shock while also continuing a students’ intercultural growth.

Encapsulated in the aforementioned learning goal, one purpose of study abroad should be for students to reach the realization that global exchange also has the potential to exist in their domestic experience. Rethinking their digital presence upon return to campus as being one that fosters new intercultural exchanges helps the students continue to develop the skills in cultural bridging learned while abroad. A digital media profile for the study abroad office, which engages returned students as well as international students and diverse followers across the globe and cultivates an understanding of the global in their local community, is an essential modelling practice. This integration can ensure that the sojourn abroad is not a separate facet of their university education but a vibrant, ongoing part of it. Finally, because the online experience of a student lives on in the virtual world long after the physical experience has ended, students can return back to the posts, reflections,

and ideas from their study abroad time and develop that content even further for their personal and professional use.

As the conduit between university students and their life-changing experiences abroad, study abroad educators are uniquely positioned to offer opportunities to returned students that are exciting, educational, and meaningful for their professional development. Students often return from their study abroad experience with a deeper understanding of how they learned and grew while abroad. They often also want to maintain a connection to global experiences as a way of continuing their connection to their host country. Harnessing the enthusiasm of these students, along with their digital fluency, allows offices to train and utilize student leaders to complete most of the social media work outlined in this paper. Utilizing students to do this work requires planning and mentoring that can serve as a deterrent. Once built, however, the students can take the lead on projects and consistently produce content throughout the year.

Conclusion

Social media is a vital platform that study abroad offices can utilize to move their mission beyond the logistics of applications and travel, to allow study abroad practitioners to play the important role of engaging students and colleagues in international initiatives on campus and abroad, to stimulate and support student academic and career planning, to incorporate the realities of living in a global world, and, finally, to assess, evaluate, and track progress in these fields. Barbara Hofer (2008) explains that the proliferation of affordable and accessible modes of communication—email, smart phones, texting, Skype, Facetime, Facebook, Viber,

WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat-has made it possible for college students to connect with a frequency that would have been unimaginable only a decade ago (p. 21). She asserts that there are both positive and negative outcomes to the use of technology abroad and that it is essential for students and study abroad professionals to have an awareness of technology's impact on the experience. This paper has argued that since students live their lives online as much as in the physical world, these facets of identity co-exist, and so to ignore their digital identities in their intercultural development during study abroad would mean to miss out on a whole segment of the ways in which students experience the world. While face-to-face interactions with students are limited to the physical space of the office, the connections that can be made in the digital world are unlimited. By grounding these online interactions in an office strategy based in intercultural competency theory, study abroad offices can mentor students to reflect upon their online identities in meaningful ways. Staff and select students become co-educators and co-creators of intercultural learning content while fostering the development of social media savviness and digital identity negotiation.

References

- Anderson, Lorenz & White. (2016) Instructor Influence on Student Intercultural Gains and Learning during Instructor-Led, Short-Term Study Abroad. *Frontiers XXVIII*. 1-23.
- Blattner, W. (2006). *Heidegger's Being and Time*. London, England: Continuum.
- Caton, K., & Santos, C. (2009). Images of the Other: Selling Study Abroad in a Postcolonial World. *Journal of Travel Research*. 48 (2), 191-204.
- Cavarero, Adriana. (2000). *Relating Narratives: Storytelling and Selfhood*. London: Routledge.

- Davis, J. (2014). Triangulating the Self: Identity Processes in a Connected Era. *Symbolic Interaction, 37*(4), 500-523.
- Deuze, Mark. (2011). "Media Life." *Media, Culture & Society, 33*(1). 137 – 148.
- ETECSA. *Espacios públicos de conexión inalámbrica (WIFI)*. Retrieved from http://www.etcসা.সু/internet_conectividad/areas_wifi/
- Fantini, A. (2004). Assuring Quality in Intercultural Education Programs. *Introspectives, 20*, 10-16.
- Hammer, M. (2012). The Intercultural Development Inventory: A New Frontier in Assessment and Development of Intercultural Competence. In M. Vande Berg, R.M. Paige, & K.H. Lou (Eds.), *Student Learning Abroad*. Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing. 115-136.
- Hofer, B. K. (2008). The electronic tether: Parental regulation, self-regulation, and the role of technology in college transitions. *Journal of the First-year Experience and Students in Transition, 20*(2), 9-24..
- Hoff, J., & Kappler, B. (2005). Integrating Intercultural Learning Into Education Abroad Programming. In J. Brockington, W. Hoffa, & P. Martin (Eds.), *NAFSA'S Guide to Education Abroad for Advisers and Administrators* (pp. 193-206). Washington, D.C.: NAFSA: Association of International Educators.
- Hoffa, W., & Forum on Education Abroad. (2007). *A History of US Study Abroad: Beginnings to 1965*. Carlisle, PA: Forum on Education Abroad.
- Hoy, D.C. (1993). Heidegger and the Hermeneutic Turn. In C. Guignon (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Heidegger* (pp. 170-194). Cambridge, England: Cambridge University.
- Ito, M., Gutiérrez, K., Livingstone, S., Penuel, B., Rhodes, J., Salen, K., . . . Watkins, S. C.. (2013). *Connected Learning: An Agenda for Research and Design*. Irvine, CA. Digital Media and Learning Research Hub.
- Keck, N. (2015, February 10). Tech may get in the way of good culture shock while studying abroad. All Things Considered [NPR radio show]. Retrieved from <http://www.npr.org/2015/02/10/385267279/tech-may-get-in-the-way-of-good-culture-shock-while-studying-abroad>.
- Kendal, L. (1998). Meaning and Identity in "Cyberspace": The Performance of Gender, Class, and Race Online. *Symbolic Interaction, 21*(2), 129-153.
- Knight-McCord, J., et al. (2016). What social media sites to college students use the most? *Journal of Undergraduate Ethnic Minority Psychology, 2*(21), 21-26.
- Kuh, G. D. (2001). Assessing what really matters to student learning. *Inside the National Survey of of Student Engagement: Change, 33*(3), 10-17.
- Latino, J. A., & Unite, C. M. (2012). Providing Academic Support through Peer Education. *New Directions for Higher Education, 157*, 31-43.
- Lowenstein, M. (2005). If advising is teaching, what do advisors teach? *NACADA Journal, 25*(2), 65-73.

- Mikal, J. P. (2011). When social support fits into your luggage: Online support seeking and its effects on the traditional study abroad experience. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 21, 17-40.
- Moran, M., Seaman, J., & Tinti-Kane, H. (2011). Teaching, learning, and sharing: how today's higher education faculty use social media. *Boston, Ma. Pearson Learning Solutions and Babson Survey Research Group*.
- Mukherjee, D., & Chowdhury, D. (2014). What do the flyers say? Embedded 'Orientalist' constructions in social work study abroad programs in the United States. *International Social Work*, 57(6), 576-589.
- Orsatti, J., & Riemer, K. (2015). *Identity-making: A multimodal approach for researching identity in social media*. Paper presented at the European Conference on Information Systems, Münster, Germany. Retrieved from: <https://balsa.man.poznan.pl/indico/event/44/material/paper/0?contribId=152>
- Pepperell, R. (2005). Posthumans and Extended Experience. *Journal of Evolution and Technology*, 14(1), 27-41.
- Qualman, E. (2017). *Plenary Speech. Born Digital: Embracing Technology to Enhance International Education*. CIEE Annual Conference, Austin, TX.
- Said, E. W. (2003). *Orientalism*. London, England: Penguin.
- Ting-Toomey, S., & Chung, L. C. (2012). What is intercultural communication flexibility? and What are the essential cultural value patterns? In S. Ting-Toomey & L. C. Chung (Eds.), *Understanding Intercultural Communication*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. 22-63.
- Williams, T. R. (2009). The Reflective Model of Intercultural Competency: A Multidimensional Qualitative Approach to Study Abroad Assessment. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 18, 289-306.

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.

References

- Back, M. (2013). Using Facebook data to analyze learner interaction during study abroad. *Foreign Language Annals*, 46, 377-401. doi:10.1111/flan.12036
- Ballentine, B. D. (2015). Creativity counts: Why study abroad matters to technical and professional communication. *Technical Communication Quarterly*, 24, 291-305. doi:10.1080/10572252.2015.1078846
- Bivens, R. (2014). *Digital currents: How technology and the public are shaping TV news*. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.
- Carmichael, T., & Norvang, R. (2014). A global dialogue on peace: Creating an international learning community through social media. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*, 26, 445-462. Retrieved from <http://www.isetl.org/ijtlhe/>

- Chander, A. (2013). *The electronic silk road: How the web binds the world together in commerce*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Coleman, J. A., & Chafer, T. (2010). Study abroad and the internet: Physical and virtual context in an era of expanding telecommunications. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, *XIX*, 151-167. Retrieved from <https://frontiersjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/COLEMAN-CHAFER-FrontiersXIX-StudyAbroadandtheInternet.pdf>
- Deans, P. C. (2012). Integration of study abroad with social media technologies and decision-making application. *Decision Sciences Journal of Innovative Education*, *10*, 299-336. doi:10.1111/j.1540-4609.2012.00344.x
- Dewey, D. P. (2017). Measuring social interaction during study abroad: Quantitative methods and challenges. *System*, *7*, 49-59. doi:10.1016/j.system.2017.09.026
- Douthit, T. L., Schaake, S. L., Hay McCammant, M. R., Grieger, D. M., & Bormann, J. M. (2015). Student blogs and journals as assessment tools for faculty-led study abroad trips. *NACTA Journal*, *59*, 213-218. Retrieved from <https://www.nactateachers.org/index.php/volume-59-number-3-september-2015/2316-student-blogs-and-journals-as-assessment-tools-for-faculty-led-study-abroad-trips>
- Downey, G., & Gray, T. (2012). *Bloggng with the Facebook generation: Studying abroad with gen y*. Paper presented at the joint meeting of the Australian Association for Research in Education and the Asia-Pacific Education Research Association (AARE-APERA), World Education Research Association Focal Meeting, Sydney, Australia.
- Dressler, R., & Dressler, A. (2016). Linguistic identity positioning in Facebook posts during second language study abroad: One teen's language use, experience, and awareness. *The Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *19*(2), 22-43.
- Ellis, J. M. (2014). Pop culture, Twitter, and study abroad: Estonia as a case study. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, *47*, 204-208. doi:10.1017/S1049096513001595
- Farrar-Myers, V., & Vaughn, J. (Eds.). (2015). *Controlling the message: New media in American political campaigns*. New York, NY: NYU Press.
- Germann Molz, J. (2012). *Travel connections: Tourism, technology and togetherness in a mobile world*. London, England: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203123096>
- Godwin-Jones, R. (2016). Integrating technology into study abroad. *Language Learning & Technology*, *20*, 1-20. Retrieved from <http://llt.msu.edu/issues/february2016/emerging.pdf>
- Goen, T. L. (2015). Advancing family science and family science programs through the internationalization of family science curricula. *Family Science Review*, *20*(1), 80-88. Retrieved from <http://www.familyscienceassociation.org/sites/default/files/6%20-%20Goen%202015%2020%20%281%29%20.pdf>

- Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis: An essay on the organization of experience*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Gómez, J. I. A., & Vicente, C. P. (2011). Communicative competences and the use of ICT for foreign language learning with the European student exchange programme ERASMUS. *European Educational Research Journal*, 10, 83-101. doi:10.2304/eej.2011.10.1.83
- Herrera, L. (2012). Egypt's revolution 2.0: The Facebook factor. In B. Haddad, R. Bsheer, & Z. Abu-Rish (Eds.), *The dawn of the Arab uprisings: End of an old order?* (pp. 91-96). London, England: Pluto Press.
- Hetz, P. R., Dawson, C. L., & Cullen, T. A. (2015). Social media use and the fear of missing out (FoMO) while studying abroad. *Journal of Research on Technology in Education*, 47, 259-272. doi:10.1080/15391523.2015.1080585
- Hofer, B. K., Thebodo, S. W., Meredith, K., Kaslow, Z., & Saunders, A. (2016). The long arm of the digital tether: Communication with home during study abroad. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, XXVIII, 24-41. Retrieved from <https://frontiersjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/HOFER-FrontiersXXVIII-TheLongArmoftTheDigitalTether.pdf>
- Huesca, R. (2013, January 18). How Facebook can ruin study abroad. *Chronical of Higher Education*. pp. A23-A24.
- Kelm, O. R. (2011). Social media: It's what students do. *Business Communication Quarterly*, 74, 505-520. doi:10.1177/1080569911423960
- Kininger, C. S., & Belz, J. A. (2005). Socio-cultural perspectives on pragmatic development in foreign language learning: Microgenetic case studies from telecollaboration and residence abroad. *Intercultural Pragmatics*, 2, 369-421. doi:10.1515/iprg.2005.2.4.369
- Leask, B. (2004). Internationalisation outcomes for all students using information and CT (ICTs). *Journal of Studies in International Education*, 8, 336-351. doi:10.1177/1028315303261778
- Levine, K. J., & Garland, M. E. (2015). Summer study-abroad program as experiential learning: Examining similarities and differences in international communication. *Journal of International Studies*, 5, 175-187. Retrieved from <https://jistudents.org/2015-volume-52/>
- Martínez-Arbelaiz, A., Areizaga, E., & Camps, C. (2017). An update on the study abroad experience: Language choices and social media abroad. *International Journal of Multilingualism*, 14, 350-365. doi:10.1080/14790718.2016.1199729
- Mikal, J. P. (2011). When social support fits into your luggage: Online support seeking and its effects on the traditional study abroad experience. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, XXI, 17-40. Retrieved from <https://frontiersjournal.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/MIKAL-FrontiersXXI-WhenSocialSupportFitsIntoYourLuggage.pdf>

- Mikal, J. P., & Grace, K. (2012). Against abstinence-only education abroad: Viewing internet use during study abroad as a possible experience enhancement. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 16*, 287-306. doi:10.1177/1028315311423108
- Miller, D., Costa, E., Haynes, N., McDonald, T., Nicolescu, R., Sinanan, J., . . . , & Wang, X. (2016). *How the world changed social media*. London, England: UCL Press.
- Nadler, A. (2016). *Making the news popular: Mobilizing U.S. news audiences*. Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Nilson, L. B. (2010). *Teaching at its best: A research-based resource for college instructors (3rd ed.)*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Prier, J. (2017). Commanding the trend: Social media as information warfare. *Strategic Studies Quarterly, 11*(4), 50-85. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/26271634>
- Rahaghi, J. (2012). New tools, old goals: Comparing the role of technology in the 1979 Iranian revolution and the 2009 Green Movement. *Journal of Information Policy, 2*, 151-182. doi:10.5325/jinfopoli.2.2012.0151
- Ramírez, G. B. (2013). Learning abroad or just going abroad: International education in opposite sides of the border. *The Qualitative Report, 18*, 1-11. Retrieved from <http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR18/ramirez62.pdf>
- Sandel, T. L. (2014). "Oh, I'm here!": Social media's impact on the cross-cultural adaptation of students studying abroad. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research, 43*, 1-29. doi:10.1080/17475759.2013.865662
- Schirato, T., & Webb, J. (2004). *Understand the visual*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Shao, Y., & Crook, C. (2015). The potential of a mobile group blog to support cultural learning among overseas students. *Journal of Studies in International Education, 19*, 399-422. doi:10.1177/1028315315574101
- Shiri, S. (2015). The homestay in intensive language study abroad: Social networks, language socialization, and developing intercultural competence. *Foreign Language Annals, 48*, 5-25. doi:10.1111/flan.12127
- Titarenko, L., & Little, C. B. (2017). International cross-cultural online learning and teaching: Effective tools and approaches. *American Journal of Distance Education, 31*(2), 112-127. doi:10.1080/08923647.2017.1306767
- Valkenburg, P. M., & Piotrowski, J. T. (2017). *Plugged in: How media attract and affect youth*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- van den Boomen, M., Lammes, S., Lehmann, A. S., Raessens, J., & Schäfer, M. T. (Eds.). (2009). *Digital material: Tracking new media in everyday life and technology*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press.

Warner, C., & Chen, H. I. (2017). Designing talk in social networks: What Facebook teaches about conversation. *Language Learning & Technology*, 21, 121-138.
Retrieved from <http://llt.msu.edu/issues/june2017/warnerchen.pdf>

Woodly, D. (2018). #BlackLivesMatter and the democratic necessity of social movements: What active citizenship can look like and what it can accomplish. In C. Howard-Woods, C. Laidley, & M. Omid (Eds.), *#Charlottesville: White supremacy, populism, and resistance* (pp. 201-211). New York, NY: OR Books.

Blogging in a Study Abroad Class to Promote Active Learning and Student Engagement

Ann Marie Francis

Abstract

Blogs have become a popular tool to improve learning and enhance student engagement. The process of creating information when writing a blog and reflecting on others' ideas when commenting work together to help students engage in reflective learning. While there have been studies considering the value of blogging in traditional and online classes, this paper explores the benefits of incorporating blogs in a study abroad class. Outlining the experiences from teaching two study abroad literature classes, the paper summarizes the program design, details creating blog assignments, explores the benefits and challenges unique to study abroad students and blogging, and examines tips and suggestions for incorporating blogs in future study abroad classes.

Introduction

Today's traditional college student has grown up in a world of technology. The need for newspapers to find news feels archaic to students who have not known a time without online news sources and Google to provide instant access to information. The students have grown up accustomed to going online to get information. If they have a question, they don't head to the local library; instead they grab their phone or their computer and they use that technology to find the answer. That constant access to technology has changed what students expect from their professors and their educational experience as a whole. Students who are entering college straight from high school expect to use Web 2.0 technology and other e-learning approaches to be incorporated into their learning experience (Newland & Byles, 2014). Web 2.0, a term made popular by Tim O'Reilly,

incorporates various technologies that allow a more interactive experience, including, but not limited to, wikis, podcasts, video sharing, shared document creation, blogging, and a variety of other interactive technologies that allow users to interact via the internet. Interaction is key when considering what qualifies as a Web 2.0 tool. Users read, comment, change, and help form the content found in Web 2.0 technologies, making the user an instrumental part of the final product. Web 2.0 is more than a technological shift; it is a social shift incorporating technology to communicate and interact (Bates, 2011). Instead of having one author or creator of a webpage or other internet-based document, Web 2.0 technologies have users who participate in the creation and the development of the final product by commenting and becoming part of the conversation or even serving as co-authors. The collaboration makes the Web 2.0 technology the breeding ground of a living document that is transformed as new users read, comment, and make adjustments.

Blogs

Blogging is a perfect example of a tool that embraces the social shift seen with Web 2.0 technology. An online blog, often called a weblog, allows users to create posts that many consider parallel to an online journal. The blog posts can include pictures, videos, and links to other websites or blogs, but the content is not what makes the blog part of the social shift that is encouraged by Web 2.0 technology. The blogs include a place for people to provide comments, providing a social construct in which people can asynchronously have discussions about topics and situations without making face-to-face contact or even being in the same geographical area. The discussions are not limited to the original author and a single

reader; instead, readers of the blog may have a conversation between themselves without the original author providing any input other than sharing the original blog post. The comments eventually become an archived part of the blog that allow the original author of the blog and other readers to refer back to. Because the blogs allow for others to comment on them, they encourage authors of blogs to do more than just post new and updated information; rather, blogs are designed for authors and readers to exchange ideas through comments and online discussions, making the blog a live, interactive document that explores opinions, thoughts, and perspectives.

Another key component of blogs is the order of the entries, which are displayed in reverse chronological order with the most recent post displaying first. This order is important because it is one of the elements that distinguishes blogs from static webpages, which are displayed in an order defined by the webpage developer and often not by the timeline in which the pages were created. In addition to not being organized in a chronological manner, webpages do not always archive material. Instead, they often have old material replaced by new material making it difficult or even impossible to find the older webpages that have been replaced with new information. Blogs, on the other hand, keep the old material as new text is added, creating an archive of entries and information posted over time that can be referred back to and used for engagement, reflection, and growth.

Effectiveness of Blogging and Learning

In recent years, blogging has become increasingly popular as blogging sites have developed user-friendly interfaces. Tumblr, one of the most popular blogging

sites, has almost 426 million blog accounts (Statista, 2018), and Statista (2018a) estimates that by 2020, there will be 31.7 million bloggers in the United States alone. While not all those blogs are active, it is clear that blogging is a popular way for people to share their personal journeys, hobbies, and business adventures. The impact of blogging is not limited to professional and personal settings; it is also reaching the classroom. One reason we are seeing an increase in blogs as a tool for teaching is because blogging supports four specific types of knowledge: factual, procedural, conceptual, and metacognitive (Bower, Hedberg, & Kuswara, 2010); in addition, the discussion format of the blogs encourages active participation and promotes community among the students, both in the classroom and through the blogs themselves (Kang, Bonk, & Kim, 2011). Proponents of blogging as a pedagogical tool argue that the asynchronous construction of blogs and the process of creating a blog post, commenting on other students' blogs, and responding to comments on both the individual's and other students' blogs provides the ideal environment for reflective learning (Bower et al., 2010; Duffy, 2008; Wheeler, 2010). After looking at the use of blogs in a semester-long classes, researchers found that the blogs helped improve students' reflective thinking skills (Osman & Koh, 2013; Xie, Ke, & Sharma, 2008). The ability to use blogs to increase reflective learning is important because it is one way that blogging supports and encourages active learning, which combines student activity and engagement to stimulate reflection and improve learning (Fink, 2013; Prince, 2004).

Of course the questions instructors ask include how much students benefit from creating and responding to blogs as part of course requirements and whether

learning is enhanced when blogs are incorporated into the course design. Several case studies and research studies have found positive results when using blogs in the classroom to enhance learning and encourage collaboration (Boulos, Maramba, & Wheeler, 2006; Hernández-Ramos, 2004; Martindale & Wiley, 2005; Samuels-Peretx, Dvorkin Caniel, Teeley, & Banerjee, 2017). For some students, reading their peers' posts and responding to classmates was more impactful than writing their own blogs (Ellison & Wu, 2008). While the reason isn't clear why responding to blogs is so influential, the researchers argue that it is probably because responding to their classmates' blogs forced the students to consider different perspectives. It is not only instructors who find improved learning when incorporating blogs into their classes; research has shown that students also find benefit when using blogs as a learning tool. When students in a large lecture class were assigned blogs to encourage reflective learning, the majority reported positive experiences, with most indicating that using blogs in the classroom enhanced their learning, primarily by making them reflect on the course material and concepts outside of the classroom discussions (Halic, Lee, Paulus, & Spence, 2010). Students also reported that the use of social media platforms including blogging made learning easier and helped them learn the material better, as well as increased enjoyment and engagement in the course material (Samuels-Peretx et al., 2017).

Blogging in the Study Abroad Classroom

When I was given the opportunity to teach two literature courses as part of Georgia's European Council Study Abroad Paris Program in the summer of 2018, I knew I wanted to engage the students and promote active learning in a way that

encouraged students to consider the impact of the trip through a variety of lenses. After reviewing the literature on the benefits of blogging, I decided to use blogs in my study abroad class. I found that blogging provided extra benefits for the study abroad students.

Program Details

The European Council's Summer Study Abroad Program is divided into two parts. The first part commenced with a face-to-face meeting for each class, which is mandatory for all students. During that meeting, students meet their professors, the course objectives and course expectations are outlined, course policies are defined, and the initial class lecture is given. Faculty are encouraged to have students complete up to 50% of their final grade between the first class meeting and leaving the country approximately five weeks later. I approached the class as a hybrid class, with the first half of the course taking place online and the second half taking place face-to-face in France. The first five weeks focused on foundational material, such as key literary terms, how to properly analyze literature, understanding the role of the war on American literature, and the connection of political events to literary movements. During that online portion of the class, students completed weekly assignments, discussions, reflection papers, and research papers. The weekly discussions took place through the Learning Management System, in this case D2L, which is also where all course materials were housed.

The second half of the classes took place in France for five weeks. Classes met for two hours twice a week and had excursions once per week. Each week, we had

a theme that we explored both during the class meetings and the excursion. The class meetings, which were a combination of lecture, discussion, and student presentations, allowed us to discuss the different components of the course and the connection to the weekly field trip. It was during the time in France that I assigned blogs for the students. The blogging portion of the class required students to write one blog entry for each week we were in Paris exploring the field trips, the connection of the excursion to the literature we were reading, and the significance of the works in their original time period and in today's world. The students wrote the blog posts after we completed the field trips, using photos from the field trips to enhance their blog content. I was very specific when assigning dates for the blog posts; students were required to post a blog entry within 36 hours of the field trip, although most posted their entries within a day or two noting that writing the blogs soon after the field trips made it easier to remember and connect the ideas. I wanted the students to create the entries after the fields trips so that students would incorporate both the field trip and the course content, specifically the literature, authors, and events we were studying.

The blogs were a combination of a journal and an explanation of the relationship between the excursions and the class concepts. For the journal-like portion, students were asked to provide personal reflections on the meaning of the works, connect the author and/or work to the time period it was written, and explore the relevance of the author and/or work today. In addition to the text portion of the blog, each blog post required students to incorporate photos from the field trips. Students were instructed to post only pictures that they took, and they could not

have pictures of classmates without permission, although students readily gave permission to have photos of themselves included. While they were not allowed to copy pictures from other websites, they were allowed and encouraged to provide links to other sites that might provide additional information and reflection. The links proved to be very useful as students were encouraged to find one element of the excursion that intrigued them and that they could research after the field trip was over and share on their blog, providing content in their blog that all students could benefit from. As the students did the research, they would provide a general summary of the information and a link for more information; the students reported that they found the links helpful and interesting as they read other students' blogs and they enjoyed learning about their classmates by reading what research each classmate incorporated into their blogs.

While I did require students to share their blogs with the class so that others could read and comment on the posts, I did not require the students to set their blogs to public. The platforms the students used (primarily Blogger or WordPress, depending on student preferences) defaulted to public viewing, so the blogs would be visible to anyone and had the potential to be found through search engines. Most students changed the privacy setting to private, which prevented the blogs from appearing in a Google search, but allowed the students to share the link with those they wished to have access to the blog. There are debates for both private and public blogs in post-secondary classrooms. Requiring students to write in a public format provides an enhanced learning opportunity that private writing fails to provide (Walker, 2005) and gives students a voice as experts and makes them more

committed to their topics (Costello, 2015). But there can also be long-term ramifications of a public blog, especially for young college students who are often tackling complex issues and considering their personal viewpoints regarding those issues for the first time, especially since the blog can be connected to the students permanently and could negatively affect the students' future job searches and careers (Ellison & Wu, 2008). Making a blog public can also inhibit students in their writing process (Walinski, 2005). Several go so far as to argue for the use of pseudonyms when having students create blogs to protect privacy (Ellison & Wu, 2008; Witte, 2007; Yang, 2009). Personally, I found that giving students the option to have their blogs either public or private allowed them to create an online writing environment that they felt most comfortable with and let them feel in control of their writing.

Benefits of Using Blogs for Study Abroad Applications

In addition to the benefits of blogs in traditional classrooms, I found several benefits of blogs that are specific to study abroad programs. One benefit is that the blogs encourage students to reflect on the field trips and connect the trips to the course material. Blogs are known to promote reflective thinking. Students reflect not only on the material they include in their own blogs, but they also reflect as they read and comment on their classmates' blogs, which some argue is where the most learning occurs (Ellison & Wu, 2008). But even before students started creating their blogs for each excursion, they worked to ensure they fully understood the connection between the course material and the field trips, especially after the first week with the first blog assignment. Prior to departing for the excursions, students

would talk in small groups and consider what they expected to get out of the field trip and how they thought it would relate to the course readings. They realized the importance of making connections and worked to identify potential connections as we were preparing to leave instead of seeing the field trips as independent elements of the course. The discussions continued as we went on the excursions, where the students would engage in conversations about the material they wanted to add to their blogs and how best to link different ideas and concepts. The requirement to incorporate photos from the field trips in their blogs only further encouraged the students to make connections.

Another benefit of blogging that was highlighted in the study abroad classes was that students would come to class having spent significant time considering the course material. While I don't have data exploring how prepared the blogging students were compared to students in classes without blogging, I noticed throughout the course that students would bring the discussions started in blogs to the face-to-face discussions during class meetings. The students did not write their blogs and then forget about them; instead, they wrote their blogs and then returned to comment on their classmates' blogs and to read the comments that were posted on their blogs. This process of returning to the material presented in the blogs kept the course material in their minds. They were continuously reflecting on the ideas and reviewing the course materials without even realizing it, instead of forgetting about the class until the next meeting. This benefit is not limited to the study abroad classroom, but I argue that it is more impactful in study abroad programs where

students are often enamored by the new environment and spend their free time exploring without thinking of the classes they are taking.

For students who shared the link with their family and friends back home, which students were encouraged to do but not required, the blogs also provided a connection to loved ones. Family and friends were able to comment on the blogs and share thoughts on the adventures the students were experiencing, which gave the students one more way to communicate and connect with people from home. In addition, the students' family members, especially the parents and others who helped finance the trip, had access to more than social media pictures depicting the students seeing sights with little or no reference to learning. Parents who followed the blogs got a clear view of the learning and educational aspect of study abroad that social media does not always portray.

Challenges of the Project

The biggest challenge of using blogs during the study abroad program was not blogs themselves, but the lack of reliable internet access. The facility we used for classes did not have internet access that the students could use, which meant the students could not work on the projects before or after class at the site. Instead, they had to go to their lodging facility or another location that provided internet when they wanted to work on their blogs. The program's housing accommodations had internet, so the students had access when they were in Paris, but they were forced to post their blogs and respond to their classmates when they were away from the classroom, which cause a few complaints. Many students found it frustrating because they wanted to be able to work between classes and were not able to. The

limited internet did prove to make things more difficult, but it also served as an advantage. The process of reflection was emphasized by the lack of instant and constant access to the internet. Students were forced to take time between the class discussions and when they posted their blog and their comments. This time provided a chance for reflection and a deeper consideration of the blog content and how that content related to the excursions and the overall experiences the students had while on the study abroad program.

Another challenge came because one student chose not to bring a laptop. During the initial course meeting (five weeks prior to departing for France), students were instructed to bring laptops with them to Paris; it was clearly indicated that laptops were not optional and all students were asked to confirm that they had a laptop they could bring. All students except one brought a laptop, with one student deciding that she could use her phone as if it were a laptop. Unfortunately, using the phone did not work well and proved to be more difficult than she had hoped. She was able to access the necessary sites, but she struggled to upload photos and videos to her blog and she commented several times that it was too difficult to do the work on her phone and was very frustrated at the extra work she felt she had to do because she only had her phone. While this situation is isolated, it does highlight the fact that instructors must be very clear about the need for the proper technology to do the work while abroad.

Adjustments to Future Classes

Although I feel blogs enhanced the classes I taught in France, I would make adjustments if I were teaching another study abroad class. First, I would start the

blogs earlier, if possible. Because the European Council Study Abroad Paris Program requires classes to start prior to departure for France, I would require blog posts and comments to classmates' posts during the time between the first class meeting and leaving the country. During that time, we had online work including D2L discussions each week, which I had hoped would help build community and let the students get to know each other prior to departure. But the discussion posts were very guided and, as one student commented, felt more like homework without a purpose. The blogs, on the other hand, were accepted by the students in the classes, possibly because students are accustomed to the blogs and they feel comfortable with them (Newland & Byles, 2014). I think the blogs would work better than D2L discussions for a couple of reasons. First, blogs are shown to build community in online classes (Boulos et al., 2006). Using blogs before departing for the foreign country will allow students to better get to know the other students and form initial relationships, which is important, especially for those students who don't know anyone else on the program or who are traveling for the first time.

The second reason I would start the blogs immediately after the initial course meeting is to help meld the class. One comment that students made is that the online work felt disjointed from the face-to-face portion of the class that took place in France. The students felt like the online portion, while connected, was not as important or as meaningful as the portion of the class that was spent together in Paris. While I disagree that the online portion wasn't as meaningful, I do agree that the online portion of the class was not as engaging as the face-to-face portion. I would argue that incorporating blogs into the online class would improve

engagement as students would be able to take a more active and creative approach to the blogs. Instead of posting only texts, the students could share photos, links, and even videos to help explore the foundational course concepts that were covered during the initial five weeks of the class that took place online.

Finally, having blog posts that were written and analyzed prior to the trip abroad would allow students more time to benefit from the blogs. The students would be able to build their blogs over a longer period of time, which would give more substantial material for reflection. Rather than limiting the reflection, which is so essential in active learning, to the time spent overseas, students would be able to reflect on the changes in their perspectives prior to, during, and after the trip. That extended time would benefit the students as they consider how the trip changed their attitudes towards the literature and other course concepts. The additional time on the blogs would also potentially increase the sharing of the blogs with their family and friends who might want to follow the students' stories as students are likely to mention the blogs when they are talking to others at home.

Students were also encouraged but not required to add new information that required additional research outside of class. The students were to be asked to find something unique on each excursion, do some online research, and provide a summary and a link to the research on their blog. For example, at Sacré-Cœur Basilica the students were asking about a mural. I asked the students to research the story behind it before the next class period. They did and they were able to share the story on their blogs and then provide the connection between the mural and the works we had read. In a future class, I would make the additional research a required

element of each blog post. The students found it helpful when learning about new areas, and it provided a way to share information that otherwise may not have been viewed by the others in the class.

Strategies to Use Blogs in Study Abroad Classes

For those faculty who are uncertain about using blogs in a study abroad class, I offer the following tips and strategies.

Make a Sample Blog

Students will benefit from specific examples of what you are looking for in both the blogs and the comments. While it seems that blogging has become ubiquitous in today's web-based society, there is a good chance that you will have students who have only read and never created a blog. Those students will appreciate a sample blog to help identify the key elements, such as photos, hyperlinks, and videos, as well as the best way to incorporate those elements into a blog. In addition, many students may find the idea of writing a blog for an academic class a little intimidating, even those who have experience writing a blog. To help assuage their concerns, provide a sample blog that you update throughout the class. In your sample blog, highlight the different features you want students to utilize in their blogs, providing specific examples of what you are looking for in the student blogs. The example also helps instructors connect to the students during class when students talk about the challenges of creating their blogs and the instructors can respond with personal examples and advice from their own blog.

Clearly State Your Expectations for the Blog

When creating a blog assignment, you must have clear expectations for both the blog posts and the comments, and those expectations should be clearly outlined and accessible to the students. Since many students will not have experience writing a blog and those who do have experience will likely not have experience writing a blog for an academic class, it is essential that you make the assignment requirements clear, including how long you expect the posts to be, what type of content you are looking for, how often students should post and comment, and any other expectations you have. Explaining the purpose of the assignment in relation to the course objectives helps students see the value of the assignment.

Set Clear Expectations for Comments

One of the benefits of blogging is the reflection that takes place as students comment on their peers' blogs and as they read and respond to comments on their own blogs. The challenge comes when students post simple comments that don't add to the discussion. Comments such as "I agree" or "Great post – thanks for sharing" will be common if you do not set clear expectations for the comments. Because one of the most important parts of the learning process is asking questions that promote critical thinking and analysis (Diamond, 2008), I like to require students to ask at least one question a week in their responses to their classmates. To help students ask quality questions and form quality comments, I have students to reflect on different perspectives and ideas present in the original blog post, and then consider how those perspectives are different from their own. From there, students form questions to add to their comments. As they comment on their

classmates' posts, they should reflect on the deeper meaning and consider the connection of ideas that were presented throughout the class instead of just the current subject matter of the blog post.

Monitor the Blogs

Monitor the blogs and the comments to ensure that there are no rude or inappropriate comments and to coach the students on how to improve on those comments or posts that are not developed or substantial. It is especially important to monitor the blogs and the comments if the students have their blogs set to public since it is possible to have some aggressive comments appear on blogs. To prevent the students from posting inappropriate or inconsiderate posts, I provided a list of netiquette rules that I reviewed the first class period and also posted in D2L. Fortunately, I did not have a problem with students being disrespectful at all, but I have heard stories from faculty who did. If you do not catch and respond to those comments quickly, it can escalate, so it is essential that faculty are active with the blogs by checking in often, reading the comments, and making posts to let students know that you are reading what they are writing.

Stagger the Due Dates for Postings and Comments

Because students are going to comment on the blogs, you do want to have students post their blogs and comment on other students' blogs on the same day. However, I take it a step further and require students to comment on their classmates' blogs over time instead of having them post all their comments on a certain date. For example, my students were required to post half their comments by Tuesday and the remainder comments between Wednesday and Friday, allowing the class

more time to reflect on the topic and encouraging the shift from independent ideas to discussions between the students. As the students start to engage in dialogue, they reflect on their opinions and perspectives and consider why they have those perspectives and how their opinions compare to other people's ideas.

Allow Private Blogs

Personally, I believe that students should have the option to set their blogs to private if they wish because it is imperative that we respect students' desire for privacy, and pushing students to create public blogs has the potential to make some students feel uncomfortable or even alter what they write. While doing so will limit some of the public interaction, for this class I was focused on interaction between the students, not between the students and the general public. I also had a considerable number of the students make their blogs private, which indicates that for me, the students felt more comfortable with the option to post privately. Two students who choose to make the blogs public at the beginning of the course talked about adjusting the blog settings to private, commenting on the personal pictures that were on the website.

Conclusion

While my experience is anecdotal, there is evidence that blogging is beneficial to students. The process of creating a blog and reading and responding to other students' blogs is indicative of reflective learning and helps improve retention of course concepts. Many of the benefits of blogs in a traditional class are transferrable to the study abroad classroom. These benefits include, but are not limited to, lively and on-going discussions, connections to family and friends back home, and a

deeper understanding of the connection between the course material and the country students are visiting.

References

- Bates, T. (2011). Understanding Web 2.0 and its implications for e-Learning. In M. J. W. Lee & C. McLoughlin (Eds.), *Web 2.0-based e-Learning: Applying social informatics for tertiary teaching* (pp. 21-42). New York, NY: IGI Global.
- Boulos, M., Maramba, I., & Wheeler, S. (2006). Wikis, blogs and podcasts: a new generation of Web-based tools for virtual collaborative clinical practice and education. *BMC Medical Education*, 6(1), 41..
- Bower, M., Hedberg, J. G., & Kuswara, A. (2010). A framework for Web 2.0 learning design. *Educational Media International*, 47(3), 177-198.
- Costello, L. A. (2015). Blogging a Research Paper? Researched Blogs as New Models of Public Discourse. *Teaching English in the Two Year College*, 43(2), 180-194.
- Diamond, R. (2008). *Designing and assessing courses and curricula: A practical guide* (3rd ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Duffy, P. (2008). Engaging the YouTube Google-Eyed Generation: Strategies for Using Web 2.0 in Teaching and Learning. *Electronic Journal of E-Learning*, 6(2), 119-129.
- Ellison, N., & Wu, Y. (2008). Blogging in the classroom: A preliminary exploration of student attitudes and impact on comprehension. *Journal of Educational Multimedia and Hypermedia*, 17(1), 99-122.
- Fink, L. (2013). *Creating significant learning experiences: An integrated approach to designing college courses* (Rev. and updated ed.) San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Halic, O., Lee, D., Paulus, T., & Spence, M. (2010). To blog or not to blog: Student perceptions of blog effectiveness for learning in a college-level course. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 13, 206-213.
- Hernández-Ramos, P. (2004). Web Logs and Online Discussions as Tools to Promote Reflective Practice. *Journal of Interactive Online Learning*, 3(1), 1-16.
- Kang, I., Bonk, C. J., & Kim, M.-C. (2011). A case study of blog-based learning in Korea: Technology becomes pedagogy. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 14, 227-235.
- Martindale, T., & Wiley, D. A. (2005). Using weblogs in scholarship and teaching. *TechTrends: Linking Research & Practice to Improve Learning*, 49(2), 55-61.

- Newland, B., & Byles, L. (2014). Changing academic teaching with Web 2.0 technologies. *Innovations in Education & Teaching International*, 51(3), 315-325.
- Osman, G., & Koh, J. H. L. (2013). Understanding management students' reflective practice through blogging. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 16, 23-31.
- Prince, M. (2004). Does active learning work? A review of the research. *Journal of Engineering Education*, 93, 223-231.
- Samuels-Peretz, D., Dvorkin Camiel, L., Teeley, K., & Banerjee, G. (2017). Digitally inspired thinking: Can social media lead to deep learning in higher education? *College Teaching*, 65(1), 32-38.
- Statista. (2018). Total number of blogs 2018. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/256235/total-cumulative-number-of-tumblr-blogs/>
- Statista. (2018a). U.S. number of bloggers 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/187267/number-of-bloggers-in-usa/>
- Walinski, J. (2005). Monitoring E-learners' Feedback with Blogs. In J. Walinski, K. Kredens, & J. Gozdz-Roszkowski (Eds.), *Corpora and ICT in language studies* (431-443). Proceedings of PALC 2005, Frankfurt, Germany.
- Walker, J. (2005) Weblogs: Learning in public. *On the horizon*, 13(2), 112-118.
- Wheeler S. (2010) Open content, open learning 2.0: Using wikis and blogs in higher education. In U. D. Ehlers & D. Schneckenberg (Eds.), *Changing Cultures in Higher Education* (103-115). Berlin, Germany: Springer.
- Witte, S. (2007). "That's online writing, not boring school writing": Writing with blogs and the Talkback Project. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 51(2), 92-96.
- Xie, Y., Ke, F., & Sharma, P. (2008). The effect of peer feedback for blogging on college students' reflective learning processes. *The Internet and Higher Education*, 11, 18-25.
- Yang, S. (2009). Using blogs to enhance critical reflection and community of practice. *Educational Technology & Society*, 12(2), 11-21.

Google Maps as a Transformational Learning Tool in the Study Abroad Experience

Jessica Stephenson, M. Todd Harper, and Emily Klump

Abstract

This article examines the role that spatial orientation and location can play on a study abroad program. Jessica Stephenson and M. Todd Harper paired a Google Maps project with autoethnography in order to help students understand their own experience of space abroad as well as how they themselves shaped that space. Students were asked to create a personalized Google Map of the sites that they visited in Rome, Orvieto, Florence, and Montepulciano, Italy. Students then added facts about the sites as well as their own photos and personal experience. They were then asked to use their personalized Google Maps as a heuristic for longer autoethnographic papers relating to the themes of pilgrimage and journey. In so doing, students realized that space is alive, constantly changing and evolving.

Introduction

Digital media has impacted, for good and ill, the way students engage with their chosen disciplines of study, not to mention their interaction with the world, especially in the context of study abroad. Try to avoid spending too much time on cell phones was the advice given to outgoing study abroad students by a university Director of International Safety and Security; he shared that he pulled a student who was looking down at his cell phone to safety seconds before being hit by an on-coming ambulance. Those who have directed or taught on a study abroad program have encountered similar situations where smart phones and other types of new communication technologies seem to get in the way of a student being aware or

even experiencing culture; and, yet, it can be productive to work with these new technologies rather than against them.

This article considers how its authors, Dr. Jessica Stephenson and Dr. M. Todd Harper, coupled a Google Maps project with traditional research writing assignments to foster primary research, reflective practices, and transformative learning amongst undergraduate students on a three-week study abroad program in Italy. In 2018, Harper and Stephenson led 17 students enrolled in an honors program on a three-week study abroad to Italy that included an extended stay in Montepulciano (a scenic town in Tuscany), shorter stays in Rome and Florence, and day trips to Orvieto and Siena. The students were part of a year-long first-year Great Books cohort wherein they studied foundational texts in English, political science, history, and art history. For the study abroad program, Harper and Stephenson chose to focus their Art History and English Literature courses, respectively, on pilgrimage and journey. As a joint assignment, the two professors asked students to create a personalized Google Map, pinning the places that they would visit on their field trips and, then, filling those pins with images and texts documenting their experience at each place. Students were then instructed to use their Google Maps project as a resource for writing a pilgrimage paper for Stephenson's class and for writing a reflective paper about their journey for Harper's class. In this article, we will discuss the theoretical underpinning of the Google Maps project and Stephenson's pilgrimage paper assignment, the assignments themselves, Emily Klump's, a participating student, reflection on her Google Map project, and an assessment by Stephenson and Harper on strengths and weaknesses of the Google

Map assignment as a tool for fostering reflective practice in the context of study abroad.

Description and Justification of Google Maps Assignment

The Google Maps project and its corresponding pilgrimage and reflective paper assignments were grounded in three principles: 1). transformative learning in study abroad often occurs as a result of reflective practices; 2). those reflective practices often involve a temporary locating of ourselves in transition or, at least, a tracing of where we have been, where we are, and where we are going; and 3). that some of our best reflection is aided by a variety of multi-media formats, not just writing. In placing a primacy on reflective practices, Harper and Stephenson's pedagogical strategy aligns with Victor Savicki and Michele V. Price's (2015) recommendation: "Reflection can be seen as a fundamental expression of humankind's 'will to meaning' (Frankl, 1962), the desire to make sense of life's events. Reflective thinking has been proposed as an important feature of study-abroad learning; the challenge for students is to construct a meaningful understand[ing] of events during their encounter with a different culture" (588). Like many scholars who champion reflective practices in study abroad, Savicki and Price (2015) define reflection as that which results when the student encounters some difficulty or crisis to their normal way of doing things (See also Hillocks, 1996; Schon, 1984). In the context of study abroad, even a student's most basic activities can seem a struggle as he or she wrestles with a different culture and an overload of new information in the classroom, on field trips, and in their everyday lives. Ideally, this struggle should result in the student reflecting upon and then adjusting existing practices and

behaviors, especially when given effective frameworks and tools with which to process unfamiliar experiences.

Reflective tools in study abroad are numerous, spanning simple debriefing sessions with a director, teacher, or group of peers, to a student's careful positioning of herself or himself as participant-observer through ethnographic study. Common to study abroad is the journal assignment, which may range from a very simple daily recording of activities and impressions to a more rigorous analysis on how the student responded to her or his environment (Craig, Zou, & Poimbeauf, 2015). In terms of the latter, the student might be asked to engage with how he or she reacted to a particular challenge, such as missing a train connection because the train was late. The entry might include a description of the missed connection, the student's initial response (most likely, one of panic), and, then, a careful reflection on how they developed a solution to navigate the situation. More recently, multi-media blogs have begun to replace traditional journaling (Savicki & Price, 2017). These blogs allow students to post images, video, and text in a public space. In terms of the latter, student blogs shift their reflections from something that only the teacher might see to something that a variety of others, including family and friends, or local hosts, might take in. This shift often affects their discourse in that the student's reflection becomes a "lesson" or a "performance" to be shared with a larger audience. In this way, the student may potentially move from mere participant observer to a more sophisticated inter-culturalist, as they analyze and reflect on changes to their understanding of self in relationship to both the host and home culture.

By drawing on ethnographic methodologies, assignments that gauge a student's consideration of their cognitive and emotional responses to situations can make a critical shift, assisting the student garner a greater understanding for how her or his relationship to the host culture changes as their interaction with the culture deepens. This is particularly true of autoethnographic assignments that employ techniques of cultural analysis and self-reflection. Autoethnographies allow students to describe the host culture through the lens of their relationship to that culture as self-reflective participant-observer. Such a practice, when done well, can help the student analyze the social, cultural, and economic differences and similarities between herself and the host culture, as well as how her or his perceptions change as interaction with that culture deepens (Clark, 2004; Clifford, 1997; Reynolds, 2007). Hopefully, through autoethnographic practice, the student comes to think about time and place encountered in new and dynamic ways, since through the study abroad experience students interact across a range of spaces and places, as for example those where cultures are demarcated with clear borders, those where cultures overlap (Pratt, 1992), and ones where "cultures are mixed and mingled and where the borders do not hold" (Reynolds, 2007, p. 28). Ethnographic and autoethnographic exercises allow the student to locate herself or himself within multiple spaces and, ideally, to understand more fully where they have been, where they are, and where they have yet to go.

To engage in reflective practices, whether through journaling, ethnographic writing, or some other form, is, in part, to simultaneously and complexly locate oneself spatially in the familiar as well as the foreign and to realize that that

spatiality is dynamic and ever-changing. In his landmark work, *Thirdspace*, Edward Soja (1996) captures this dynamic and ever-changing spatiality as something that is alive and produced. Soja (1996) theorizes a “trialectics of spatiality” where conceived, perceived, and lived space come together in a dynamic and ever-changing swirl (p. 57). Responding to Henri Lefebvre (1992), Soja’s thirdspace is a place where geometric and mathematic space (the conceived space of maps) intersects with the space we perceive through our senses (perceived space) as well as the space we inhabit with our experiences (lived space). However, without lived space, Lefebvre’s (1992) triad and Soja’s (1996) “trialectics of spatiality” becomes disembodied, abstract, and meaningless (p. 57). Nedra Reynolds (2007) puts the dynamic quality of Soja’s thirdspace this way:

The trialectics of space leaves binary concepts, like insider-outsider, floating in the middle or bouncing from one spot to another: thirdspace means exploding or transgressing binaries, not simply flipping them to restore the undervalued term. Lived, perceived, and conceived space fold into and spin across one another, working together to accomplish the production of space. Our marketplaces, bedrooms, bus terminals, theaters, or schoolyards are not isolated from the process, do not stand separate from perceptions and conceptions, but are the sites where representations and uses are reproduced. (p. 16)

In short, to write reflectively in an effective sense is more than simply representing space and spatial relations; rather, it is to involve oneself in the very production of that space.

Newer technologies, such as digital media as thirdspaces, have the potential to transcend, but they may also easily fall victim to the double-edged nature of binary thinking and the potential to disconnect lived space. As Reynolds (2007) notes, “changing conceptions of space, including the production of new social spaces like

the Internet, result from technologies that allow rapid, almost instantaneous, transmission of information and ever-faster modes of transportation. Twenty-first century technologies have made border crossings *seem*, at least, as easy as punching buttons” (p. 18). These new technologies make us feel as though the world is smaller and that time and space have become compressed: “As space flattens out, time becomes both harder to notice and even more important; the masking of *time* through the changing boundaries for space has consequences for workers, students, women, for all of us who live and work in the everyday” (Reynolds, 2007, p. 19). For example, these new technologies allow for us to carry work home; they force us to respond to all sorts of situations, even when they are miles away. Reynolds (2007) fears that this is especially true of cell phones, where various binaries, such as public and private, are blurred (how many of us have overheard someone’s very private conversation in public?). Simultaneously, they become an electronic tracking device, mapping our very movements throughout the course of a day.

And, yet, where Reynolds is rightly critical of these new technologies, Adam Strantz (2015) sees their ability as something positive, especially within the context of study abroad programs. Strantz (2015) responds to Reynolds’ complaint: “just as concepts of space and place change in response to changes in transportation, architecture, or urban planning, there is abundant evidence that new technologies are also shifting our understanding of space and are ushering in new forms of writing or talking—forms that many users are adjusting to” (p. 165). Newer technologies allow students to locate themselves and, more importantly, to reflect upon, how “people are supported by maps, signs, and other uses in making their

way about a location” (Strantz, 2015, p. 165). Strantz (2015) calls this “wayfinding” and notes that it allows students to trace both their own “representational” and “lived space” by allowing them to focus on “mental maps [conceived spaces] and sense of space [perceived spaces] that people create as they move through spaces [lived space]” (pp. 165-166). He goes on to note,

Our mobile technologies literalize these emplacements, thereby enabling students to see relationships they have developed. While these traces are developed through mapping their own work, the use of GPS-enabled mobile devices allows for a more distinct sharing of space and location with other users. Accordingly, mapping, sharing maps, and telling stories of movement externalize stories we have shared but also allows students heuristic memory and access to visual representations of their movements to which we simply have not had access. (pp. 165-166)

For Strantz then, mobile technologies provide an opportunity for students to gather and then disseminate information, while tracing and reflecting upon their own movement. As such, they also become a heuristic for more immediately accessible student research and reflection and, in the case of Strantz himself, his own research.

Strantz’s own research involved using Google pins that professional writing students on a study abroad created to trace their movement as well as the writing completed in these spaces. From the maps that were constructed, Strantz (2015) arrived at the following conclusions:

- There is a need for cultural fact-finding as students enter into new global contexts for their work,
- GPS-traced maps offer the ability to connect disparate locations together,
- Including non-places in the methods of empirical research is impactful, and

- The *kairotic* aspect of these digital tools enables students to take these methods with them wherever they have a networked connection. (166-170)

Strantz sees digital mapping tools as a place of discovery and invention. The texts that students produce, the images that they upload, and the maps that they create help to generate a new, more complex understanding of space and their positioning of themselves within that space.

In this regard, the Google Maps assignment served multivalent pedagogical purposes centered around active learning and reflective practices. Students realized mapping as a form of invention, contact zone, and place-making; as autoethnography through which to think about space and place encountered in new, dynamic, and challenging ways; and as thirdspace since, through the project, their conceived, perceived, and lived space came together dynamically. Armed prior to departure with lists of monuments and sites to be visited, the pinning of said locations to a mobile map positioned students as active shapers of their study abroad experience. They created visual itinerary maps through which space, place, and time become personalized, inventive processes; they gained foreknowledge of key sites, the temporal and spatial relationship between monuments and their broader contexts, and crafted routes to be travelled.

The mapping project therefore facilitated engagement with study abroad space, place, and time as “contact zone.” Mary Louise Pratt (1992) employs the term contact zone in an attempt to involve the spatial and temporal co-presence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctions, and whose trajectories now intersect. By using the term “contact,” the interactive,

improvisational, and interpretive dimension of cross-cultural encounters is foregrounded. A contact perspective emphasizes the ways in which relationships, as well as places or spaces, constitute and shape cultures. It treats the relationships not in terms of separateness, but in terms of co-presence, interaction, and interlocking misunderstandings (Pratt, 1992, p. 6). By pinning historical sites to a city map, students come to see that ancient cultures and monuments exist and cohabit with modern city design: seemingly distant and disparate place, space, and time is pulled into dynamic relationship. Students saw that the Roman Forum and Colosseum exist and cohabit contemporary Italian centers of power and national identity and that the Pantheon resides today within a larger space of entertainment, culinary services, and tourism. The familiar and the foreign collide as McDonald's, Starbucks, and Nike share space and place with the Duomo in Florence, calling the student to reflect from a position of co-presence, interaction, and potential dis-junction. The student is challenged to problematize and problem solve as languages collide in the slippage from English to Italian place names on maps.

While on the ground in Italy, Google Maps served as a form of "wayfinding" allowing students to trace their own "representational" or "lived space" as "thirdspace" since their mental map (conceived space), sense of space (perceived space), and movement through space (lived space) folded in on one another. During field trips students were encouraged to utilize the Google Map in real time to document and reflect upon their experience in situ. Google Maps comprise two features: 1). A function to upload photographs culled from the web or taken by the student; and 2). A notes function in which to pen textual information. Students were

given wide latitude as to how they wished to utilize the Google Map tools. Those with an interest in photography could privilege a visual means of documenting their experiences. Others chose to search images on the web from which they curated a selection then added to individual pins. Note-taking strategies were equally diverse. Some students used the function to didactic ends, recording factual information on history imparted by instructors, or culled from texts located at sites, or from the course textbook. Others favored a journaling approach to reflect upon and chronicle their encounter with each location. The Google Maps assignment thus helped trace the study abroad experience as movement between the realm of the personal, experiential, and educational as engaged “third space” with its co-presence of conceived, perceived, and lived space.

Student Reflection on Google Maps Assignment

The wayfinding, contact zone, and thirdspace potentials of the Google Maps project are evident from the following reflection by participating student Emily Klump, who writes:

I found the Google Maps project to be very helpful in organizing my study abroad experience and learning about all the places we visited. I started the project before leaving for Italy by pinning all the locations on the map. This gave me an idea of what we would be doing and seeing while in Italy and it gave me a visual of where in the country we were going. Since I’d never been out of the country before and didn’t know what to expect, I really appreciated the map for preparing me for what was ahead in those three weeks. I also used my map to plan out my weekend trip to Verona and Venice.

For my project, I uploaded pictures and descriptions for each location on my Google map. I wrote both facts about the location and a reflection of how I felt and what I thought when I was there. The first location we visited was the Baths of Diocletian. I uploaded 10 pictures and wrote, “The baths of Diocletian were created by Maxentius. They were named after

Diocletian because Maxentius wanted a connection to Diocletian. They were social hangouts. Baths were separated by genders.” It’s simple, but just a little description like that, along with some photos, helps me remember things about that location that I would have otherwise forgotten by now.

My favorite location on the map was Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri. For this pin, I wrote, “This church was designed by Michelangelo, but the front doors are modern. I thought that it was really beautiful and I could really feel God. It was my favorite church that I visited.” I also uploaded six pictures that I took, and made sure to get different parts of the church in order to get a complete picture. When I look at this pin on the map, I can remember the experience of walking into the church and being completely awestruck.

One of the biggest challenges with the project was the language barrier. Many of the locations on the map, especially those in Montepulciano, had both an Italian name and an English name. This made some of the locations hard to find because only the Italian name was available on the map to pin. The other challenge was remembering which pictures went with which location when I was uploading them. For example, at the Parrocchia Santissimo Nome Di Gesu, I was very impressed with the faux top on the dome and the overall beauty of the church. I took several pictures but when I went to upload them, I couldn’t remember which church it was out of the several on the map. Luckily my peers helped me, and I was able to put the pictures and description in the right place on the map.

I pinned all the assigned locations on the map, as well as some locations from my weekend trip to Verona and Venice. I went to Verona and Venice with two other girls, and when we were planning, we used the map to find the locations we wanted to visit, and once we found those locations, we used the map to plan out how we would get there. In Verona, we went to the Casa di Guilietta, and in Venice we went to San Marco’s Basilica. Even though they weren’t originally part of my plans for my study abroad, I put them on the map because Venice and Verona became part of my trip and I wanted to be able to remember those locations as well as the ones that were planned since the beginning. This was the first time I traveled anywhere with only people my age, so the map was a good travel companion because it gave us a way to prepare ourselves.

The Google Maps project definitely enhanced my study abroad experience. I was able to better prepare for the trip and plan my own travels. The project helped me organize my travels in Italy and made it easier to remember where I went and what I did. Doing the project also helped me focus more at each location because I needed to get information and pictures for each pin. Without the Google maps project I wouldn’t have remembered which location all the pictures were taken at. Through the

project, I made my own guidebook, unique to my trip and experiences I had. (personal communication, October 8, 2018)

Pilgrimage Assignment

To push Emily and her peers into deeper reflective practices in the interests of transformative learning, the Google Map assignment served as a stepping stone for an autoethnographic formal research paper on pilgrimage. The concept of pilgrimage, as a distinct form of travel, asked students to construct a meaningful understanding of events in their encounter with a different culture in Italy. Phil Cousineau's (1998) text, *The Art of Pilgrimage: The Seeker's Guide to Making Travel Sacred*, served to frame the assignment prompt:

I am convinced that pilgrimage is still a bona fide spirit-renewing ritual. But I also believe in pilgrimage as a powerful metaphor for any journey with the purpose of finding something that matters deeply to the traveler. With a deepening of focus, keen preparation, attention to the path below our feet, and respect for the destination at hand, it is possible to transform, even the most ordinary journey into a sacred journey, a pilgrimage. (p. 7)

Here, Cousineau (1998) positions pilgrimage in equally secular terms "as a powerful metaphor for any journey with the purpose of finding something that matters deeply to the traveler" (p. 7). In selecting this quote, the assignment opened up the opportunity for students to engage with spaces, monuments, art, architecture, and experiences that might not fit a traditional definition of pilgrimage as a sacred journey, but instead challenging them to think of pilgrimage as a form of deep reflection.

To that end students read a body of literature theorizing pilgrimage and applied it to their first-hand engagement with several sites or monuments documented using the Google Maps project. Students engaged with historical forms of pilgrimage as

sacred journey through course content; pilgrimage sites discussed included Stonehenge, England; the Temple of Amun-Ra, Luxor, Egypt; Chavin d'Huantar, Peru; the Parthenon, Athens; The Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem; and the Great Stupa of Sanchi, India. The classical notion of pilgrimage as a transformative journey by which to connect with sacred spaces and objects, including icons and relics, also formed the focus for the class discussion of Romanesque and Gothic cathedrals in France, Spain, and Italy. Here, cathedral architecture was considered in the light of the medieval visitors' need for transformation, transcendence, and refuge through contact with sacred objects and spaces that offered grounding and escape. The notion of pilgrimage as a defined path linking sacred destinations was also explored through a discussion of the El Camino, the medieval route that connected sacred points in France and Spain terminating at Santiago de Compostela, Portugal.

Set against this foundational knowledge, the core assigned readings sought to expand pilgrimage definitions and entertain secular forms of journey as potentially meaningful and transformative. Peter Margry's (2008) article, "Secular Pilgrimage: A Contradiction in Terms?" considers questions such as: what constitutes pilgrimage in the 20th and 21st century; what elements are needed to make secular journey, including tourism, a potential form of pilgrimage; and what makes pilgrimage a transformative process? Justine Digance's (2006) "Religious and Secular Pilgrimage: Journeys Redolent with Meaning" reflects on the structure of pilgrimage, while Duncan's (1995) "Art Museum as Ritual" introduced Victor Turner's concept of the liminal, applicable here as a temporary state or place that is the antithesis of the everyday. Eric Weiner's (2012) *New York Times* article,

“Where Heaven and Earth Come Closer” offered criteria for identifying transformative places. Weiner (2012) proposes the concept of “thin places” to describe spaces where “heaven and earth meet,” not necessarily in a religious sense, but to describe places that “unmask one, that disorient, that confuse [...] through which we lose our bearings and find new ones. Or not. Either way, we are jolted out of old ways of seeing the world, and therein lies the transformative magic of travel” (p. 10).

In utilizing the Google Map project for the reflective Pilgrimage Research Paper students were called upon to more deeply consider the quality and nature of their educational and travel experience, since individual pinned and documented sites now served as source material through which to reflect upon study abroad as a form of pilgrimage. In this sense, the Google Map project became autoethnographic, embracing and foregrounding the student’s subjectivity as they considered their own responses to situations and peoples encountered in a different culture.

In pulling the Google Map project into the realm of autoethnography, it came to function very much like a medieval-era pilgrimage itinerary map. As early as the Byzantine era, scholars and pilgrims compiled inventories of places to be traversed by pilgrims. Many itineraries took the form of lists, others were interactive and cartographic, as for example Matthew Paris’ famous “*Chronica majora*,” a medieval road map linking London with the most famous centers of pilgrimage, Rome and Jerusalem. Written and illustrated in ca. 1250 CE in the Benedictine abbey of St. Albans, England, the map and inventory is striking in its dynamic and participatory

design. Each itinerary page contains folded flaps of paper appended to the pages depicting Italy. Each flap bears anecdotal information, notes, and points of interest penned by Paris. When opened, each flap, like a pin on the Google Maps, transforms the route and cartographic map, enriching the meaning of the marked places with personalized and subjective reflections penned by the pilgrim (Connolly, 1999).

Student Reflection on Pilgrimage Paper

The interactive quality of Paris' map is not unlike the participatory, performative, contemplative, and subjective "place making" aspect of the Google Map project as is clear from the following autoethnographic account by participating student Emily Klump, who writes:

My Google Maps project also helped me with my pilgrimage paper assignment. For the paper, I had to define pilgrimage and write about three pilgrimage sites--one outside of Italy, one in Montepulciano, and then one other site from our trip. The Google Maps project helped me with this paper because I was able to sort through all the sites I visited and remember those that I had forgotten. I used the Google Maps to eventually choose my sites from the study abroad: St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City and Piazza San Francesco in Montepulciano.

For St. Peter's, I wrote notes on the map including, "pieta, pilgrimage site, many popes buried there, and takes 45 minutes to get to the top." I uploaded seven pictures, including one of the pietas that I took while I was there. The map helped me chose St. Peter's because my notes gave me things to write about in my paper. I wrote about how St. Peter's is a pilgrimage site, and it was a pilgrimage site for me as well as thousands of others. I wrote about how I felt when I walked in and saw the beauty of the church, and my pictures helped to remind me when I was writing.

In that portion of the paper, I really emphasized the size of both the church and the crowd of people coming to visit. My map helped me with this because all of my pictures caught the crowds, and the church was so big that I had to take multiple pictures if I wanted to get the same area from floor to ceiling. I built up the church in my mind, so the size of the actual basilica represented its presence in my head.

Inside the basilica, I felt changed. The church was overwhelmingly beautiful, covered floor to ceiling with artwork. There was also Michelangelo's *Pieta*, and seeing such a famous work of art in person, and inside such a famous church, was an amazing experience. I struggled to get a picture to put on the map that really captured how I felt.

Every part of going to St. Peter's was part of the pilgrimage experience, even the journey by subway and waiting in line. Even the pin on the map showed that getting to St. Peter's was a journey: It was in the Vatican City and quite removed from the other locations in Rome that we visited. We had a longer journey than usual on the subway to get to the Vatican City and then we had a long walk to the basilica. I wrote about waiting in line, "Just getting into the church was a pilgrimage in itself, as we had to wait in a long line and stand in the sun. We had some interactions with strangers as we noticed people trying to cut the line. It seemed wrong that people were dishonestly trying to get into a church, but I guess that wanting to see such an important site does that to people." While waiting in line, I was able to get some great pictures of the outside of St. Peter's to put on my map, so there were definitely some positives to the journey being so long. I was able to reflect on where I was, which made St. Peter's Basilica such a great location for the pilgrimage paper.

St. Peter's Basilica was a thin place for me. In class, we discussed the concept of "thin places" as somewhere where heaven meets earth. They are transformative, and a person leaves different than they came in. Thin places are traditionally thought of as religious spaces such as churches, but they can be secular locations as well. St. Peter's was a traditional thin place. I felt transformed after seeing such a famous church that I had heard about my whole life. I wrote in my paper, "When I left St. Peter's, I felt as if I had achieved a Catholic milestone. I had traveled to a place that was built and rebuilt several times, both inside my head and in real life. I saw a famous work of art and saw many more transformative works that I didn't even know were there." The map serves as proof that I really did go to St. Peter's Basilica, and I will never forget how transformed I felt.

I knew what St. Peter's was when I pinned it on the map before I left for Italy, and it was one of the locations that I was most looking forward to going to. This makes the pilgrimage location I chose in Montepulciano surprising. I chose Piazza di San Francesco, a location that I had never heard of until I got to Montepulciano. Even after the first time I visited the piazza, I didn't know the name of it or how to come back to it again until it was time to upload the pictures. I fell in love with Piazza di San Francesco because it was truly an example of a thin place. Looking out at the sunset, I felt that there was something different about the air out there. It looked like I was looking into a photograph or a painting, not a real place. The experience was unforgettable, and if I didn't have the map, I probably

wouldn't have remembered that it was Piazza di San Francesco where I had that experience.

My pilgrimage paper would not have been the same without my Google Maps project. The map helped me sort through all the locations I visited and was my own personal guidebook to the places I visited. When planning a pilgrimage, it is necessary to use a map, and that is what I did. Being able to put pictures and notes on the map helped a lot because everything was in one place and was super easy to use as a reference. I used the information in my map to help me write my paper. I think that using the map was the best way to organize the information from my trip and use to help me write my paper. (personal communication, October 8, 2018).

Conclusion

In conclusion, let us return to the three principles that grounded the Google Maps project and its corresponding paper/assignments: 1.) transformative learning in study abroad often occurs as a result of reflective practices; 2.) those reflective practices often involve a temporary locating of ourselves or, at least, a tracing of where we have been, where we are, and where we are going; and 3.) that some of our best reflection can include a variety of multi-media formats, not just writing. Actualizing these principles in reverse order, Harper and Stephenson enabled students to record and analyze their experiences of space and place in Italy as part of their Google Maps project. Their textual and visual postings on this digital map became their primary source of invention for more sustained and thoughtful reflection in their pilgrimage papers, which drew on autoethnographic practices. The combination of mapping and reflection allowed the students to gain insight into how these new experiences of historical and modern space and place, along with the difficulties encountered, brought about a transformation in how they view the world and themselves.

This transformation is subtly revealed in Emily Klump's reflections of first her Google Maps project and then her pilgrimage paper. Her Google Maps reflection demonstrates how she used the Google Maps tool as a source of invention, contact zone, and place-making. By uploading factual information, personal reflections, and photographs, she was able to connect the spatial and temporal co-presence of subjects and places previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctions, to document her own "representational" or "lived space" as third space experiences of those sites, and to trace her own wayfinding between those sites. This is movement through space and time is particularly illustrated in her descriptions of *Santa Maria degli Angeli e dei Martiri* and the Baths of Diocletian, a Renaissance Church and a bath of the late Roman Republic. The two structures, which Michelangelo connected when he designed the church's cupola to be attached to the large vaults of the former Roman bath, draw together the 4th and the 16th centuries into one space. Both structures stand across from Italy's central train station, *Roma Termini*, originally built during the 1860s and then remodeled in the 1940s, and which houses several modern stores and restaurants, including one of Italy's few McDonald's. Although she simply uploads photos and factual material about the baths (importantly, the students were unable to enter into the museum and thus unable to experience that space), she enthusiastically describes her experience of the church ("I thought that it was really beautiful, and I could really feel God"), revealing a keen sense of self within that space. Moreover, while she does not describe the walk from the baths to the church, her actual map traces the movement between the two structures in much the same way that she traced and mapped out

her free weekend in Verona and Venice. In pulling this together, Emily Klump's Google Map acts as an electronic journal or set of field notes with the important exception that the text and photographs that constitute the notes for each site are connected spatial on a digitized map.

Klump's reflection on her pilgrimage paper, including the role that her Google Maps project played in shaping that paper, reveals how she moved from the simple recording of data and experience to a deeper reflection that demonstrates the transformational learning that took place within herself. Where she was only able to record bits and pieces of her experiences on her digital map, she is able to expand and reflect upon them in the paper. For example, in her discussion of St. Peter's, she was able to emphasize "the size of both the church and the crowd of people coming to visit" in a manner that could not be fully captured in the multiple pictures that she had uploaded to her Google Map (E. Klump, personal communication, October 8, 2018). More importantly, the pilgrimage paper gave shape and meaning to her experience within those spaces. As noted earlier in the paper, Phil Cousineau (1998) reminds us that pilgrimage is "a powerful metaphor for any journey with the purpose of finding something that matters deeply to the traveler" (p. 7). It is clear that Klump initially sees her own journey to and through these two places (the basilica and the piazza) as movement through a series of points on an abstract map. Ironically, she uses a hyper-modern tool to gain a sense of connectedness through history, something a lot of American students lack. While she describes her own desire to see St. Peter's before she even leaves the United States as the beginning of her pilgrimage, she interprets the long wait to enter St. Peter's as an important

part of her pilgrim's experience. Moreover, it is not an experience of immediate gratification; within her reflection of that journey, she moves from mere student to an engaged pilgrim. Not only does she experience the basilica as a student, learning its history and construction, she also interacts with it as a pilgrim, noting that for her, St. Peter's was a "thin place", a transformational experience, "a place that was built and rebuilt several times, both inside my head and in real life" (personal communication, Oct. 8, 2018).

To assess the value of the Google Maps project as a vehicle to engender reflective and transformative learning, it is clear that the project was a success as it was favorably received by sixteen of the seventeen participating students. While one student found no benefit to the assignment, sixteen students noted the positive benefits within their pilgrimage papers and in sharing their Google Map assignments with the class. Students noted that it enhanced visual comprehension of places and their location in space prior to travel; served as a tool by which to document their travel experience, as a form of journaling in real-time, as a vehicle for gathering primary research; for the central repository of information linking textbook, lectures, and fieldtrips; and as a touchstone for autoethnographic inquiry. Students also provided valuable feedback regarding assignment negatives. For some students there were unforeseen technology challenges in uploading images to individual pins; the use of certain programs resulted in images loading sideways, or not loading at all. Students who did not upload many images found that Google then auto-loaded stock images to their personal pins. The time needed to take, curate, and upload images to pins far exceeded expected time projections made by

instructors. However, overall, the benefits of the project outweighed the negatives. Of all the graded assignments, the Google Maps project clearly stood out as most meaningful in enhancing active learning and participation in the study abroad experience. Furthermore, it transformed participants from being individual students to active shapers of the collective study abroad endeavor since students also presented aspects of their Google Map projects to the class. While Google Maps have the potential to be shared widely as open documents on the web, the instructors chose to retain the private journaling potential of the Google Maps feature; in this way students could hopefully record information and form perspectives in an authentic safe space. Towards the end of the study abroad experience, though, all participating students shared chosen aspects of their Google Map work with the class as a whole. The collective sharing of individual responses to the assignment worked to create an inclusive sense of community while foregrounding the diverse and multiple creative ways in which the mapping project can be interpreted. Student privacy was maintained since the Google Map functioned as a form of intimate journaling, yet, it simultaneously engaged the digital media's more public domain as an arena for shared experiences, resources, and research.

References

- Clark, G. (2004). *Rhetorical Landscapes in America: Variations on a Theme from Kenneth Burke*. Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press.
- Clifford, J. (1997). *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Connolly, D. (1999). Imagined Pilgrimage in the Itinerary Maps of Matthew Paris. *The Art Bulletin*, 81(4), 598-622.

- Cousineau, P. (1998). *The Art of Pilgrimage*. San Francisco, CA: Conari Press.
- Craig, C. J., Zou, Y., & Poimbeauf, R. (2015). Journal writing as a way to know culture: Insights from a study abroad program. *Teachers Teaching: Theory and Practice*, 21(4), 427-489.
- Digance, J. (2006). Religious and Secular Pilgrimage: Journeys Redolent with Meaning. In T. Dallen (Ed.), *Tourism Religion and Spiritual Journeys* (pp. 36 - 48). London, England: Routledge.
- Duncan, C. (1995). The Art Museum as Ritual. In D. Preziosi (Ed.), *The Art of Art History: A Critical Anthology* (pp. 424 - 552). Oxford, England: Oxford University Press.
- Frankl, V. E. (1962). *Man's Search for Meaning*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Hillocks, G. (1996). *Teaching Writing as Reflective Practice*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Lefebvre, H. (1992). *The Production of Space*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing.
- Margry, P. (2008). Secular Pilgrimage: A Contradiction in Terms? In P. Margry (Ed.), *Shrines and Pilgrimages in the Modern World: New Itineraries into the Sacred* (pp.13 - 46). Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Amsterdam University Press.
- Pratt, M. L. (1992). *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*. London, England: Routledge.
- Reynolds, N. (2007). *Geographies of Writing: Inhabiting Places and Encountering Difference*. Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press.
- Savicki, V., & Price, M. V. (2015). Student reflective writing: Cognition and affect before, during, and after study abroad. *Journal of College Student Development*, 56, 587-601.
- Saviki, V., & Price, M. V. (2017). Components of reflection: A longitudinal analysis of study abroad student blog posts. *Frontiers: The Interdisciplinary Journal of Study Abroad*, 29(2), 51-62.
- Schon, D. (1984). *The Reflective Practitioner: How Professionals Think in Action*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Soja, E. (1996). *Thirdspace: Journeys to Other Real-and-Imagined Places*. Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell Publishers.
- Strantz, A. (2015). Wayfinding in global contexts: Mapping localized practices with mobile devices. *Computers and Composition*, 38, 164-176.
- Weiner, E. (2012, March 11). Where Heaven and Earth Come Closer. *New York Times*, p. 10.

Considering the History of Education Abroad Programs to Create Assignments Serving both the Academic & Professional Needs of Students

Lara Smith-Sitton and Joan McRae

Abstract

This contribution explores two technology-based assignments—a travel journal & video bio and a Wikipedia translation project—that were developed for implementation in study abroad courses. Developed in consideration of historical and contemporary study abroad program structures, instructors and program directors can modify and adapt the assignments described for many different courses and locations. Each assignment builds upon specific learning outcomes emphasizing international components that advance critical language, research, and writing skills. Secondary goals of these assignments are the creation of deliverables that articulate to future employers the depth and value of education abroad programs and how these experiences have prepared students who participate to engage in careers in the global marketplace. Learning objectives, considerations about technology requirements, frameworks of the assignments, and a rationale for the components are discussed in detail.

In the 21st century, college study abroad programs articulate four primary purposes or arguments for their value: “the curricular argument, the cross-cultural argument, the career enhancement argument, and the development argument” (Hoffa & DePaul, 2010, p. 8). Angela M. Passareilli and David A. Kolb (2012), recognizing these foci for study abroad programs, see the interconnectedness of the arguments and student benefit:

Study abroad programs are rich with possibilities for meaningful and transformative learning. . . . For students who move mindfully through the study abroad experience, it has the potential to change their world view,

provide a new perspective on their course of study, and yield a network of mindful-expanding relationships. (p. 137)

However, these researchers also note the potential for study abroad programs to become little more than “a glorified vacation,” contending that all involved with the teaching in international programs must understand student learning and ways to maximize their experiences: “Attention must be paid to designing a learning experience that helps students fully absorb and integrate their experiences at increasing levels of complexity” (Passarelli & Kolb, 2012, p. 138).

While this seems commonsensical, crafting study abroad assignments and programming can be challenging. What kinds of assignments and activities can result in impactful and unique learning in international settings? What components encourage student engagement and strong work product? How can technology expand traditional classroom assignments rooted in reflection, research, and skill acquisition for rich learning opportunities? In response to these questions, this essay will discuss two assignments created for study abroad writing and language courses: a travel journal with a video bio component and a Wikipedia translation project.

Each of these projects implements digital- and technology-based components that can be adapted and modified to serve a range of disciplines, classes, and locales. These assignments were crafted not only in consideration of the research questions cited above but also through an understanding of historical and contemporary goals for study abroad programs. The thought-process behind these assignments was to rely upon the places visited by and experiences of the students as resources. The assignments and related activities then tie directly to institutional and programmatic goals as well as employer needs and student interests. Our hope is that instructors

may gain new insights for these assignments or revisions of current projects for students in international teaching spaces. For example, a psychology student in London considering clinical practice might visit the Bethlem Royal Hospital Museum of the Mind and explore the 17th century work of Robert Burton entitled *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, which led to theoretical work regarding the value of writing in therapeutic practice. This student might pull from the information learned to create a video bio emphasizing their knowledge about the intersections of writing and mental illness treatment. A library sciences student studying in Paris might visit the American Library in Paris and find that there are opportunities for correction and expansion of the Wikipedia page in both French and English. This student would advance not only foreign language skills but also articulate knowledge acquired about how the American Library Association sought to support U.S. armed forces and other English-speaking individuals living in Paris during World War I. Both of these examples provide opportunities for students to connect historical explorations to contemporary concerns, including their professional interests.

From the Past to the Present: Goals in U.S. Study Abroad Programs

According to data published by NAFSA: Institute of International Educators, in the 2015–16 school year, 325,332 of the 19,962,458 students enrolled in U.S. colleges and universities participated in a study abroad program. This reflects an increase of 3.8% from 2014–15 (NAFSA, 2016). The opportunities for study abroad experiences and institutional support for U.S. college students has grown exponentially since the formalization of international learning pursuits started in the late 19th century. Originally, study abroad programs took young women from elite

northeastern colleges on a sort of “European Grand Tour,” which focused primarily on language acquisition, cultural exposure, and sightseeing (ASHE, Twombly, Salisbury, Tumanut, & Klute, 2012, p. 15). The growth and codification of international learning programs continued throughout the 20th and 21st centuries with much broader foci on pedagogy, student development, and career-focused opportunities; in addition, these programs created a conduit for the federal government to promote Americanism abroad and prepare citizens for productive cultural engagement in the world (Mukherjee, 2012). As the places and purposes of study abroad expanded, students’ options for courses, assignments, and activities they could pursue also grew.

Early programs such as the Delaware Foreign Study Plan, founded in 1923 and continued until World War II, provided a model for modern-day, credit-earning study abroad structures. Originally envisioned as a travel-focused curriculum, this program became an academic immersion program in France where students earned academic credit for coursework at French universities under the direction and supervision of an American professor (Walton, 2005, p. 255). Eight students participated in the first trip in the early 1920s and approximately 1,200 students participated by the end of the program. This initiative was mutually beneficial to both American and French universities: French universities wanted to put forward the strength of their universities and build strong relationships between citizens in both countries post-WWI; the University of Delaware, specifically, wanted to build foreign relations and economic education programs to facilitate American business growth (Walton, 2005, pp. 160-161). Following World War II, this model was

expanded to include other initiatives beyond just single institution-based projects. Through legislative support, notably the National Defense Education Act, the Smith-Mundt Act, and Foreign Assistance Act, the Fulbright Program and Peace Corps joined and expanded the concept of study abroad initiatives to include other international academic and service options. In addition, substantial support through funding and government-sponsored organizations provided for more undergraduate international educational initiatives (ASHE et. al., 2012 p. 17). These changes revealed an acceptance of the potential for study abroad to do more than simply serve as a supplemental classroom or academic experience—study abroad was viewed as essential facet of American higher education in order to help U.S. citizens prepare for engagement in a range of diplomatic and professional endeavors in the world. It can be challenging for students to articulate clearly how specific study abroad experiences directly prepare students for professional goals, yet assignments that challenge students to make those connections and see how sharing their own preparedness creates opportunities that could grow enrollment and affirm rich value and impact discussions. It may be as well that the structures of these assignments allow for initiation before leaving and then are expanded in global spaces—a scaffolding approach.

As higher education study abroad programs ebbed and flowed through the last third of the 20th century—including weathering the impact of the Vietnam War, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks—interest and support for international learning initiatives, which included study abroad, continued to grow. The purposes for these programs, however, were reshaped with

four primary motivations: global citizenship, economic competitiveness, peacemaking, and national security (Mukherjee, 2012, p. 85). With a public focus on accountability and value-based assessments surrounding the rising costs of higher education, recently many of the arguments in support of study abroad shifted away from the more general learning potentials related to cultural exposure and foreign language skills to purposes that connected to pre-professionalization topics such as career-preparedness and business growth in the global marketplace (Jon, Shin, & Fry, 2018, p. 2). A study conducted on behalf of the American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU) (Hart Research Associates, 2006), *How Should Colleges Prepare Students to Succeed in Today's Global Economy*, captured that employers do not prioritize foreign language skills in new hires: only 3% of employers surveyed selected foreign language proficiency as one of the most important skills they look for in new hires. Yet, somewhat contradictorily, the same study also revealed that 46% of employers wanted colleges and universities to place more emphasis on proficiency in a foreign language. This seems to create an opportunity to demonstrate to employers and to students the value of foreign language study. Assignments that integrate language proficiency along with research, knowledge acquisition, and attention to detail give students a chance to explain to employers a specific learning experience and how they see the skills acquired transferring to their career responsibilities, particularly those in the global marketplace.

Ranked above the statistic regarding language proficiencies was a desire by business executives for colleges and universities to place more emphasis on “global

issues and developments and their implications in the future (72%) . . . the role of the United States in the world (60%) . . . [and] cultural values and traditional in America and other countries (53%)” (Hart Research Associates, 2006, p. 2). The report also cited that “63% of business executives interviewed [stated] that too many recent college graduates do not have the skills to be successful in today’s global economy . . . [and] nine in ten (87%) of employers agree that America’s colleges and universities need to raise the quality of student achievement to ensure the United States remains competitive in the global economy” (Hart Research Associates, 2006, p. 9). Interestingly, whereas the report identified the desire for more attention to learning outcomes inherent in study abroad programming, study abroad participation was not specifically discussed or even eluded to as a desired educational experience in the 2006 report. Crafting assignments that provide opportunities for our students to articulate what they uniquely experienced in education abroad programs and how their learning responded to the demands of today’s employers is essential.

Fast forward 12 years to July 2018, Hart Research Associates and the American Association of Colleges and Universities conducted a similar study with employers entitled *Fulfilling the American Dream: Liberal Education and the Future of Work*. This study, as well as several studies since the 2006 study, have directly examined the perspectives of employers about college-level study abroad programs. In 2018, 93% of business executives and hiring managers cited they would be *much more likely* to hire a recent college graduate with applied or project-based learning experiences—study abroad programs were specifically included in this category.

Studying abroad was ranked seventh as a valued facet of college education behind other endeavors such as internships, courses with significant writing assignments, and service-learning projects. The study cites that nearly 55% of employers would be *more likely* and nearly 20% would be *much more likely* to hire a student who pursued a study abroad experience (Hart Research Associates, 2018, p. 16). And while foreign language proficiency was still valued, it was placed last on the list of “key learning outcomes”: approximately 23% of business executives and hiring managers considered language skills other than English as very important. Interestingly, this research also revealed approximately 70% of those surveyed believed that college students are only “fairly effective in communicating about the skills and knowledge they have gained in college that will be important for workplace success” (Hart Research Associates, 2018, p. 4). If students are unable to explain the value of their educational experiences, they are not able to be competitive for jobs and careers they would like to pursue. Seizing the opportunity to help students make the connections and share these connections with others supports our work as teachers and program designers as well as helps students reach their personal and professional goals.

Data collected in recent years affirms that opportunities for study abroad experiences and institutional support for students continue to grow at American universities in part because these programs create valuable experiential learning experiences and because employers want to hire more “internationally competent personnel” (NAFSA, 2016, par. 1). Research confirms the value of studying abroad, including recognition by the AACU that “Diversity/Global Learning” is one of ten

high-impact educational practices (Kuh, 2008). Yet, another recent study found that nearly 40% of U.S. companies surveyed asserted they missed international business opportunities because of a lack of internationally competent personnel. This same report provided that “when 95% of consumers live outside of the United States, we cannot afford to ignore this essential aspect of higher education” (NAFSA, 2016). Employers want what is commonly described as “internationally competent personnel,” and this includes not only language, writing, and communication practices but also basic competencies relating to travel and transportation as well as the confidence, willingness, and desire to work outside of the U.S. (Slaughter, 2013).

The data points summarized here present a deeper understanding of the goals of higher education to respond to public and private sector demands for the focus of educational programming and the skills and competencies sought by today’s employers for engagement in the global marketplace. While study abroad experiences offer a range of transformational experiences for students, creating assignments that deliberately consider and articulate learning outcomes connected to narratives regarding professional growth, skill development, and career preparation can motivate students and financial stakeholders, as well as employers and governmental agencies, to continue to support study abroad academic initiatives in higher education.

Assignment One: Articulating Relevant Experience—Travel Journal and Video Bio Assignment

This first assignment has two parts: first, a travel journal component and second, a short video bio building from a reflective writing entry. In a course that focuses

on writing and communication practices in the global marketplace,¹ this assignment challenges students to capture critical facets of their individual study abroad program and consider how their experiences may relate to their futures. Additionally, the assignment calls upon students to articulate specifically the skills and knowledge they acquired in a digital format that can be incorporated into a project portfolio, LinkedIn profile, or other web-based space. This assignment responds directly to the learning priorities valued most by employers:² oral communication, critical thinking/analytical reasoning, working independently, writing, and applying knowledge/skills to real-world settings (Hart Research Associates, 2018, p. 12).

The portion of the assignment that focuses on travel journal entries connects students' experiences abroad to common behavioral interview questions, which allow for advanced reflective writing exercises that give students the opportunity to look back and decipher what may have been important or significant about experience during their time abroad. Reflective writing exercises are commonplace in high school English and first-year college composition courses, so this facet of the assignment should be familiar to students. But here, the writings will have a different purpose and venue: students will deeply consider how the study abroad

¹ This assignment would work well in courses such as management communications, workplace or business writing, or career-based courses that serve a variety of disciplines including English, languages, business, marketing, and communications.

² Research from a range of organizations confirms these skills are those most desired by employers and often where students fall short. The Hart Research Report series for the AACU provides an excellent resource; however, additional useful data can be accessed through the National Association of College and Employers (<http://www.nacweb.org>).

program has specifically prepared them for their career goals in a world where globally-competent and culturally-aware professionals are needed. The video bio is an extension of the writing component that calls students to articulate the value of their experience through a short digital clip that allows for development of strong oral communication skills and articulation of international experiences and competencies. The emphasis of this assignment is to tell the audience how they possess and advanced certain skills and abilities because of their educational experience outside of the U.S.

Kathleen Blake Yancey's work in reflection and metacognition in composition studies has consistently articulated the use of these practices to help students understand their experiences and develop knowledge in a range of contexts both inside and outside of the classroom. She writes specifically about the procedure of reflection:

Reflection is dialectical, putting multiple perspectives into play with each other in order to produce insight. Procedurally, reflection entails a *looking forward* to goals we might obtain as well as a *casting backward* to see where we have been. When we reflect, we thus *project* and *review*, often putting the projects and reviews in dialogue with each other. (Yancey, 2016, p. 123)

Again, what makes this assignment different than other travel writing or journal assignments is that students are guided by a series of prompts that mirror common behavioral or neurological interview questions—the same kinds of questions they may face when interviewing for jobs or graduate programs following their college studies. Inquiries such as “tell me about yourself” or “discuss a time when you had to take a leading role” have the potential to reveal challenges, triumphs, and skills

acquired or put into action in the study abroad program that highlight important learning and knowledge acquired in international settings. Students responding to the same questions who have not pursued a study abroad program will not be able to craft responses focused on competencies gained through learning in a different environment.

There are any number of resources—from magazine articles to books to career planning materials—that emphasize the importance of being prepared for interviews. Most cite that employers are seeking not just to learn about skills but to better understand how a candidate will likely perform under certain circumstances. One of the most effective ways for a candidate to connect their unique skills and experience is through stories that show what makes them distinctive. John Lees, author of *The Interview Expert: How to Get the Job You Want* and *Job Interviews: Top Answers to Tough Questions*, advises to write narratives in response to possible interview questions before interviews: “People buy into stories far more than they do evidence or data” (Gallo, 2012, par. 4). The stories should be focused, concise, and have a clear point that reveals something unique about an individual’s experience. This assignment takes the idea of a reflective travel journal and connects it to prompts that align with standard behavioral interview questions. Students gain important life-skills that help classroom reflective writing assignments have greater value beyond grade-based tasks. With a focus on the professional impact of this assignment, students may engage more with the content focus and learning outcomes.

Students are given the freedom to design their travel journals in the electronic format that best serves their individual needs. Giving students a choice in how to capture their reflections also gives the opportunity for explorations of digital tools that they may be familiar with or want to learn more about. As Miles Kimball (2005) explains in his work regarding ePortfolios, “Students grow as lifelong learners by managing their work, by using their discretion to choose which artifacts best show their accomplishments, and by explaining how those artifacts show a progress of learning” (p. 437). The technology needed for this assignment includes a computer or tablet and internet access, as well as familiarity or use of a digital platform such as Google Docs or Dropbox, an ePortfolio, or possibly a blogging platform (such as Wix, Wordpress, or Weebly). Students provide the instructor with access to the electronic repository for the assignment.

The assignment begins with an introduction to journaling and behavioral interview questions. Students receive short open access readings from online sources that provide a foundational understanding of these concepts before a class discussion that can include both in class and oral practice.³ This becomes the framework for how students are to create the travel journal entries. A particularly good focus for drafting behavioral interview responses is the “STAR” method.⁴ The

³ There are a number of excellent resources for students exploring the topic of professional journaling and behavioral interviews, including “Want to be an Outstanding Leader? Keep a Journal” (Adler, 2016), “6 Ways Keeping a Journal Can Help Your Career (The Muse, 2012), “Behavioral Interviews” (Princeton, 2018), and “the 9 Most Common Behavioral Interview Questions and Answers” (Haden, 2017).

⁴ The STAR Method is an acronym that stands for Situation, Task, Action, and Result. The approach commonly taught in business schools and used by career development programs is an effective writing framework for this assignment. There are a range of resources, including the description provided by the Yale Office of Career Strategy cited herein.

focus of each entry, however, must be within the context of the study abroad program or global or international competencies. Each story or vignette captured in the narratives reveals students' individual or small group experiences abroad. Students are then given an assignment summary that gives two different questions each week—they select one of the prompts. While students must keep each entry between 500 and 750 words, videos, images, and other visual components may supplement the written components of their digital journals.

Upon completion of the journals, a class discussion highlights the challenges and successes of the assignment. Students are asked to discuss how they managed their time in keeping up with a longitudinal project over the weeks of the course. Students can share narratives that they felt were particularly strong and learn from their classmates how they crafted entries for their assignments. Each student then selects one entry and expands it into a short video project that takes the written entry into action. Following a discussion about the use of video resumes and bios on LinkedIn and in project portfolios, students will create a two- to three-minute video that includes images and/or film as well as their voices to reveal unique experiences that capture something valuable about the study abroad experience that they believe will transfer to their lives outside of the classroom.

There are many examples of how students will develop these short video projects. The equipment needed is a video device—phone, tablet, camera, video camera, or even a GoPro. Students need their laptops for editing and sound recording. Twenty-first-century students are typically quite familiar with how to create short video projects—software usually comes installed with computers, or

free software is readily available for download and use. As far as topics and visuals, again, students have the freedom to produce the digital project however they would like—some may elect to be in the video or simply write a script and read it as a voice-over. For example, a student might elect to tell a short story about a challenge with navigating the Paris Metro, which might include historical research and a situation or problem they had to solve that shows their familiarity with this public transportation system and its use abroad. This, among other things, reveals a student's understanding of the transportation available and his or her confidence to navigate and travel in unfamiliar cities. Another student might elect to reveal a visit to the American Library in Paris, where he or she watched videos about European refugees in order to articulate the importance of understanding the sources for research when traveling or working abroad and how to access information. Connecting research to new situations would be valuable for any number of professions, including library sciences, writing, editing, publishing, and within specific business and nonprofit organizations. The options are limitless for the video bios. What is important here is the focus on written and oral communication, alongside of visual and digital projects, that allow students to develop effective ways to articulate the value of their time abroad for future employers or graduate programs as the imagined audience.

The assignment itself sets the formatting options for students and emphasizes the freedom they have to create a platform that works well for them. Recognizing the demands of being away from established study practices, students are challenged to find a time each week (or more often if more than a weekly journal

entry is required) when they will draft, edit, and proofread the short writing assignment. As previously mentioned, students are asked to generate a 500- to 750-word essay that connects an experience in the study abroad program to a selected behavioral interview question in the travel journal. The goal is to challenge students to be able to craft responses that pull from their time outside of the U.S. Below are 10 behavioral interview questions that students will craft responses to within the context of their experiences studying abroad:

- Tell me about a time when you acted as a team leader in an unfamiliar setting or situation.
- Tell me about a time when you had to resolve conflict with a team of individuals you did not know well.
- Tell me about a time when you took on a supporting role, rather than a leadership role, with a group of individuals you have not worked with in the past.
- Tell me about a time when you pursued an experience beyond what was required, and what you learned as a result of the initiative you took.
- Tell me about a time when you had to juggle too many tasks in a new setting, and how you managed to organize your time to complete what was essential.
- Identify three interesting places that you have visited that shaped your interests and personal or professional goals and articulate how and why.
- Describe a high-pressure situation that you experienced, and how you coped to move through the experience.
- Share an experience when you had to solve a problem creatively, and how technology or past experience enabled you to improve the situation.
- Describe a recent situation when you had to “think on your feet” and motivate others to join you.
- In what areas do you feel you have special expertise or unique knowledge, and how did you gain it?

The assignments are evaluated for clarity, creativity, writing mechanical concerns, and evidence of strong writing. Students are also graded on the use of the technology they selected—specifically, how their choice and the integration of technological tools strengthened the form and format of the entries.

Following the written entries, students select one and expand that answer with images, video, and sound. Students are encouraged to develop a project that they would feel comfortable placing in their project portfolio for an audience beyond the classroom. Students may elect to show pictures of sites and locations or include their images within those places. Here, written and oral communication practices come together. Students are revealing to employers unique skills, abilities, and experiences explored in settings beyond American classrooms that affirms their ability to work in diverse settings in the global marketplace. The focus is to highlight examples of global competence. Like the journal entries, the video bios are graded on the clarity of the message, strength of messaging (both written and oral communication components), creative approach, and use of technology.

The primary objective of the travel journal assignment is to challenge students to use reflective writing assignments as a tool for learning while developing a sustainable writing practice to serve long-term interests in careers with writing at the heart of the job descriptions. Whether students plan to write creatively, develop content for companies and organizations, or simply use journaling as a way to develop strong leadership and writing skills, the goal is to help students learn about themselves as writers and deliberately integrate writing into their professional and personal lives. The hope is that these assignments will provide a framework and

approach for other multimedia projects for either career-focused goals or possibly within organizations where storytelling and digital narratives are needed. Students invest a significant amount of time and money in study abroad academic programs—maximizing these programs will prompt deeper understanding of the many things students can learn in international settings.

The learning outcomes for this two-part assignment include:

- Students will demonstrate how experiences and assignments in study abroad programs respond to the skills and abilities desired by 21st-century employers.
- Students will be able to define and articulate what is meant by the term “internationally competent personnel.”
- Students will be able to apply principles of primary and secondary research in class assignments and articulate the value of the research method selected.
- Students will be able to collect evidence and consider diverse audiences in order to produce assignments focused on research and writing skills.
- Students will be able to engage in and appreciate the collaborative, social aspects of writing while using writing as a tool for learning and articulation of experience.
- Students will be able to effectively apply the grammatical, stylistic, and mechanical formats and conventions in written and digital deliverables.
- Students will be able to evaluate and articulate critiques of the work of others both professionally and constructively.
- Students will be able to produce a variety of writing and digital deliverables appropriate for professional project portfolios that will serve as evidence of research, collaboration, oral communication, project management, editing, and writing abilities.
- Students will be able to analyze the connections between written and oral communication through the incorporation of technology and visuals into assignments.

Assignment Two: Demonstrating Language and Translation

Proficiency in a Wikipedia Project

In a study abroad program for graduate students in a French language education program, the program leader designed an assignment that required learning how to edit, compose, and translate Wikipedia pages. This assignment was designed to show students the history and culture they were observing and studying as authentic products created through technology, as well as teach them to manipulate these tools for their own consumption. The centerpiece of the course's graded tasks is to create, edit, or amplify a translated Wikipedia page. Now the reputation for reliability of Wikipedia, "the free encyclopedia that anyone can edit," has been somewhat uneven since its inception in 2001. Skepticism about its value as a reference source or an information tool is prominent in most of the literature published since its inception (Abilock, 2012; Callison, 2008; Murey, 2008) and the fact that everyone can change or contribute to it, rendering its articles different from one day to the next, has even been used as a source of comedy on the late night Colbert Report (Brumm, Colbert, & Hoskinson, 2007).

And yet despite the caution of teachers, librarians, and comedians, "Wikipedia has become an essential source of knowledge on the internet" (Antin, 2011). People of all ages, students and non-students alike, use Wikipedia as a resource for finding information—intellectuals and computer geeks are major contributors, but so are professors, high school teachers, students, and everyday people. Moreover, Wikipedia itself has become a growing subject of research; it now maintains a page

to collect journal articles, books, and conference papers focused on it.⁵ A recent study indicates that at least at the university level, faculty members' perceptions of Wikipedia are more positive than before (Soules, 2015), and faculty members are increasingly creating new and unique kinds of assignments that integrate either Wikipedia or a Wikipedia model. The key to using Wikipedia productively is educating students about how it works; prohibiting its use has obviously not been effective at any level of education, high school or university level. As students and teachers learn to modify and build articles, their confidence in Wikipedia as a tool grows stronger. In order to promote partnerships between their site and education, Wikipedia has established an education branch, "Wiki Education," to guide instructors in the design of their assignments.⁶

The global component of Wikipedia is one of its most appealing features; each country has its own branch, written in the official language(s) of the country. The translation of pages from one country and language to another has become essential for the wider dissemination of knowledge across the globe.

To this end, one of the assignments used in this graduate student study abroad trip is the translation of a Wikipedia page from French to English. Instead of being simply graded and filed away, students' projects will be published on Wikipedia, available to all, and contribute to the collective knowledge of English speakers

⁵For lists of the academic work published about Wikipedia, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Academic_studies_of_Wikipedia#Journal_articles. Accessed 11-05-2018.

⁶ More information can be found at <https://wikiedu.org>; testimonials can be seen on the twitter feed: <https://twitter.com/WikiEducation>.

around the world. In order to complete this assignment successfully, two things are required: language competence in both French and English, as well as internet service. Students should have achieved an intermediate level of French or above (as measured by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) proficiency guidelines⁷) so they can maneuver comfortably between languages. In addition, students need access to reliable internet service while in their program, in this case Paris. The students in this program stay at New York University's housing facility in Paris, so we can be assured of a high speed and continuous coverage for uploading and editing purposes.

One of the major benefits of this Wikipedia translation assignment is learning about best, and worst, translation practices. As most of us know, languages do not translate word for word as much as meaning for meaning. It takes careful consideration on the part of the translator to render a thought, rather than just a word, into another language. Google translate and other machine translators can be of only limited assistance in the translation act, although students rarely recognize it until confronted with a machine translation that is incomprehensible. Wikipedia recognizes this fault and marks articles that have been "machine translated," with a designation of MT. It then collects these together on special pages designed to encourage editors proficient in various languages to give the articles particular

⁷ See <https://www.actfl.org/publications/guidelines-and-manuals/actfl-proficiency-guidelines-2012> for full details of the proficiency guidelines.

attention;⁸ at the same time, Wikipedia has launched a project to investigate ways to perfect “machine translation.”⁹

Examination of a short section of an article about the small city of Pont du Chateau in France should illustrate this principle. The translated article is based on the city’s tourism website, composed in French, which has then been translated by machine into English with no human intervention and uploaded to Wikipedia. It was detected and added to the special page requesting further translation work. Evidence of its artificial translation can be seen most glaringly in the second sentence of the History section, by comparing the English, with its misplaced modifiers and inaccurate definitions, with the original French: “Become in the 13th century a true citadel with its ‘old castle’ and its single enclosure, Philippe Auguste made it a garrison city, it equipping soon with two new enclosures with towers, doors, Maigne, Bise, Barrière and carries vault of it, ramparts which one guesses in the plan of the old city.” This translation should read: “In the 13th century, Phillippe Auguste transformed the old chateau and its single wall into a real citadel; later he added two walls with towers, gates, and ramparts to turn it into a garrison city, as can be seen in the map of the old city.” Some earlier version of the original French must have included these details about “Maigne, Bise, Barrière and carries vault of

⁸ “Wikipedia articles needing cleanup after translation from French,” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Wikipedia_articles_needing_cleanup_after_translati_on_from_French

⁹ See for example, this page on the Wikipedia Machine Translation Project: https://meta.wikimedia.org/wiki/Machine_translation

it” which now appear extraneous and incomprehensible in translation. Here is the entry and its translation

Guy de Dampierre s’empara de Pont-du-Château en 1212, pour le compte du roi de France, Philippe Auguste, lequel rattacha la ville à la couronne. Devenue au XIIIe siècle une véritable citadelle avec son « château vieux » et son unique enceinte, Philippe Auguste en fit une ville garnison, la dotant bientôt de deux nouvelles enceintes avec tours, portes et des remparts que l’on devine dans le plan de la vieille ville (“Pont-du-Château,” n.d).

Guy de Dampierre seized the town in 1212 on behalf of Philip II of France, which made the city a Crown possession. Become in the 13th century a true citadel with its "old castle" and its single enclosure, Philippe Auguste made it a garrison city, it equipping soon with two new enclosures with towers, doors, Maigne, Bise, Barrière and carries vault of it, ramparts which one guesses in the plan of the old city (“Pont-du-Château,” n.d). (This section under history and origins of the city on Wikipedia was translated with “machine translation.)

Many translated sites are in better condition than this extreme example, but can still benefit from the editing and potential expansion of a native speaker. A Wikipedia article in English on the Delacroix museum, for example, is quite abbreviated from its French counterpart. The 261 words of the French version of the section “History of the Museum,” has been pared down to a mere 91 words, eliminating the most salient details. An English editor could amplify this site by adding in the facts deleted in the transition from the French version, or might insert information from additional sources. Visiting the museum, for example, could afford an editor with a wealth of additional, reliable sources to flesh out the skeletal

information provided.¹⁰ Their experience on location as well as their immediate contact with the subject both serve to inform their academic product.

Before beginning the assignment, students practice editing in Wikipedia and must become “autoconfirmed users,”—they must have a registered account of more than four days old and must have successfully made at least 10 edits. Educational modules on choosing articles and the how-tos of editing can be accessed by teacher design of a “course” with Wikipedia. Students familiarize themselves with the essentials of creating an article.¹¹

To begin the assignment, students will first need to identify a French site that either needs to be created or translated, or they must identify an already translated site that would benefit from amplification, such as the example above for the Delacroix museum. Having the benefit of being on location in Paris, students can explore the places or people that interest them and then see if Wikipedia has a page in French, along with its corresponding page in English. Another approach is to consult the list of sites that have requested translation, find one that concerns a subject in Paris, and then seek out information about that place or person while in Paris. Yet another possibility is to seek information about a place in Paris or a

¹⁰ Delacroix museum: 6 rue de Furstenberg 75006 Paris

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Musée_national_Eugène_Delacroix

¹¹ For directions on editing, students are required to read “Help: Editing”

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Help:Editing>; for instructions on creating articles, students consult: “Your First Article” https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Your_first_article;

they then practice in the “sandbox” space:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Article_wizard; and finally begin to draft their article with the Article Wizard:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Article_wizard/CreateDraft

French citizen they have already heard about. For example, one student recently discovered a Facebook page for a French author of a book translated into English that she was researching (*The 6:41 to Paris* by Jean-Philippe Blondel), and discovered there was no Wikipedia page in English for him or his book. She contacted him via Facebook, interviewed him through instant messaging and integrated that information along with other published sources to construct a page for him and his book in English.¹²

After choosing a topic, students create a page in English to house the article they will translate from the French. They then begin the translation effort from French into the grammatically correct and neutral style required by Wikipedia. In Paris, they have the opportunity to seek out new sources to integrate into their article, perhaps even take a photograph to illustrate the topic. Projects are graded with a rubric that assesses the degree to which they meet the goals of the assignment.

The advantage of contributing to the Wikipedia encyclopedia project, rather than a traditional translation or research paper assignment, is the satisfaction and confidence that students derive from adding to the collective body of knowledge. At the same time, it is in our best interest to assure the quality of Wikipedia, so frequently consulted by our students, and which should be, and can be, a useful,

¹² The articles were accepted and can be consulted here:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_6:41_to_Paris for the book; the author page is here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Philippe_Blondel. The original article in French is here: https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Philippe_Blondel, but there is no French page yet for his best-selling book. The student's research process was documented by the student in an article published in the university's student magazine, *Collage* Fall 2018 pp. 20-21 (<https://www.mtsu.edu/collage/issues.php>).

accurate, and free tool for the whole world. Educating our students to create and translate Wikipedia pages is the key.

The learning outcomes set forth below are tied to specific facets within the assignment:

- In choosing their subjects, students will be able to discover culturally significant landmarks, establishments, or personalities to investigate while in Paris and articulate the cultural importance of these sites.
- Through the creation of their articles, students will learn to edit and contribute to Wikipedia and evaluate the accuracy of online information.
- By translating a chosen site from French to English, students will apply translation skills to render the French into English through the manipulation of vocabulary, idioms, and grammar.
- In editing their project for fluency in English, students will demonstrate skill in turning the stylistic nuances of French into a readable and neutrally-toned English, thus honing the precision of their English language skills.
- As they integrate additional information to their articles, students will demonstrate effective evaluation skills regarding the credibility of source material necessary to the construction of their articles.

Conclusion

These two assignments consider the evolution of study abroad programs in American higher education with current goals for international academic initiatives and the needs of 21st-century employers. Each assignment builds upon specific learning outcomes in domestic courses by emphasizing international components that students may interact with because of their engagement outside of the U.S. And while versions of these assignments could also be modified for domestic projects, the purpose of these assignments is to show that the students have traveled outside

of the U.S. and these experiences give them an understanding of the complexities of working outside of their home country. Employers desire more “internationally competent personnel”—employees who have traveled abroad and are able to maneuver in spaces beyond U.S. borders—and these assignments. A line on a resume does not necessary articulate the depth and value of education abroad programming. The travel journal and video bio help students articulate valuable experiences in global marketplace that move beyond taking classes in another country. In addition, the Wikipedia assignment puts language skills in action and has students engaging in primary and secondary research as well as translation practices that reveal their attention to detail and ability to identify inaccuracies in resource tools.

The assignments also become more challenging with the incorporation of technology. The technological tools required in each assignment are resources most American students will have access to abroad; however, consideration of what might happen should a student lose their phone or tablet is also important in class discussions at the start of the assignment. Students might be encouraged to bring cameras or other tools that can not only enhance their assignments but also serve as back up technology aids in the event of damage or loss of devices.

Recognizing the desire for college learning to help prepare students directly for entry into today’s careers and job markets, these assignments build upon research, writing, communication, technology, and language skills acquired through undergraduate coursework and provide an opportunity for more development in each of these areas. And, of course, each deliverable—the travel journal and video

bio and the Wikipedia translation—provides students the opportunity to create assignments that have public audiences for their knowledge, skills, and expertise gained through the assignments where the research subject is in an international setting. In returning to the questions that shaped these assignments at the start of this project, these assignments, coupled with the understanding the many purposes of study abroad, allow instructors and program directors to craft assignments and experiences that serve the diverse goals of stakeholders, participants, and future beneficiaries of experiential learning initiatives available to university and college students. In addition, they give students examples and tools needed to articulate their readiness for working in the global marketplace given their experiences outside of the U.S.

References

- Abilock, D. (2012). True—or not? *Educational Leadership*, 69(6), 70-74.
- Adler, N. J. (2016, January 13). Want to be an outstanding leader? Keep a journal. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2016/01/want-to-be-an-outstanding-leader-keep-a-journal>
- Antin, J. (2011, May 7-12). *My kind of people? Perceptions about Wikipedia contributors and their motivations*. Paper presented at CHI 2011: Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems, Vancouver, B.C., Canada. Retrieved from http://pensivepuffin.com/dwmcphd/syllabi/info447_wi14/readings/01-IntroToWikipedia/antin.MyKindofPeople.CHI2011.pdf
- ASHE, Twombly, S. B., Salisbury, M. H., Tumanut, S. D., & Klute, P. (2012). *Study Abroad in a New Global Century: Renewing the promise, refining the purpose*. Retrieved from <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com>
- Brumm, M. (Writer), Colbert, S. (Writer), & Hoskinson, J. (Director). (2007). Barry Lando [Television series episode]. In S. Colbert (Executive producer), *The Colbert Report*. New York, NY: Comedy Central. Retrieved from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=20PIHx_JjEo

- Callison, D. (2008). Information use, authority, reliability. *School Library Media Activities Monthly*, 24(7), 34–37.
- Gallo, A. (2012, September 26). Stand out in your interview. *Harvard Business Review*. Retrieved from <https://hbr.org/2012/09/stand-out-in-your-interview>
- Haden, J. (2017). 9 most common behavioral interview questions and answers. *Inc.* Retrieved from <https://www.inc.com/jeff-haden/9-most-common-behavioral-interview-questions-and-a.html>
- Hart Research Associates. (2006). *How should colleges prepare students to succeed in today's global economy?* American Association of Colleges and Universities. Retrieved from https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/2007_full_report_leap.pdf
- Hart Research Associates. (2018). *Fulfilling the American dream: Liberal education and the future of work.* American Association of Colleges and Universities. Retrieved from <https://www.aacu.org/sites/default/files/files/LEAP/2018EmployerResearchReport.pdf>
- Hoffa, W. W., & DePaul, S. C. (2010). *A history of U.S. study abroad: 1965–Present.* Carlisle, PA: Forum on Education Abroad.
- Jon, J.-E., Shin, Y.-J., & Fry, G. W. (2018). Understanding study abroad participants' career decisions and perspectives in US higher education. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 1–18. doi: 10.1080/03057925.2018.1502608
- Kimball, M. (2005). Database e-portfolio systems: a critical appraisal. *Computers and Composition*, 22(4), 434–458. doi: 10.1016/j.compcom.2005.08.003
- Kuh, G. D. (2008). *High-impact educational practices: What they are, who has access to them, and why they matter.* Washington, D.C.: Association of American Colleges and Universities.
- Mukherjee, M. (2012). US study abroad from the periphery to the center of the global curriculum in the information age. *Policy Futures in Education*, 10(1), 81–89. doi: 10.2304/pfie.2012.10.1.81
- Murey, D. (2008). In defense of Wikipedia. *Law Library Review*, 100(3), 593–599.
- NAFSA: Association of International Educators. (2016). *Trends in U.S. study abroad.* Retrieved from https://www.nafsa.org/Policy_and_Advocacy/Policy_Resources/Policy_Trends_and_Data/Trends_in_U_S_Study_Abroad/
- Passarelli, A. M., & Kolb, D. A. (2012). Using experiential learning theory to promote student learning and development in programs of education abroad. In K. H. Lou, R. M. Paige, & M. Vande Berg (Eds.), *Student learning abroad: what our students are learning, what they're not, and what we can do about it* (pp. 137–161). Sterling, VA: Stylus Publishing.
- Pont-du-Château. (n.d.) In *Wikipedia*. Retrieved February 26, 2019, from <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pont-du-Château>. See also <http://pontduchateau.fr/article/histoire-et-patrimoine>

- Slaughter, M. J. (2013). *American companies and global supply networks: Driving U.S. economic growth and jobs by connecting the world*. Business Roundtable, the United States Council for International Business, and The United States Council Foundation. Retrieved from https://www.uscib.org/docs/2013_american_companies_and_global_supply_networks.pdf
- Soules, A. (2015). Faculty perception of Wikipedia in the California State University System, *New Library World*, 116(3/4), 213-226. doi: 10.1108/NLW-08-2014-0096
- The Muse. (2012). 6 ways keeping a journal can help your career. *Forbes*. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/dailymuse/2012/07/18/6-ways-keeping-a-journal-can-help-your-career/#49e21c837499>
- Walton, W. (2005). Internationalism and the junior year abroad: American students in France in the 1920s and 1930s. *Diplomatic History*, 29, 255–278. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-7709.2005.00473.x
- Yale Office of Career Strategy. (2018). Behavioral interviews. Yale University. Retrieved from <https://ocs.yale.edu/get-prepared/behavioral-interviews>
- Yancey, K. B. *A Rhetoric of reflection*. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press.

About the Contributors

Jennifer R. Billinson is Assistant Professor in the Christopher Newport University Department of Communication, teaching a variety of courses in media, including social media. Her research agenda explores the ways in which individuals and societies use modern media (specifically music) in response to and to cope with national tragedies.

Emily Capdeville is the Associate Director of Study Abroad at Tulane University. In addition to managing the operations and communications strategy of the OSA, Emily teaches Perspectives on Global Citizenship and provides Intercultural Competency Development resources to faculty, staff and students through her work with the Tulane IDI Qualified Administrators Group.

Ann Marie Francis is an Assistant Professor for the University of North Georgia. Her primary research interests include multimodal composition, community-based writing, and composition pedagogy. In addition to her teaching and research duties, she serves as the Coordinator of the English Department for the Cumming Campus.

Annie Gibson is the Director of Study Abroad and Administrative Assistant Professor at Tulane University. Her research specialization includes Cuban and Brazilian performance cultures, immigration, travel and tourism studies, and intercultural learning. She promotes intercultural learning campus-wide and collaborates on intercultural initiatives, including the Tulane IDI Qualified Administrators Group.

Todd Lee Goen is Instructor in the Christopher Newport University Department of Communication, teaching interpersonal, family, nonverbal, and intercultural communication. He is internship director, faculty director of communication abroad in Benelux, and chair of the International Studies Advisory Committee. His research focuses on family nonverbal and intercultural (study abroad) behavior.

M. Todd Harper is Associate Professor of English, Kennesaw State University. Since 2005, he has directed study abroad programs to Greece, Turkey, and Italy. He now focuses on helping to develop

Kennesaw State University's international facility in Montepulciano, Italy. Since 2010, he has directed 15 programs at the facility, including KSU's large summer session, its innovative first-year fall program, a culinary program, and a Great Books program.

Emily Klump is from Roswell, GA and is a junior at Kennesaw State University, where she is an English major. She hopes to pursue a career in writing. She is active in the honors program and greatly enjoyed her time as a member of the Great Books Cohort, where she got the opportunity to study abroad in Italy.

Linda D. Manning is Associate Professor in the Department of Communication at Christopher Newport University where she teaches courses in interpersonal and family communication and qualitative research methods. Her research agenda focuses on family discourse. Currently, she is exploring the ways in which families engage in conversation around sustainability issues.

Joan E. McRae is Professor of French in the Department of World Languages, Literatures, and Cultures at Middle Tennessee State University where she teaches French culture and literature, international detective fiction, and humanities. Her research interests include manuscript culture, poetry of the late Middle Ages, and language pedagogy.

Lara Smith-Sitton is Assistant Professor and Director of Community Engagement in the English Department at Kennesaw State University. She teaches writing and rhetoric courses and oversees the graduate and undergraduate internship program. Her publications and research topics include community engagement, internship program design, and 18th- and 19th-century rhetoric.

Jessica Stephenson is Associate Professor of Art History and Interim Associate Dean, College of the Arts, Kennesaw State University. She received a doctorate in African art history from Emory University. Her research specialty is the emergence of novel art forms in contexts of change; art, heritage and tourism; and histories of museum collecting and display.

Journal of Global Initiatives

POLICY, PEDAGOGY, PERSPECTIVE

VOLUME 14

2019

NUMBER 1

ISSN 1930-3009