Considerations for Beginning a Study Abroad Course
NACTA International Committee Workshop, 2013
Mark Russell, Purdue Animal Sciences, mrussell@purdue.edu; 1-765-494-7677

These are random thoughts of steps that need to be considered / addressed in order to make a group study abroad class trip effective. The process takes time and planning should be started at least 24 months before the planned first student trip.

- Decide what are the desired **learning outcomes** – the type of experience, educational preparation, and support will vary accordingly. Length of trip, activity- travel study tour, service learning, field research, and what study expertise is needed.

- Start as you would for any class. Write the **syllabus** and define the **assignments** and **what assessments** will be used for learning/transformational changes – IRB approval

- What other faculty or staff expertise do you need on the **course leadership team**? Who will accompany you and be your co-instructors? Relationships with students, co-faculty, and hosts.

- **What preparation class or orientation meetings** are needed – this depends on the type of class being conducted. Maybe orientation meetings, a Pre-Travel class for credit with its own syllabus, maybe a post-reflective class?

- Outline the **proposed schedule for the student learning experiences**, just as you would do for the activities/laboratories in any class – prepare to describe what resources will be needed at each activity – costs? availability on site?

- Research your **university and college rules/guidelines** and offices of support to make this possible. Credit rules and faculty course approval, international office approval, budget and rate requests, risk management and travel planning.

- These classes are not possible without **partners/friends on the ground**. Where do you have relationships on the ground that can make your desired experience possible? This can be other attendees at professional conferences, university graduates, friends, or colleagues at your university or industry leaders

- **How many students** do you want/need for this to work feasibility budget wise and experience wise. What ratio of faculty to students can you afford? Are the faculty paid for 12 months?

- What expertise do you need of the **hosts/local resource people**? Language, culture, research, technical skills, people skills, knowledge?

- The course leadership **team exploration trip** – attempt to follow the exact route and lodging, meals, etc. that you intend to take students. Building relationships is CRITICAL!

- **Who on the ground in –country** will plan the lodging, transportation, meals, and activities? Price everything – estimating budgets is very difficult.

- **How are you going to recruit** – who is the competition? Students select based on location, expected experience, class faculty leaders, and costs. You must have the cost/price solid before you can expect students to commit.

- Stay in regular contact with all students who express interest. Continue to feed students information about trip regularly - they have many other options and attrition is likely. **Prepare methods of communication** – university phone, blogs, etc.

- **Plan methods to manage money** and the accounting and receipting for the group expenses. Especially in a predominately cash economy. Plan to reconcile the accounting - direct charges to the credit card, ATM withdrawals in country, and cash expenditures.

- **Design appropriate Reusable Learning Outcomes** (blogs, videos, CD’s, pictorial libraries, impact statements) to use in promoting the course in subsequent years.

- Plan, Plan, Plan and then once the trip begins, be flexible and go with the flow. **Make it a good FUN** and educational experience for everyone.

- Adjust the future course syllabus, budgeting, experiences, orientation, and recruiting and retention based on feedback from initial/current students.
GUEST COLUMN

By Ashley Detzer

Studying abroad: Culture shock, then real life

The Dominican Republic is study abroad experience.
What sweet account of my present. Almost every and some
So here it is. My briefly.

It's certainly some culture,

Two of four different from the back in the area pretty darn

They change when you are.

These are the traditions that make the most of.

And you know what? I love the way the palms, and Boyd

It's all good.
You know how to read and

Some things matriculate with you. When you need a good

One more: sometimes, super popular, a girl,

When you need a good.

Your language skills, like the rest of the culture and

New community. You will feel a

In real life it's always good.

You're living in real life and

This with a great experience —

About the food. The bad and the

They hear the mixture. They

Everyone says studying

Everyone is in the right track of your

If you sit with an open mind,

He is not so unique.

And you know what I love

I know that you are.

But what's the matter with you.

Your expectations, because

Your community, because

You know what you're doing.

In real life it's always good.

You're living in real life and

This with a great experience —

About the food. The bad and the

They hear the mixture. They

Everyone says studying

For the Journal of Culture

Domestication: The adaption program in the
Interoffice: is using a study
University student from
Figure on an Indiana

Dear

Your own little niche

When you see yourself and

What you share, that change

What is making you question

The little things that make you

The little things that happen when the unexpected arises in

A foreign environment will

When you understand a little

You have a degree in

You are going to go with the flow.

And you know what I love

I know that you are.

But what's the matter with you.

Your expectations, because

Your community, because

You know what you're doing.

In real life it's always good.

You're living in real life and

This with a great experience —

About the food. The bad and the

They hear the mixture. They

Everyone says studying

For the Journal of Culture