A Primer on Building the Student International Experience: Lessons Learned

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“Plans are nothing. Planning is everything!” – General George S. Patton
Planning Logistics - Host Country Analysis

- Environmental Scan – The Political Situation
  - U.S. State Department
  - U.S. Consular Service
    - In U.S. and in Host Country
  - CIA World Factbook
  - Partner School

- Local Contact in Host Country
  - Preliminary Site Visit if Possible
  - U.S. Consulate
  - “Point Person” at Partner School
  - Exit Plans for Terrorism or Disaster

Lessons Learned
Planning Logistics - Identifying the Right Student Participants

Screening Criteria:

- Set to your school’s policies for participation in foreign study & travel abroad programs.

- Your judgment – Are they a “good fit” for foreign travel?

- Your judgment – Are they a “good fit” for the group?
Planning Logistics – Planning the Trip

- Plan for a Long Planning Timeline – 8 to 12 Months
  - Participant Commitment Date
  - Deposit Sequence
  - “Refund” & “No Refund” Dates
  - Trip Confirmation
  - Airline Tickets
  - Passports & Visas

- Budgeting:
  - Currency Fluctuations
  - Student Direct Costs
  - Faculty Expenses
  - Tuition & Fees
  - Room & Board
  - Extras for Students
  - Trip “Slush Fund”

Lessons Learned
Participation Policy

- Clearly Written Policy Statements:
  - Payment, Refund & Cancellation
  - Behavior Expectations
  - Academic Expectations
- Have Students Sign (if minor, parents sign also)
- Release for Medical Emergencies
- Emergency Contact Information
- Send Copy to Parents/Guardian/Spouse
Planning Logistics – Student Preparation

Build Excitement at Orientation Meetings!!:
- The Information Packet
  - Country Maps, Brochures & Guidebooks (Country Tourist Authority, Consulate, Airlines, Michelin Guides)
  - Country Profile from CIA World Factbook
  - Culture Protocols, CultureGram (BYU)
  - Language Phrase Book
  - Reading List of Books on History, Culture & Travel in Host Country
- Show Travel Videos
- Speakers who have traveled in host country
- Students from previous trips

Understand and Set Expectations:
- The Student:
  - Their Expectations
  - Their Concerns
  - Their Fears
- The Trip Coordinator:
  - Your Expectations
  - Your Concerns
  - Your Fears
Planning Logistics – Student Preparation

Cultural Orientation to Host Country:
- Social Protocols
- Expected Behaviors
- Gestures
- Language – Key Phrases
- Local Laws of Note

Lessons Learned
Travel Logistics – Pre-departure Preparation

- Bags & Packing
  - Carry-on
  - Suit case

- Critical:
  - What TO Take
  - What NOT to Take

Lessons Learned
Travel Logistics – Pre-departure Preparation

What **TO** Take:
- Passport & Visa (with photocopies)
- Medicine in Drug Store Packages
- Medical Profile:
  - Conditions, allergies & prescriptions
- Electrical Converter Kit
- Digital Camera
- Travelers Cheques or Pre-paid check card (i.e.: American Express)
- Appropriate Clothes
- Cell Phone w/ International Calling Capability

What **NOT** to Take:
- Hair Dryer & Curling Iron & Iron
- CD Player & Entire CD Collection (take an iPod instead)
- Inappropriate Clothes
- Laptop – Questionable?
- Contraband & Control Substances

Lessons Learned
Travel Logistics – Pre-departure Preparation: The Carry-on Bag

What to Carry On Board:
- Passport & Visa
- Tickets & Boarding Passes
- All Medications in Appropriate Plastic Bags
- Change of clothes & underwear (1 or 2 Days)
- Emergency Toiletries in Appropriate Plastic Bags
- Money
- Digital Camera
- Cell Phone
Travel Logistics – Pre-departure & Arrival Preparation

**Departure:**
- Meet at airport at least 4 hours prior to departure.
- Identify where to meet at Airport.
- Have their cell phone numbers.
- Give them your cell phone number.
- Dress for travel.
- Hold all travel documents until check-in.

**Arrival:**
- Dealing with Immigration & Customs in Host Country
- Dealing with Jet Lag
- Land Travel Confirmed
- Exchanging Money
- Call Home
- Identify Local Reference Points to Minimize Disorientation

Lessons Learned
Site Logistics - Local Scheduling

- **Must Do** – Build balance between structured activities and unstructured free time.

  **Structured Activities:**
  - Classes
  - Tours & Field Trips
  - Presentations

  **Unstructured Free Time:**
  - Individual Exploration
  - Site Seeing & Shopping
  - Fun Stuff

- **Must Do** - Encourage students to go out on their own and explore!!


[Lessons Learned]
Site Logistics – Must Do’s

**Must Always Carry:**
- Passport or copy of passport, depending on local law.
- Address & phone number of host school or host family.
- Hotel matchbook if staying at a hotel.
- One Traveler’s Cheque
- Some Local Currency

**Must Learn:**
- Landmarks for orientation
- How to use public transportation
- How not to get in trouble locally
- To deal with Culture Shock
- To ask questions
- They are a guest in host country

Lessons Learned
Key Resources

- U.S. Department of State
  - [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov)

- CIA World Factbook

- CultureGrams
  - [www.culturegrams.com](http://www.culturegrams.com)

- IIEPassport Student Guide
  - [//info.iiepassport.org.studyabroadguide/part4.html](http:////info.iiepassport.org.studyabroadguide/part4.html)
Please Share Your Experiences, Tips, Successes, Problems and Questions

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Thank You!