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
  - CIA World Factbook
  - Partner School

- Local Contact in Host Country
  - Preliminary Site Visit if Possible
  - US 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
  - Passports & Visas

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

*Lessons Learned*
Planning Logistics – Student Preparation

- Participation Policy
  - Clearly Written Policy Statements:
    - Payment, Refund & Cancellation
    - Behavior Expectations
    - Academic Expectations
  - Have Students Sign
  - Send Copy to Parents
  - Parental Release

Lessons Learned
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](https://www.cia.gov)
  - Culture Protocols, [CultureGram](https://culturegram.org) (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
Cultural Orientation to Host Country:
- Social Protocols
- Expected Behaviors
- Gestures
- Language – Key Phrases
- Local Laws of Note
Travel Logistics – Pre-departure Preparation

- Bags & Packing
  - Carry-on
  - Suit case

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

Lessons Learned
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

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

- What to Carry On Board:
  - Passport & Visa
  - Tickets & Boarding Passes
  - All Medications
  - Change of clothes & underwear (1 or 2 Days)
  - Emergency Toiletries
  - 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!!
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 Travelers 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
Resources

- U.S. Department of State
  - www.state.gov

- CIA World Factbook
  - www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook

- CultureGrams
  - www.culturegrams.com

- IIEPassport Student Guide
  - /info.iiepassport.org.studyabroadguide/part4.html
Please Share Your Experiences, Tips, Successes, Problems and Questions

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Thank You!