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Designing Study Abroad Pre-Departure Trainings
海外留学出発前の事前研修プログラム
by Andy Hockersmith & Tim Newfields
(Toyo University)

Abstract

At a time when many universities are trying to clarify their study abroad pre-departure training courses, this paper underscores the importance of considering what is being taught, how it is taught, and the rationale for preparing students for study abroad. The need for appropriate pre-departure training to increase the chance of success in overseas sojourns has been underscored by many authors (Grove, 1989; Johnston, 1993; Pessala, 2012; Kinginger, 2013). The results of an online survey (n=23) summarizing how SA pre-departure programs at various universities in Japan are conducted are summarized. This paper concludes by offering recommendations for implementing effective pre-departure training programs.

Keywords: study abroad orientations, socio-pragmatic training, cross-cultural counseling

概要

多くの大学が留学前の事前研修プログラムを明確にしようとするにあたり、本論文はその研修の内容や方法、そして学生自身に準備のための動機づけの重要性を強調している。海外留学の成功率を高めるために適切な事前研修プログラムが必要であることは、多くの学者により述べられてきた(グローブ 1989 年、ジョンストン、1993 年、ペッサラ、2012 年、キングインガー、2013 年)。本論では、日本の複数の大学における出発プログラムの実施方法をオンライン調査（n=23）した結果をまとめた。本論では最後に、効果的な事前研修プログラムを実施するための推奨事項を提唱して結んでいる。

キーワード：海外留学オリエンテーション、実践的トレーニング、異文化間カウンセリング

Well-designed pre-departure trainings for study abroad programs offer an opportunity to prepare students for many of the challenges they are likely to face abroad. According to Barber (2014, p. 36) such programs can enhance the chances of cross-cultural and linguistic success during participants’ overseas educational endeavors. However, all too often, the focus of pre-departure trainings is limited to matters of logistics and survival language (Fantini, 2004, cited by Ramos, 2013, p. 8).

Most pre-departure study abroad trainings that we have observed have consisted of lectures designed to deliver information efficiently to students rather than interactive exchanges encouraging them to reflect. Indeed, such trainings have a tendency to resemble pre-departure checklists for
packaged tours rather than in-depth and well-structured sessions focusing on ways to make overseas experiences more meaningful in terms of cross-cultural learning, linguistic development, and personal relevance. Although billed as "mandatory", often there is no penalty for missing sessions, and there is frequently little or no follow up to assess a training program’s effectiveness. Moreover, many university faculty and staff are unaware of the pre-departure training programs offered by their institutions (and in many cases, the actual study abroad programs themselves). As a result, numerous learning opportunities are being missed.

While most institutions post the contents of their pre-departure training programs on their websites, research documenting the effects of such orientations is limited and inconclusive. However, by examining the existing research, it seems that many university administrators and faculty are beginning to see the need for a more in-depth approach to pre-departure training. More often than not, pre-departure training programs are evaluated on the basis of qualitative, even anecdotal findings rather than quantitative data. Moreover, most universities we are aware of have not yet succeeded in implementing comprehensive pre-departure training curricula on any large scale.

Rogers (2010) describes the impact of a semester-length elective intercultural communications course offered to Kwansei Gakuin students who were set to participate in yearlong study abroad programs at universities in English speaking countries. While the course described was noncompulsory, all study abroad students were required to take some academic English courses, as well as courses providing some background information about their host countries prior to departure. Moreover, Japanese culture classes and general intercultural communications skills classes were also compulsory. These courses are designed to address many of the academic and intercultural challenges participants will likely face. In addition, students are encouraged to take an intercultural communications elective. Hence, students at this institution are getting much more than a perfunctory run through a pre-departure checklist. Indeed, the author notes “course evaluations indicated that most students who took the course felt that they gained valuable knowledge and skills in the course that would be helpful to them when they went abroad as well as in the future after they returned” (p. 270) However, the author admitted that “it is uncertain whether this ability was used during the time they actually had the experience, or whether they simply analyzed and synthesized their experiences partly in response to doing the survey for this research project.” (p. 274)

Expanding our scope of inquiry beyond Japan for a moment, this tendency is also noted by Shaheen (2004) who examined the effects of a semester-length pre-departure training course on the intercultural learning of 17 American students preparing to study abroad in France. No statistically significant difference ($r^2=.25, p=0.72$) was found between those who participated in the pre-departure training program and a matched control group ($n=20$) in terms of scores on the Intercultural Development Inventory (Hammer, 2008). However, qualitative interviews and informant observations led the author to suggest that some aspects of the pre-departure program may “prompt students to think more purposefully about what they hope to gain from the experience. If they have specific goals for the program, they are more likely to achieve these goals” (p. 166).
Shaheen further endorses the implementation of post-return orientations, which often help students notice the gains they have made. “Several students mentioned in their interview that they had not realized how much they had learned from their time abroad until they talked about it with me” (p. 154). By actively talking about their experiences, Shaheen argues that students gain a chance to unpack, recognize, and ultimately build on what they learned while abroad.

Cox (1996) provides an overview of the needs and benefits of a pre-departure training program of unspecified length for Japanese university students preparing for three-week homestay and language study programs in the United States. She provides a detailed rationale for such a program, then goes on to emphasize the importance of students learning to identify their own goals and motivations for study abroad. Cox also states it is important for students to examine their own culture and consider how it might impact their experiences abroad. Her article includes several explanations of useful activities and tools to employ when instituting a study abroad preparation program.

**Method**

**Instrument**

To ascertain how study abroad programs at universities in Japan are often conducted, we designed an online questionnaire survey. This survey was based on previous surveys by the Oakland University International Students and Scholars Office (n.d.) and the Association of International Educators (2015). The original survey consisted of 13 items and an informed consent statement. However, we were constrained to shorten this to 8 items due to web hosting limitations. The revised 8-item survey (and informed consent statement) was alpha-tested by three peer reviewers. After some minor revisions, it was then translated into Japanese by the co-author and subsequently checked by four Japanese peers. To reduce the possibility of translation error, the final version was back-translated into English by one Japanese teacher of English. On July 29, 2015 both the English and Japanese versions of the survey were placed online at https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/LCDNHFJ and http://tinyurl.com/zzmddo9.

**Informants and Procedures**

In August 2015 approximately fifty survey request letters were emailed to language instructors and administrative staff known by the co-authors who were working at universities in Japan. All but five of these letters were in English. A post-hoc survey cut-off date of September 15, 2015 was set. During the 45 days the survey was online, we received 23 English language responses, representing a 50% response rate. Unfortunately, no Japanese language responses were received. Given the small size of this sample, we decided that an in depth quantitative data analysis would be inappropriate.
Results

Before mentioning the results, we should acknowledge two problematic issues inherent in the survey. First of all, the respondents were entirely native English speakers at Japanese universities. It is quite likely that Japanese English teachers might have different insights or opinions about the questions raised. Indeed, many study abroad policies are set by Japanese administrators, and foreign language instructors who lack fluency in Japanese might not be well informed regarding what those policies are. A second limitation of this study is that the modest sample size makes the results suggestive at best. A more comprehensive sampling might reveal different patterns with respect to the survey items.

With those provisos in mind, let us now consider the responses. A few key points stand out. One is that while most universities do have some sort of pre-departure trainings for their study abroad programs, these trainings don’t seem to be a priority. Roughly 40% of respondents (7 out of 17) reported that all pre-departure sessions were optional, and 47% indicated that students who missed session(s) would be asked to learn the material on their own outside of class. A further 35% reported that missing sessions might lower a student’s grade. While being asked to learn the material outside of class sounds like an opportunity to develop independent learning skills, it was not clear that there would be any follow up to confirm whether the students had learned the material.

Another striking survey result was the number of outbound study abroad programs available at many universities. Eight out of 22 respondents (more than 30%) reported that their universities have 15 or more study abroad programs. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many university professors and administrators (including the authors of this report) don’t actually know how many programs are offered by their universities. With such a wide variety of options available, quality control becomes increasingly difficult.

In terms of evaluating the effectiveness of the pre-departure trainings, 30% of the respondents indicated that this was done via an in house survey, 25% that it was done via word of mouth, and 35% didn’t know. To be fair, not knowing whether an evaluation exists is not the same thing as saying the evaluation doesn’t exist. However, the fact remains that 35% of respondents don’t know how the trainings are evaluated. Moreover, word of mouth assessments can be highly skewed due to social desirability bias. The survey results suggest that many evaluations are largely an afterthought.

Finally, the manner in which information is transmitted to students is largely through lectures. Fewer than 20% of respondents reported that students participated in discussions. The same number of respondents indicated that students took part in roleplays or other simulations. More promising is the fact that 8 out of 21 respondents reported that study abroad alumni gave talks. We believe this is something all pre-departure trainings should be doing. However, in our view the over-reliance on lectures to convey information is problematic.
Discussion

Based on the previous survey results, we would like to conclude this paper with seven specific suggestions to enhance the quality of study abroad programs at the university level. At Toyo University, we are attempting to implement the following points for long-term study abroad programs. Unfortunately, we are not yet able to implement many of these points for most short-term study abroad programs.

Recommendation #1: Don’t limit the training to logistics –

If training programs focus only on travel logistics and safety, it becomes easier for students to see study abroad as a touristic package rather than an educational process. To avoid touristic scenarios, Whalen (2011) suggests students should set and articulate goals for their study abroad experience, and trainings should incorporate culture, communication skills, problem solving, preventing/solving problems with host families or roommates. Safety, culture shock, and overseas university classroom etiquette should also be covered.

Recommendation #2: Conduct the trainings in the target language –

Target language acquisition is a primary goal for many study abroad students. Trainings should reflect this by being conducted in the target language. While this will be more challenging to students, it will also improve their motivation and help them see practical language use as an integral part of their experience. Furthermore, it establishes language competence as a priority from the beginning and helps students see that language learning is interwoven throughout the study abroad program. Foreign language use is central to many study abroad experiences, not something that should occur only in certain moments then otherwise packed away.

Recommendation #3: Include communication strategies –

Students will need to become more adept at using their target language(s). Many Japanese students lack authentic experience using any foreign language(s) and need to learn strategies for negotiating meaning and repairing communication when breakdowns occur. Encouragingly, most of the respondents to our survey indicated that strategic communication skills were a component of their training programs. Beyond giving mere survival language, students should learn strategies and approaches to enhance their ability to communicate in the academic situations they will face. For example, this can include paraphrasing or circumlocuting when they don’t know how to express a particular concept in English. It also includes knowing how to confirm meaning and ask for and give
further explanations when needed. These are but some of the core competencies that will aid students’ communicative competence, thus enhancing their overall experiences. Pre-departure trainings should help students develop these skills through active learning (Bonwell & Eison, 1991). In L2 contexts, this involves practicing structures and strategies and using them in meaningful activities such as free discussions.

**Recommendation #4: Use student near-peer role models –**

For students preparing to embark on study abroad, contact with study abroad alumni and/or students from host institutions or destination is far more interesting to participants than talking to teachers. The advice, insights, and stories these peers can share are invaluable in shaping student expectations. Each year at Toyo University’s Study Abroad Prep Course (a 7 – 10 day optional non-credit bearing course for future study abroad participants), we organize an international student forum. During that event, current international exchange students and past study abroad participants answer outbound study abroad students’ questions and discuss concerns and goals. During this session, we allow students to use whatever language they wish. In addition to a question and answer panel session, we set up multiple discussion stations. Outbound exchange students meet with various study abroad “experts” and have opportunities to ask questions about whatever they want. It is always a highlight of the course.

**Recommendation #5: Make the training inclusive –**

Trainings should be adjusted according to students’ concerns, questions, and goals. Their experiences, anxieties, and suggestions should be regularly elicited as they enrich the program and keep it relevant. While a lot of trainings tend to be the same every year, we believe it is worth seeking input from the students for at least two reasons: 1) they might share ideas for new topics to explore, and 2) they appreciate being part of the planning process. Something as simple as a needs analysis survey that students fill out and trainers debrief helps can help students feel like their needs are being taken into account. The training should not feel like merely a rehash of previous programs, but rather a unique entity that has been created specifically for them.

**Recommendation #6: Incorporate task-based learning –**

Give students chances to actively research their destination countries and universities, and share their findings with each other. This engages them more than lectures and enables them to adjust their learning to fit their needs. We have found that Japanese university students often lack experience in doing research on English websites. Moreover, there is a lot they don’t know about where they are going. Creating web quests similar to those of Nairn (2011) or Hayden (2011) gives them
opportunities to seek out information about the facilities, dormitories, and campus communities they will be soon using. This may not only help familiarize them with venues where they will likely go, but it can also help them become more adept at finding information on other English websites.

**Recommendation #7: Make it experiential and reflective –**

Pre-departure trainings should capitalize on students’ excitement and give them a chance to *experience* content (including the challenging and unpleasant stuff) rather than just ingest it. Trainings should be interactive and full of opportunities for students to share their ideas, ask questions, and engage with the content. A lecture about potential problems with roommates has limited impact; however, a role-playing activity and discussion will likely enhance students’ connection with and understanding of the content. At all stages of the training, students should be encouraged to reflect on what they are learning. Incorporating a reflective learning component into the training helps students connect what they learn to their goals and recognize their agency in the experience.

**Conclusion**

Different institutions are approaching pre-departure orientations in different ways. For many institutions, pre-departure orientations are limited to nuts and bolts of logistics, filling out forms, and walking students through itineraries. The information is delivered primarily through lectures that are nominally mandatory. However, other universities clearly recognize the benefits of expanded orientations and are expanding the length and scope of their orientations to address issues such as intercultural communication, goal setting, and culture shock. Still other schools are offering study abroad prep seminars as credit bearing elective courses. Indeed, there is a broad range of approaches to pre-departure orientations.

In researching this paper, we have become more aware of how all study abroad stakeholders need to communicate more and develop more in-depth pre-departure trainings. The challenge seems to be finding the time and resources to implement a deeper and more expansive pre-departure program content. Our online survey results suggests an informal consensus already exists that we need to be doing more to prepare our students for the challenges and opportunities they will face abroad. Now we just need to do it.

**Works Cited**


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Appendix A. English Version of the Online Survey Questionnaire

Pre-Departure Study Abroad Training Survey

We are conducting research on study abroad pre-departure training programs in Japan. Could you kindly take a few minutes to complete the following online survey? All responses will remain confidential and be used only for academic research. You are also welcome to skip any questions that you prefer not to answer. Should you have any questions about this research, feel free to contact either of us directly.

Andrew Hockersmith
Toyo University International Affairs Office

Tim Newfields
Toyo University Faculty of Economics

[Note: To reduce the likelihood of spam, the email addresses have been deleted.]

1. How many students are at your institution? __ under 2,000 __ 2,000-4,999 __ 5,000-9,999 __ over 10,000

2. How many different study abroad programs currently exist at your institution?
   __ 1-3 programs __ 4-6 programs __ 7-10 programs __ 11-15 programs __ over 15 programs

3. For a typical semester-length (or year-length) study abroad program at your university, how many pre-departure training sessions are held?
   __ Currently none __ 1-3 sessions __ 4-6 sessions __ 7-9 sessions __ over 10 sessions: ___________

4. If students miss some/all of those pre-departure training sessions, what repercussion(s) will usually occur?
   __ Nothing: all pre-departure sessions are optional.
   __ This might lower the student's overall grade for their study abroad course.
   __ That student will be asked to learn the material out of class.
   __ That student will be asked to study abroad in a different program.

5. Which of the following topics are typically covered in a typical pre-departure program for semester-length (or year-length) study abroad at your university? (Select all that apply)
   __ basic health and safety issues
   __ homestay communication tips
   __ cultural and historical information about the host country
   __ basic language survival tips
   __ information about culture shock and stages of cross-cultural adjustment
   __ advice about dealing with racial, ethnic, and religious prejudice
   __ practical information about money and transportation
   __ suggested sight-seeing spots
   __ an expected code of conduct while studying abroad
   __ information about what to do in emergencies
   __ advice about friendships
   __ Other: ____________________________

6. Does your university distribute a handbook for students who have decided to study abroad?
   __ No    __ Yes __    (If yes, how many pages is that book? _____ pages)
7. How are your pre-departure training programs usually conducted? (Check all that apply.)
   _ students receive lectures about relevant topics
   _ students receive a written handbook
   _ students are referred to a university study abroad website.
   _ open discussions are held on thematic topics
   _ experiential role-plays and simulations are conducted
   _ talks by previous year program participants are given
   _ I'm not actually sure.
   _ Other: _____________________________

8. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of your pre-departure training programs?
   _ by informal word of mouth   ___ through an in house survey   __ Other: ____________________

If you would like to receive a copy of the academic paper that comes out of this research, kindly email Andy (andy@toyo.jp) or Tim (timothy@toyo.jp) your email address. We will then mail a copy of that paper to you in .PDF format at the end of this year. Please be assured that your personal information will be kept confidential.

Appendix B. Japanese Version of the Online Survey Questionnaire

海外留学事前研修に関する調査

私たちは、日本の大学における留学事前研修プログラムに関する研究を行っています。お手数ですが、このオンライン・アンケートに、ご回答いただけますでしょうか。すべての解答は、研究のためにのみ使用し、他の事には使いません。また、差し支えない質問は空欄のままにして頂いて構いません。ご質問があれば、下記のEmailのいずれかにご連絡下さい。

Andrew Hockensmith
東洋大学国際教育センター

Tim Newfields
東洋大学経済学部

[オンライン版では、電子メールの住所は削除しました]

1. 貴校の学生数を教えてください。___2千人弱   _2千～5千人   _5千～1万人   __1万人以上

2. 現在、貴校では、海外留学プログラム（長期、短期）がいくつありますか？
   _1〜3種類   _4〜6種類   _7〜10種類   _11〜15種類   __15種類以上

3. 長期海外留学プログラムの出発前研修は、どのくらい回数、行われますか？
   _全くない   _1〜3回   _4〜6回   _7〜9回   _10回以上   __不明

4. もし学生が出発前研修を受けなかった場合、どのようなペナルティーを科していますか。
   _何も科さない：すべての出発前研修は任意参加です。
5. 海外長期留学プログラムの出発前研修は、どのような内容で実施されていますか。
下記から該当するものをすべて選択してください。

_ 基本的な健康と安全の問題
_ ホームステイ・コミュニケーションのヒント
_ ホスト国についての文化や歴史的背景
_ 基本的な言語のサバイバル・ヒント
_ カルチャー・ショックと異文化適応の段階の情報
_ 人種や民族、宗教的な偏見への対処についてのアドバイス
_ お金や交通機関についての実用的な助言
_ 観光スポットの提案
_ 海外留学中の行動規範
_ 緊急時の対応について
_ 友だち作りのためのアドバイス
_ その他：__________________________

6. 貴校では、留学する学生にハンドブックを配布していますか。
_ いいえ  _ はい  _______ (はいの場合は、その本のページ数を教えてください_____ページ)

7. 海外留学出発前研修は、通常どのように行われていますか。(Check all that apply.)

_ 留学に関するガイダンスを行う。
_ 学生同士で、留学をテーマにディスカッションをさせる。
_ 学生にハンドブックを渡す。
_ シミュレーションロールプレイを行う。
_ 学生にウェブサイトを見るよう指示する。
_ 昨年留学した学生の体験を聞く。
_ その他

8. 留学出発前研修プログラムの効果について、どのような方法で評価され、何を参考にしますか。

_ ロコミを通じて  _ 学内のアンケートを通じて  _ その他

この調査結果を必要の方は、お名前と電子メールアドレスをアンディーさんティムさんご記入ください。
調査結果は、年度末に PDF 形式で送らせていただきます。全ての情報はこの調査のみに、使わせていただきます。
Book Review

Study Abroad for Dummies

by Erin E. Sullivan
ISBN: 978-0764554575

Although this book was written primarily for North American undergraduates contemplating overseas study/travel, it may be useful for those in Japan organizing study abroad programs. It covers a lot of information in simple terms that offer clues about how to access additional study abroad related information fairly easily. However, such simplicity is not without a price: there is a tendency to sacrifice detail and overgeneralize. For example, when the author states, "Studying abroad can be the most exciting semester or year of your undergraduate college experience." (p.1) it is worth examining the underlying assumptions. First of all, study abroad is not merely for college undergraduates: students at all levels can benefit from overseas experience. Second, the majority of SA experiences are less than a semester in length.

This book consists of 25 chapters organized into six general parts. Much of the content of this text seems like commonsense to adults with study abroad experience. However, for nineteen-year-olds contemplating their first trip overseas, some of the information might be helpful. For those in Japan, Part I, sections of Part IV, and much of VI are apt to be of most interest. Part I covers basic background pre-departure issues that are worth considering, and Part IV offers some practical legal advice that is relevant in many countries. Part VI showcases some diverse overseas programs people who are thinking of designing overseas programs at their universities may find useful.

Strengths and Weaknesses

In many ways, this text tends to oversimplify and idealize study abroad, imbuing it with life changing outcomes as a matter of course. For example, the author enthusiastically claims that study abroad will result in "the time of your life" if you are "curious, adventurous, responsible, willing to learn, enthusiastic, and energetic" (p. 1). However, study abroad outcomes tend to depend on complex variables that are difficult to predict. For this reason, we feel the author should have qualified many of her statements about study abroad more carefully. Consider the following excerpt:

"Studying abroad prepares you to take your place in the world by teaching you cultural awareness and respect. It also increases your self-awareness, particularly how you see yourself in relation to the rest of the world. International education not only advances learning and scholarship, but encourages cross-cultural communication and prepares students for leadership roles in a global community." (p. 9)

Careful readers will realize that there is a mythical quality to many of these statements. Although study abroad outcomes do often include some of the changes specified above, it is also true that some students can go through a study abroad program with few, if any, long-term changes (Vaillancourt, 2010).

Indeed, one of the most interesting aspects of this book is the way it conceptualizes the study abroad experience. The author encourages readers to think of study abroad as, "one big, exciting, and educational adventure" (p. 1). This notion strikes us as very American; most Japanese would probably tend to conceptualize study abroad in a rather different light. Japanese male students in
particular would likely adopt metaphors such as "battle" [挑戦] and "fight" [戦い] to describe study abroad.

**The Bottom Line**

This book prompted us to consider whether any single study abroad text can provide meaningful information about the hundreds, if not thousands, of possible study abroad destinations worldwide. Less than a single page of the text covers information about Japan specifically. By contrast, over a dozen pages outline study abroad options in the United Kingdom.

North American women coming to Japan would probably benefit more from reading Pover's *Being a Broad in Japan* (2001) than this text. Another excellent text for Japan-bound westerners is De Mente and De Mente's *Japan: A New Way of Getting the Most Out of a Japan Experience!* (2012). Conversely, Japanese students thinking of heading off to North America may benefit from Silva and Toyoda's *Us and Them* (2011), which is an intriguing EFL text covering many cross-cultural issues. Japanese who are less proficient in English may prefer Asai's *Shitte Okitai! Kaigai Ryūgaku no Risō to Genjitsu* (2005) or Takano's *Ryūgaku no Shinjitsu* (2014). Both of these texts provide good insights about how to maximize study abroad experiences.

As more and more information becomes available on the Internet, the question should be asked whether any printed study abroad pre-departure text is actually needed. For example, the Institute of International Education’s *Student Study Guide to Study Abroad* contains similar material to this book and it is available as a free download at http://goo.gl/YP9FQN . . . since detailed information about each study abroad destination tends to change quickly, the Internet itself might be the best information resource.

In summary, our recommendation of this book is lukewarm for the reasons mentioned above. For North Americans who like the format of the *Dummies* series, this text may be worth purchasing. However, for most people thinking of studying either in or from Japan, better alternative alternatives exist.

- Reviewed by Karen Yabuno & Tim Newfields

**Works Cited**


Student Perspectives in an International Dormitory:
A Panel Interview with Ken Asaka, Tatsuya Miwa, and Sae Narita
by Andy Hockersmith

Toyo University’s International House (I-House) opened in 2008 as a housing facility for the university's international exchange students, and visiting professors and researchers. In 2015 a resident assistant (RA) program was instituted and three undergraduates with long-term study abroad experience were selected as RAs: Ken Asaka, Tatsuya Miwa, and Sae Narita. These RAs live on site and their duties include completing monthly inspections of students’ rooms, helping to see that residents follow I-House regulations, and assisting them in dealing with some of the challenges of living abroad. In addition, they organize monthly social events for I-House residents. This interview was conducted in English on March 3, 2016 at Toyo University’s International Affairs Office. The interview was thematically transcribed according to the procedure outlined by Halcomb and Davidson (2006) with the original wording revised for succinctness, clarity, and grammatical correctness. Finally, the revised content was verified by the interviewees based on a critical participatory looping procedure recommended by Falout and Murphey (2010).

Hockersmith: How did you first learn about RAs? Why were you interested in becoming an RA?

Asaka: A couple of my Japanese friends in the Netherlands had worked as RAs in Japan. One was at Oberlin University, the other at Kansai Gaidai. And the practice of having RAs in universities is very common in the Netherlands. All the student housing buildings at my university had RAs, and I’ve heard that RAs are becoming more common at Japanese universities. So when I heard Toyo was going to hire RAs, my reaction was “Finally! This will be a very good move for Toyo University and the international exchange students who study there.”

Miwa: In my case, I was studying in the USA. My university had ten housing facilities on or near its campus. Each facility had an RA, so I was already somewhat aware that RAs had some role in supporting dorm residents. I became interested in this job since I wanted to help exchange students.

Narita: When I was studying abroad in Germany, I had no idea about RAs. I stayed in a student dorm, but we didn’t have any RA system, so the concept was unfamiliar. Moreover, there were troubles with flat mates, noisy parties, and so on. Had there been an RA system, the experience would have been much smoother. Prior to studying abroad, I lived with my parents. However, after returning from Europe I decided to become more independent by living alone, cooking for myself, and doing my own housework. That is one of the reasons I chose to work as an RA—it is an opportunity for independence. Another reason is because of language. I felt like when I returned to Japan it would be difficult to find opportunities to speak English and German. So I was especially interested in becoming an RA because I would have more chances to practice my English and German.

Asaka: In the Netherlands, most people speak English well, but their mother tongue is usually either Dutch or Frisian. When code-switching, it was hard for me to understand what was going on. And I often needed help from locals to solve many problems. I feel like other exchange students who come to Japan would be in a similar situation. They would have similar problems - or even more so, since most Japanese are not proficient at English. Although some exchange students speak Japanese well, many do not. One reason I chose this job was to help them.
**Hockersmith:** Prior to starting this job, you must have had some expectations about what it would be like. Compared to your expectations, how has the reality been?

**Miwa:** It closely matches my expectations. When I was in the United States, it seemed as if RAs were always working on some events. So my image of RAs as event-organizers is so not different from my experience today.

**Narita:** Yeah, my image and experience are not so far apart.

**Asaka:** Same here.

**Hockersmith:** What kind of training do you think RAs should get?

**Miwa:** I don’t believe extensive training is needed, but I do believe it is essential for RAs to communicate a lot with students.

**Narita:** I agree. And I think it is best to come to the job without too many expectations. I think if new RAs have too many expectations, they will always try to deal with situations based on their expectations. That way doesn’t work; you end up being overly rigid. You need to be more flexible and pragmatic. You have to deal with situations as they actually are, not with how you think they should be. Also don't feel so much stress!

**Asaka:** On hindsight, I can say that it would have probably been better for us as Japanese RAs to speak to other international exchange students in Japanese. But very often we would use English instead because it was easier. Because our English was often better than their Japanese, we could have smoother conversations and communicate what needed to be communicated if we used English. Unfortunately, it seems that some international students felt ashamed because they couldn’t communicate as freely and smoothly in Japanese as we could in English. And so they would just use English. It was more efficient. This may have reduced the incentive of some students to learn Japanese. If they know from the beginning that our English is fluent, it seems some will feel less compelled to use Japanese. So we need to make strategic decisions about which language to use.

**Narita:** Also we need to remember the Japanese proficiency levels of each exchange student. At Toyo University, we have beginner, intermediate, and advanced level JSL students. We need to adjust our Japanese to match the students’ levels. It can be challenging. If you make your Japanese too simple, it seems like you’re talking down to them. But if you use Japanese that’s too difficult, they might feel like they don’t understand enough and then get frustrated. It can be very hit or miss.

**Asaka:** That’s true. Students get put in different classes based on their Japanese placement tests, but this isn’t a complete picture of their skills. Some international students are really good at reading. Others are really good at speaking. Some do well with listening comprehension because they watched a lot of anime when they were growing up. Others are really good with formal Japanese. It’s good for us to try to remember not only their overall levels, but also their individual strengths. It’s a lot to try to keep straight, but the more we know about their abilities, the better we can work with them.

**Miwa:** I often debate whether or not to speak Japanese to students. Some of them can sustain only very basic conversations in Japanese, so I often rely on English to communicate. However, it seems best to try to communicate in Japanese first.

**Hockersmith:** What are the biggest benefits of being an RA?

**Miwa:** Living together with so many different people from many different countries.
Narita: I agree! Most Japanese university students don't get to interact with people from different cultures very often. We don’t have so many chances to use other languages. Although I try to communicate in Japanese with foreigners at first, I often end up using my English or German language skills - and improving them, too. Culturally, being an RA is sort of an ongaeshi (恩返し) experience for me: when I was in Germany I was helped by German students as well as many international students and volunteer organizations. For instance, there was an international student organization made up largely of degree-seeking international students from places like Taiwan, Turkey, and so on. Their job was to help all international students. They helped me a lot and I really appreciate it. So I think it is natural for me to repay their kindness by being part of this exchange student support network.

Asaka: Language learning is one benefit. Also, I’ve widened my perspectives. For instance, if I lived in a community that only had Japanese people, my perspective would be narrower. But now I live with international students and they all have different perspectives, so it is really interesting. And also, when I studied abroad I only communicated with Dutch people, but now I know more about different cultures and I can see some of their differences. Also, I’ve learned a lot in terms of how to plan events and figure out what people enjoy doing.

Hockersmith: In what ways do you think study abroad helped prepare you to be a good RA?

Miwa: Studying abroad certainly improved my cross-cultural communication skills. I learned how to communicate with people from many different cultures in the USA. And needless to say, my English skills also improved.

Asaka: Interpersonal communication skills are certainly important. Had I remained in Japan my entire undergraduate years, I don’t think my communication skills would have developed so much. Living overseas helped me learn more about communication. For example, I am less hesitant now about speaking with strangers. For many students, studying abroad is sort of like an emotional roller coaster – sometimes they feel joy and excitement, but sometimes they feel depressed or homesick. Living overseas, I matured a lot and learned how to manage my emotions better. I also feel that I am better at understanding other people’s feelings because I’ve experienced a lot of the things that they are experiencing. When I was an exchange student, I experienced culture shock. I’ve been there and know how it feels, so it’s easier for me to help. When serving as a RA in an international dorm, one of my key roles is to let students know that the moods they are going through are natural - feelings of isolation, loneliness, and disappointment are part of the cultural adjustment process. It’s normal to have ups and downs, and there is no need to feel ashamed or stuck. We are here to offer encouragement and support.

Narita: To me, it seems important to distinguish between linguistic skills and interpersonal communication skills. A person might be fluent in Japanese, English, and German, yet still clumsy when it comes to person-to-person communication. Maybe interpersonal communication skills are more important than mere linguistic skills. This seems to be true wherever we travel. Communication in Tokyo is difficult not only for foreigners, but also for Japanese because Tokyoites have a tendency to live in their own small bubbles and not communicate much with strangers. However, communication is essential for human beings. So for RA communication skills are really important—perhaps more than linguistic skills.

Hockersmith: What sort challenges or difficulties do international students in Japan tend to experience?
Asaka: Well, compared to many other countries around the world, Japan is relatively homogeneous. Physically, culturally, and linguistically, international students tend to stand out as minorities here. Most Japanese people have never been minorities before. They’ve lived in Japan their whole life so they don’t know what it feels like to be an outsider. I was like that before studying abroad, too. I knew some international students talked about feeling isolated, but I couldn’t really understand it because I’d never really experienced it. But once I went abroad, I could understand how it feels. International students living in Japan feel that isolation. It can be hard for them to make friends with Japanese people because the Japanese people might not know how international students feel. Foreign students in Japan are exposed to so much Japanese all the time. All of them want to learn Japanese. That’s why they are here. However, most international students go through periods of discouragement. Some may actually feel like giving up now and then. At any rate, feelings of isolation or discouragement are realities that many visitors to Japan must adapt to. Also, many Japanese students are so busy with their part time jobs and schoolwork that they might not have much time or energy to hang out with foreigners or be interested in them. Some international students feel that it is really difficult to develop close relations with Japanese. So I think international students should be tough and flexible, and have a good sense of humor. That is important if you are living in Japan.

Narita: The International House is really different from the rest of the neighborhood. Nearly all other people in the neighborhood are Japanese, but the I-House is full of international students. It’s really unusual. The I-House is comfortable and safe, and it’s great for students to be able to relax in their own language and hang out with people from their own cultures. However, the I-House isn’t really a good place to learn Japanese. It’s too easy to just use your native language. You’re in Japan, but in a sense it’s not really Japan. It’s a good place to get used to life in Japan - but to really become proficient in Japanese, it is probably better to live with a Japanese family or with Japanese college students instead of in an international dorm. I’ve heard that in some international dorms, Japanese students are paired with foreign students. For Japanese language learning, perhaps that is better than having two foreign students live together.

Miwa: As Ken pointed out, many international students feel that it is difficult to communicate with Japanese, particularly if they are in groups. It is often said that Japanese are very "group conscious" and that we have a tendency to behave differently when in groups than we do when alone or with merely one other person. In one sense, Japan is a great place to learn about interpersonal group dynamics.

Hockersmith: What is your advice for international students coming to Japan?

Asaka: I try to tell international students that having a busy life is part of the culture. Japanese university students often have lots of classes, part-time jobs, and so on. So it can be difficult to make Japanese friends. Plus if there are language problems: if your Japanese isn’t good enough, it seems even harder. You need patience, humor, and tolerance to develop long-term friendships. However, it is often worth the reward.

Miwa: Some Japanese students don’t know anything about foreign cultures and they are not so interested in foreign visitors. However, many are genuinely interested in understanding other cultures. So I recommend making friends with open-minded people. Find people who are more receptive to foreign cultures. Talking with them can be a good way to learn more about Japanese culture and gradually make more and more friends with people who maybe aren’t as interested in foreign culture, but who are fairly open-minded.

Asaka: School is not the only place to make friendships. It is good to socialize outside of the classroom. For example, Japanese who ordinarily seem "stiff" will open up at bars or places like that.
For many things in Japan, it depends on the situation. It might be hard for people to open up in class, so you should put yourself in places where people can relax. I know some international students whose attitude towards Japan improved immensely thanks to a Shinjuku bar where they chat with lots of different people. Tokyo is a big city with plenty of opportunities to socialize and have fun. Study abroad is going to be more enjoyable if you take a break sometimes and enjoy the world outside of school. There are plenty of other ways to make friends, like through organizations, internships, part time jobs, and so on.

**Hockersmith:** What advice do you have for new RAs?

**Miwa:** Well, RAs have to be good at performing different roles. You are probably going to become personal friends of many of the students. However, friendship should not interfere with the performance of duties. For example, during room inspections, sometimes it is necessary to be strict with foreign residents who are also friends. RAs have to do many different things, and that is why interpersonal communication skills are so important.

**Narita:** Another essential thing is fairness. Everyone deserves equal treatment and respect. Being an RA is different from a regular part-time job: you’re in the I-House a lot. It’s where you live, but you are rarely completely "off duty." You’re always kind of at work. Emergencies can arise at any time. There are many things you have to do. Sometimes it is challenging, and it is never boring.

**Asaka:** It’s really important to communicate with I-House residents to find out what kind of persons they are. Some residents are very independent and need little, if any, help. Others are really shy. Even if they need something from us, they will hesitate to ask. We cannot expect everyone to be proactive. Sometimes RAs have to reach out, try to understand, and tactfully offer advice in ways that are appropriate. If we help the students too much, they will never learn how to do things themselves. And most of them seem to understand this. They want to be independent, but their level of maturity varies a lot.

**Works Cited**


Textbook Review

Passport 2:

English for International Communication
(2nd Edition)
by Angela Buckingham and Lewis Lansford
Oxford University Press (2010)

There are at least a dozen textbooks with study abroad themes on the Japanese ELT market. This review describes a text that I have used with some success for the last two years with undergraduates primarily at CEFR-J A1.1 to A2.1 English levels (i.e. mainly in the TOEIC 230 - 455 score range). The current edition of Passport 2 consists of an 87-page student book, an audio CD, a 43-page workbook, as well as a comprehensive teacher's guide that also features a resource disc. Since the student book is priced at ¥2,630, I did not use the workbook, which is an additional ¥1,160.

The main text consists of twenty thematic units systematically covering a range of travel-related communicative tasks and grammar points. A skillful storyline in which six Japanese tourists visit three different countries for varying lengths of time gives this text cohesion. For example, Unit 5 describes the weekend plans of a Japanese businessman who is doing a homestay in Australia.

In addition to the regular text units, there are also four special units in which students take imaginary trips to the USA, Canada, China, and Australia. Those trips are not as detailed as the ones outlined in McMahon's Travel Abroad Project (2005), but they do provide engaging tasks that orient students towards overseas travel.

Each unit is a mere two pages in length and starts off with an engaging illustration and listening exercise. Model phrases are then presented and a detailed conversation follows. Each unit concludes with a dialog substitution exercise and role play. Most lessons took about sixty minutes to cover; the remaining class time was used to cover pragmatic and study abroad themes.

To gauge student reactions to this text, a questionnaire with an informed consent statement was distributed in the final classes of each academic year. This questionnaire was similar to the one described in Newfields (2015) and student responses are summarized in Appendix A. The original Japanese version is available online at http://jalt-sa.org/PDF/Passport2(J).pdf

Pros and Cons

Overall, student reactions to this text were varied, though positive reactions outweighed negative ones. Over half (n=39) of the 69 respondents considered the level of difficulty about right and almost two-thirds (n=43) recommended this text to at least some degree. Responses to the illustrated scenes at the start of each unit were mixed: 29% (n=19) considered these to be the most helpful part of the text, while one-third (n=26) were probably frustrated because they could not explain what was happening in those illustrations.

Personally, I feel this text is professionally designed and engaging, but somewhat superficial. Although it offers exposure to a wide range of English accents and some good examples of pragmatic repair, information pertaining to communication styles and what Arvizu and Saravia-Shore (1990) describe as "cross-cultural literacy" is not covered. Moreover, three of the four
imaginary trips are to "inner circle" English-speaking destinations. I hope that future versions of this text will introduce less consumer-oriented touristic topics and shed light on key global issues. Instead of having two North American destinations, it would also be nice to see at least one unit focus on international internship/volunteer opportunities in third world destinations.

The Bottom Line

Overall, I feel that this text is one of the stronger EFL textbooks with overseas travel themes available in Japan. Teachers with particularly low-level students might consider using the Passport 1 text rather than this text: many of the themes are similar, but the content is simpler. I hope that future editions of this text will include more activities fostering reflective thinking about various cultures. A close look at student test results suggests that more work on basic spelling is also needed. Probably the student workbook content should be expanded to focus more on common spelling and grammar mistakes. Finally, the "Top Tips for Travel" near the end of this text could be more interactive. Despite these limitations, in my view Passport 2 is a notch above the other EFL texts with travel themes on the market. Although I hesitate to describe this as a "study abroad text", this work does inspire at least some students to think about the diverse experiences that can occur while traveling overseas.

- Reviewed by Tim Newfields

Works Cited


Appendix A: Translation of the Student Textbook Evaluation Form & Survey Results

Informed Consent Statement: The purpose of this feedback survey is to help make an informed decision about which classroom textbook to use next year. Completion is voluntary and will not affect your grade. All information is confidential and will be used solely to review this textbook and make a decision about its future use. You are welcome to contact me at any time if you have any questions regarding this survey. - Tim Newfields (Office Room 20906, email: ********)

Part I. Respond to the questions below by checking the number that most closely matches your opinion according to this scale:

1 = very much not so 2 = clearly not so 3 = slightly not so 4 = neutral 5 = slightly so 6 = clearly so 7 = very much so

1. How clear were the objectives of this text?
   1: 9%(n=2) 2: 3%(n=2) 3: 7%(n=6) 4: 17%(n=12) 5: 33%(n=23) 6: 25%(n=17) 7: 12%(n=8) Av=4.96

2. How helpful were the audio recordings accompanying this text?
   1: 4%(n=3) 2: 7%(n=5) 3: 7%(n=6) 4: 33%(n=23) 5: 26%(n=18) 6: 13%(n=9) 7: 9%(n=6) Av=4.43

3. To what extent did this textbook help you to improve your presentation skills?
   1: 1%(n=1) 2: 7%(n=5) 3: 9%(n=6) 4: 20%(n=14) 5: 38%(n=26) 6: 20%(n=14) 7: 4%(n=3) Av=4.64

4. How clear were the instructions for the various activities in this text?
   1: 3%(n=2) 2: 6%(n=4) 3: 6%(n=4) 4: 20%(n=14) 5: 19%(n=13) 6: 33%(n=23) 7: 13%(n=9) Av=4.99

5. To what extent would you recommend this text for students in next year's course?
   1: 3%(n=2) 2: 4%(n=3) 3: 9%(n=6) 4: 22%(n=15) 5: 36%(n=25) 6: 22%(n=15) 7: 4%(n=3) Av=4.67

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6. How well did this textbook cover the material outlined in the online course syllabus?
1: 1% (n=1) 2: 1% (n=1) 3: 1% (n=1) 4: 14% (n=10) 5: 13% (n=9) 6: 13% (n=9) 7: 10% (n=7) Unsure: 45% (n=31)

Part II. Agree or disagree with the following statements by checking the number that most closely matches your opinion according to this scale:

1 = strongly disagree 2 = disagree 3 = slightly disagree 4 = neutral 5 = slightly agree 6 = agree 7 = strongly agree

1. The overall length of this text was appropriate: there was just enough material.
1: Ø (n=0) 2: 1% (n=1) 3: 3% (n=2) 4: 14% (n=10) 5: 25% (n=17) 6: 36% (n=20) 7: 16% (n=11) NR: n=3 Av=5.22

2. The cost of this text was fair.
1: 9% (n=6) 2: 7% (n=5) 3: 9% (n=6) 4: 29% (n=20) 5: 20% (n=14) 6: 14% (n=10) 7: 9% (n=6) NR: n=2 Av=4.14

3. The illustrations in this text were clear and helpful.
1: 1% (n=1) 2: 4% (n=3) 3: 6% (n=4) 4: 13% (n=9) 5: 28% (n=19) 6: 28% (n=19) 7: 19% (n=13) NR: n=1 Av=5.14

4. This difficulty level of this text was just right for me.
1: 3% (n=2) 2: 3% (n=2) 3: 10% (n=7) 4: 23% (n=16) 5: 22% (n=15) 6: 29% (n=20) 7: 6% (n=4) NR: n=3 Av=4.55

5. My interest in overseas travel has changed as a result of this text.
1: 9% (n=6) 2: 7% (n=5) 3: 13% (n=9) 4: 26% (n=18) 5: 19% (n=13) 6: 12% (n=8) 7: 9% (n=6) NR: n=4 Av=3.91

Part III.

1. Which of the units in this text were most helpful for you? (check a maximum of 3)
   #1: (n=9) #2: (n=3) #3: (n=7) #4: (n=8) #5: (n=2) #6: (n=10) #7: (n=5) #8: (n=2) #9: (n=3) #10: (n=8)
   #11: (n=6) #12: (n=4) #13: (n=7) #14: (n=9) #15: (n=11) #16: (n=4) #17: (n=12) #18: (n=5) #19: (n=10) #20: (n=4) NR: n=3

2. Which of the units in this text were least helpful for you? (check a maximum of 3)
   #1: (n=9) #2: (n=5) #3: (n=6) #4: (n=9) #5: (n=6) #6: (n=2) #7: (n=6) #8: (n=3) #9: (n=9) #10: (n=3)
   #11: (n=6) #12: (n=4) #13: (n=8) #14: (n=5) #15: (n=2) #16: (n=6) #17: (n=1) #18: (n=6) #19: (n=1) #20: (n=2) NR: n=5

3. Which of the following parts of each unit were most helpful for you? (check a maximum of 3)
   Intro Illustration: (n=19) Listening: (n=17) Look & Learn: (n=18) Conversation: (n=22) Over to You! : (n=3)
   Activity: (n=10) Destinations: USA: (n=4) Canada: (n=3) China: (n=7) Australia: (n=2) NR: n=1

4. Which of the following parts of each unit were least helpful for you? (check a maximum of 3)
   Intro Illustration: (n=26) Listening: (n=9) Look & Learn: (n=5) Conversation: (n=14) Over to You! : (n=3)
   Activity: (n=7) Destinations: USA: (n=4) Canada: (n=1) China: (n=2) Australia: (n=2) NR: n=1

Supplemental Question for the 2015-2016 Survey Respondents (n=30):
"What do you plan to do with this text after this course is finished?"
Sell it: (n=0) Keep it for self-study: (n=12) Give to a friend: (n=6) Discard it: (n=7) NR: n=5

Thanks for your feedback.
All comments will remain anonymous and will not influence your grades in any way.

Ver. 1.5 (Jan. 28, 2016 Revision)
Classroom Ideas

The Tolerance of Intolerance

by Sean Arnold (Temple University Japan)

As Japan becomes more committed to internationalization in the globalized economy, the number of universities that require students to complete one semester to one year on a study abroad program has risen. The Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports and Technology (MEXT) has set a goal for colleges and universities in Japan to accept and dispatch 300,000 study abroad students by 2020 (MEXT, 2009). University administrators and faculty can anticipate some of the cultural and linguistic challenges these students are likely to face and for that reason cultural awareness training sessions should be required at the home and host institutions. Indeed, this training may be critical as many of these students will be experiencing a foreign culture for the first time as "academic sojourners" (Sato and Hodge, 2009; Spurling, 2006). The original term "sojourner" as conceptualized by Siu (1952) has been used to describe the experience of longer term travelling abroad. Siu referred to sojourners as immigrants who maintain their connections to their original ethnic groups while living in new cultural communities. Sato and Hodge (2009) and Spurling (2006) draw on the concept of an academic sojourner, travelers that exhibit an "unwilling[ness] to organize [themselves] as permanent resident[s] in the country of [their] sojourn" (Spurling, 2006, p. 34). In other words, these sojourners do not experience complete assimilation and oftentimes find themselves as outsiders to the host culture (Sato & Hodge, 2009; Spurling, 2006). Although these researchers use "complete assimilation" as a gauge to how academic sojourners fit in their host cultures, the term seems inaccurate since the goal for academic sojourners rests not in assimilation, which may not exist even for cultural natives, but to function in the host culture, to have as Deardoff describes some degree of "intercultural competence" (p. 244).

As outsiders, academic sojourners could likely experience what Neulip and McCroskey (1997) term "intercultural communication apprehension." This is associated with anxiety about interacting with persons from foreign cultures. It entails apprehension coupled with an intolerance of ambiguity (Budner, 1962), which in turn creates obstacles that academic sojourners need to address and learn from to enrich themselves. For example, a Japanese student who chooses not to speak directly to his/her host family about problems s/he is having may not realize that keeping silent to avoid being rude may be the opposite of what is expected in many host cultures. However, the student, unaware of the host cultural norms, may opt to disregard said problems, potentially leading to more apprehensive interactions with people from the host culture, especially the host family. Budner's research illustrates that high intolerance of ambiguity could lead to ambiguous situations being perceived as threats. Therefore, without cultural awareness training from the home and host university, lack of understanding of the host culture could result in negative impressions of it. On the other hand, Kim and Goldstein (2005) predict that "greater tolerance for ambiguity" leads to "positive expectations for intercultural encounters" and ultimately helps students see study abroad more positively (p. 268).
Furthermore, Cohen, Paige, Shively, Emert, and Hoff (2005) found that journaling of cultural experiences with responses from the home and host institutions have been shown to increase intercultural sensitivity (p. 10-11). Furthermore, researchers like Adler (1975) and Taylor (1994) point out a sojourn to another culture affords opportunities for psychological growth and sometimes negative consequences such as culture shock. Taylor (1994) suggests that sojourner experiences leading to learning and transformation from within can result in a "perspective transformation" (p. 394).

**Rationale**

This workshop is based upon a humanistic-existential psychology framework in which participants explore "cross-cultural encounters as opportunities for personal growth" (p. 249), seeking to better understand "who we are, where we come from and where we might want to go" (Montuori & Fahim, 2004, pp. 248-9). To that end, the workshop activities are not designed as a linear progression nor in terms of negative "don't do" lists. Participants explore their cultural self-awareness by exploring concepts such as tolerance/intolerance of ambiguity and culture shock through strategies such as self-reflective journaling and group discussion. The workshop attempts to raise students' awareness of the complexity of cross-cultural encounters and possible misunderstandings. Participants identify some simple cross-cultural misunderstandings that may correlate with higher degrees of intolerance of ambiguity and negative impressions of a host culture. The workshop also introduces participants to a journaling method that can be utilized to enrich the academic sojourn as well as address cross-cultural misunderstandings. By completing sentence prompts about cross-cultural misunderstandings and positive experiences in the host culture, students may illuminate beliefs, perceptions, and assumptions about themselves they had not realized, enabling personal growth.

The workshop assumes that participants have a target language Common European Framework (CEFR) B2 proficiency level or higher. For EFL students, this is roughly equivalent to a TOEFL-iBT score of 80 or above. Not coincidently, that is the cutoff TOEFL score for admittance to many higher educational institutions outside of Japan.

This lesson could be a standalone workshop or be the first of a workshop series. I am treating this as a 120-minute standalone lesson to prepare Japanese undergraduate students for their study abroad experiences.

**Lesson Procedure**

**Step 1:** The teacher presents students with a two-minute, ten-second video clip from the movie *Mr. Baseball* (1992) that provides an example of a misunderstanding by an American named Jack Elliot [Tom Selleck] who has just arrived to Japan for the first time and is unfamiliar with Japanese culture. In the clip, Jack is invited to dinner with his Japanese girlfriend's family. He knows almost nothing about Japanese culture and makes many mistakes.

Participants watch the video online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bdeFdFEbuqk, and then answer the following question below in pairs:

- How many mistakes does Jack make?
Step 2: Participants take Jack's perspective regarding the dinner. Of course, this may be difficult since most of the workshop participants are likely to be Japanese. However, attempting to see things from a different perspective is critical to the cultural adjustment process. After the video clip, the students answer the following questions with their partners:

- What was different about the dinner compared to what you are used to (in America)?
- What feelings did you experience (as Jack) during the dinner? List them.

Step 3: The teacher then brings two pairs together to form groups of four and asks participants to discuss how Jack's behavior might produce negative reactions among Japanese. As they discuss this question, the participants make a list of negative perceptions Jack may feel toward Japanese culture or people based on this film clip.

Some possible examples: (1) Jack may think Japanese people have terrible table manners.
(2) Jack may not accept typical Japanese customs such as sitting on the floor to eat.

Step 4: Participants put their lists on the board and present them to the class. At this point, the teacher asks participants to see their own culture from an outsider's perspective and imagine how s/he may react. Participants will confront similar situations while abroad, so raising their awareness of cultural differences is a good first step in helping them learn to cope with uncertainty, confusion and resistance to the host culture(s).

Step 5: The teacher shows the chart in Appendix A, which compares Japanese and American table manners. The unknown situation of dining in a traditional Japanese home evokes a high intolerance of ambiguity towards Japanese culture for Jack. His frustration at the end of the clip may be a manifestation of this intolerance. In other words, Jack may feel overwhelmed by the newness and unfamiliarity of the host culture and perceive it as a threat.

The teacher should then show one or two examples of intolerance of ambiguity from the video clip; for example why Jack reacts when everyone is slurping. As the meal progresses, Jack gives up and sticks his chopsticks in a bowl to leave the table, a possible reaction to the high intolerance of ambiguity he has just experienced.

After this, the teacher should hand out Appendix A.

Step 6: Participants then complete the questionnaire in Appendix B, which asks them to examine their expectations about a typical college course in Japan. When completed, participants get together in groups to compare their responses to the questionnaire.

Step 7: Participants compare their responses to find similarities, noting their responses to each number and recording this information. Participants compile the data by doing a quick survey of the class and recording the information on the board. Participants then discuss the following questions:

- Of statements #1-#6 from the questionnaire, which had the most similar responses in your group?
- Why was there so much similarity? Think of culturally specific reasons.
Step 8: Participants imagine they are in their studying abroad destination(s) as they complete the questionnaire again. Afterwards, they discuss their responses in small groups. The teacher then writes possible responses on the board and asks students to guess which cultures the following responses for each of the seven items in Appendix B might be common.

- strongly disagree
- disagree
- neither agree or disagree
- agree
- strongly agree

For example, most Japanese students will probably "agree" or "strongly agree" with Statement #1. However, most students in North America would likely be apt to "disagree" or "strongly disagree" with this. The teacher should have students discuss the different responses they gave based upon their pre-departure notions of their study abroad host cultures - or of their actual experiences of it.

Step 9: The teacher then introduces a study abroad journaling procedure, reminding participants that they can record experiences and reflect in either a digital e-journal or a paper format. The journal itself can be divided into three sections using the sentence prompts listed below to guide students. Study abroad students should/can write about cross-cultural misunderstandings they have experienced, using at least one sentence prompt for each section.

- **Description** –
  - I was unsure what ________________________________ (cultural misunderstanding/event) meant, but I remember . . .
  - I was surprised by ________________________________ (cultural misunderstanding) because . . .

- **Analysis** –
  - I feel ______________________ about this cultural misunderstanding because . . .
  - This cultural misunderstanding tells me ________________________________ about my home culture since . . .
  - I am still confused/unsure about ________________________________ because . . .
  - I would rate my intolerance of ambiguity as high/average/low because . . .

- **Interpretation** –
  - Something I have learned about myself from this cultural misunderstanding is . . .
  - Insight(s) I have gained from this cultural misunderstanding is . . .
  - I will cope with this cross-cultural misunderstanding by doing 1- 2- 3- 4 (circle one) thing(s). They are . . .
  - I will lower my intolerance of ambiguity by . . .

Participants are asked to write about a cross-cultural misunderstanding from either the video OR from the questionnaire in Appendix B in Step 6. The teacher should be sure participants are clear what the cultural misunderstanding is and why it could be problematic to them (raises intolerance of ambiguity). Participants should have at least ten minutes to write their sentence prompts.

- I was surprised by ________________________________ (cultural misunderstanding) because . . .
- I feel confused/sad/angry/________________ because . . .
**Step 10** (if time allows): The teacher then places participants in groups of three according to which cross-cultural misunderstanding or scenario they responded to from Step 9. Participants summarize what they wrote in turns and discuss any surprising or interesting responses. Also, the teacher asks participants to create one question about the lesson content they may still have.

**Step 11:** Finally, the teacher should ask participants to do the Tolerance of Ambiguity Assessment (Appendix C) at home or in class if there is time. (Note: Higher scores are thought to reflect higher intolerance of ambiguity.)

**Closing Thoughts**

This workshop is an amalgam of several lessons I used with Japanese university EAP students to raise their awareness of cultural misunderstanding and challenges that can occur during study abroad. Although this workshop is presented as a standalone session, I envisioned it to be the first part of a workshop series on cross-cultural misunderstandings and the learning afforded from so-called culture shock. That workshop should also mention effective coping strategies to reduce misunderstandings and introspective or reflective strategies students can employ to enrich themselves during their academic sojourner experience.

**References**


Appendix A: Some Common Differences in Table Manners in Japan and America

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Japanese Culture/Customs</th>
<th>American Culture/Customs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sitting on floor to eat</td>
<td>Rarely if ever sitting on floor to eat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sitting cross-legged (males); Sitting with heels tucked under the torso in &quot;seza&quot; (females)</td>
<td>Sitting on chairs at a table when eating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating with chopsticks is common; knives and forks are used much less</td>
<td>Eating with knives, forks and spoons is standard</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slurping noodles acceptable and expected (in public, females do not slurp)</td>
<td>Slurping is considered extremely rude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invited guests are not expected to talk much during meals</td>
<td>Invited guests are expected to actively engage in conversations during meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pouring your own drinks is uncommon; hosts usually take the lead in pouring drinks</td>
<td>People usually pour their own drinks unless it is an official function; it is considered polite to ask for drinks if they are out of reach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chopsticks are never placed in rice vertically since this refers to death</td>
<td>Shoes usually worn indoors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoid slurping drinks, which is considered childish</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Appendix B: Questionnaire about Student Expectations of University Courses in Japan and their Study Abroad Destinations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student expectations about overseas college courses</th>
<th>In Japan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SD=strongly disagree; D=disagree; N=neither agree or disagree;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A=agree; SA=strongly agree</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. My professors will measure my efforts as part of my course grades.</td>
<td>SD D N A SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My professors will not expect me to ask questions during classes.</td>
<td>SD D N A SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My professors will do most of the talking in class.</td>
<td>SD D N A SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My professor will expect me to keep records of my graded works and know my grade instead of asking him/her.</td>
<td>SD D N A SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. My grades will be decided mostly by exams.</td>
<td>SD D N A SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. There will be extra credit work available to improve my grades.</td>
<td>SD D N A SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. My professor will accept student work even if it is late if I have a &quot;good reason.&quot;</td>
<td>SD D N A SA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix C: Tolerance of Ambiguity Scale

The questionnaire is adapted from Budner's (1962) original study in terms of layout, directions and statement rating scale entries.

Instructions: Please respond to the following statements by indicating the extent to which you agree or disagree with them. Fill in the blanks with a number from the rating scale that best represents your evaluation of the item.

Rating Scale:

4. Neither agree nor disagree
5. Slightly agree  6. Moderately agree  7. Strongly agree

1. ___ An expert who doesn't come up with a definite answer probably doesn't know too much.
2. ___ I would like to live in a foreign country for a while.
3. ___ There is really no such thing as a problem that can't be solved.
4. ___ People who fit their lives to a schedule probably miss most of the joy of living.
5. ___ A good job is one where what is to be done and how it is to be done are always clear.
6. ___ It is more fun to tackle [attempt] a complicated problem that to solve a simple one.
7. ___ In the long run it is possible to get more done by tackling small, simple problems rather than large and complicated ones.
8. ___ Often the most interesting and stimulating people are those who don't mind being different and original.
9. ___ What we are used to is always preferable to what is unfamiliar.
10. ___ People who insist upon a yes or no answer just don't know how complicated things really are.
11. ___ A person who leads an even, regular life in which few surprises or unexpected happenings arise really has a lot to be grateful for.
12. ___ Many of our most important decisions are based upon insufficient information.
13. ___ I prefer parties in which I know most of the people to parties where all or most of the people are complete strangers.
14. ___ Teachers or supervisors who hand out vague assignments give one a chance to show initiative and originality.
15. ___ The sooner we all acquire similar values and ideals, the better.
16. ___ A good teacher is one who makes you wonder about your way of looking at things.

**Scoring the Scale**

To score this test, the *even-numbered* items must be reverse-scored. That is, the 7s become 1s, the 6s become 2s, the 5s become 3s and the 4s remain the same. After reversing the even-numbered items, add the scores for all 16 items to get your total score. Higher scores suggest greater *intolerance* for ambiguity.

**YOUR SCORE:**
**Classroom Ideas**

**A Student Study Abroad Interview Project**

Tim Newfields (Toyo University)

On December 24, 2010 Prime Minister Kan announced a cabinet decision to promote internationalization and overseas exchanges among Japanese universities (MEXT, 2010, cited in Kitamura, 2015). Specifically, the goal was to have 300,000 Japanese university students study overseas each year. That figure represents more than a threefold increase above the number of university students from Japan currently studying abroad (Fujii, 2013, par 4).

Now many universities in Japan are attempting to encourage more students to study overseas. However, it seems accurate to say that most promotional events are run mainly by administrative staff and/or faculty: students are often positioned as passive recipients of study abroad information. This classroom activity outlines one way to get students more actively involved in soliciting information about study abroad. In this activity, students interview students who have studied abroad, transcribe their responses, and then give presentations about what they learned in class. In short, the goal is to turn students into active researchers and information generators about study abroad. This activity may also be useful in fostering transcription and presentation skills.

**Target Audience and Time Frame**

This activity works best for university students with CEFR B1 or higher levels of English proficiency. It could be adapted for those at A2 levels if detailed guidance is provided with the interview questions and students are allowed to read those questions from paper. Chances are, such students will want to use written notes during their final presentations. Although I envisioned this activity for college students, at high schools where many students have study abroad experience it might also work.

This activity should be implemented in either four or five thirty-minute class sessions, ideally over a timeframe of 4-5 weeks. In my view, it is well suited as a semester-final (or quarter-final) activity for an EFL or study abroad preparation class.

**Materials Needed**

The following handouts are used in this activity:

- **Handout 1** outlines the goals, tasks, schedule, and assessment procedure of the entire activity. Teachers can adjust the evaluation rubric and tasks to student levels. Each participant should receive one copy of this handout, which appears in Appendix A, in the first lesson.

- **Handout 2** shows two sample interviewee introductions. Using these as templates, students will be able to revise the introductory paragraphs of the persons they plan to interview. This handout, which is in Appendix B, also lists some possible interview questions. To make it more interactive, I prefer to have students come up with their own questions first and discuss them with peers, and then hand out this paper in the second lesson. If working with elementary level students, however, you might prefer to hand out a Japanese version of this list and ask them to think about how to express the ideas in English. Finally, the handout mentions some practical advice about interviewing.

- **Handout 3** outlines a few simple transcription symbols for transcribing digital audio files. If you are teaching linguistics or sociology majors, it may be worth teaching a widely used transcription system (e.g. Du Bois et al., 1993 or Jefferson, 2004). However, for most other students, a more
simplified orthographic system is better. This handout, which is in Appendix D, also contains part of a student interview transcription and it should be distributed during the second lesson.

- **Handout 4.** which is in Appendix E, indicates how one student transcription has been corrected by a teacher. It is designed to introduce teacher correction symbols. It might also help students better understand some common mistakes and teacher corrections. Handout 4 should be distributed during the third lesson.

- **Handout 5** is a student evaluation of this entire activity. This handout, which appears in Appendix F, should be distributed after all student presentations have been completed in the final lesson.

**Procedure**

One way to do this activity is through the following six steps:

- First, outline the goals of this activity as described in Handout 1, then mention the three specific tasks. Be clear about the schedule and assessment rubric. Although I had students do each task individually, some teachers might prefer having students complete the tasks in pairs or small groups.

- Before the next class, be sure to give students feedback on their suggested interview questions and interviewee introductions. Ask students to email their homework assignments at least three days prior to the second class so that you will have time to look through all of the papers. In lesson 2 students should first examine each other’s tentative interview questions and interviewee introductions. After that, distribute Handout 2 in class and make sure all students are clear about the content and procedure. At this point you will need to explain what informed consent is. Appendix C (which is not a student handout) provides some suggestions for teaching about informed consent. Conclude the lesson by outlining the next homework assignment as specified in Handout 1.

- The third lesson focuses on how to transcribe texts. It may also be a good point to explore how discourse markers (Fraser, 2009) are used. In some classes, it may be appropriate to point out common conversation fillers (Rose, 2008). One way of doing this lesson is to play a sample interview that has been partly transcribed and bring students’ attention to some of the relevant features of the transcription. Another option is to have students transcribe interview fragments in class. Distribute Handout 4 and outline the next homework assignment. That homework involves transcribing at least 4 minutes of the audio-recorded interviews.

- Before the fourth lesson, consider how to correct student homework assignments. One option is to let students correct each other’s transcriptions in class. Another option is for the teacher to correct the assignments. A third option is to relax and not worry so much about having everything correct. One goal of the fourth lesson is to get students to notice how some sounds are often not heard clearly. In the fourth lesson students should also be given time to prepare for their final presentations. One way to do this is by contrasting a "successful" presentation with a "less successful" one. Another way is to go through the evaluation rubric in Handout 1. Regardless of how you do this, by the end of this lesson students need to be clear about their final homework assignments.

- In the final class, you might want to give students 5-10 minutes to practice their presentations by themselves, and then have them present in groups of 4-6. The "best" presentation from each group can then be given before the entire class. This is but one of the many possible ways of doing the final presentations. After the presentations, ask students to reflect on the activity as a whole - and particularly on the elements that led to study abroad "success." Finally, ask students to complete the questionnaire in Appendix F to rate this activity.
Conclusion

Since I developed the Student Evaluation in Handout 5 post hoc, I do not yet have a precise measure of student reactions to this activity. In all candor, it is probably wise to question how much long-term impact these mini-lessons have on the interviewing, transcription, and presentation skills of students. However, I can say many students did enjoy interviewing their peers and that some learned new things about study abroad. This activity did seem to heighten the interest of many students in studying overseas. Some also became more aware of how difficult it is to accurately transcribe recorded speech, since many phatic expressions in English tend to be almost "invisible."

Unfortunately, I can't say that the presentation skills of most students changed as a result of this activity. Indeed, the majority of student presentations were not adequately prepared. Many students had a tendency to read from their papers, slip into Japanese, or exhibit long pauses.

In subsequent research, I hope to analyze the student interviews in depth. The student transcriptions also provide fascinating evidence of how many Japanese students tend to "hear" English sounds in ways that are quite different from proficient speakers. Finally, I would like to encourage other teachers to try out some of the activities mentioned here in their own classes. I welcome comments/suggestions from any teachers interested in doing joint research based on this classroom research project.

Works Cited


Appendix A: Handout #1 of the Student Study Abroad Interview Project

GOALS, TASKS, SCHEDULE, & ASSESSMENT RUBRIC

GOALS

(1) To improve your English interviewing, transcription, and presentation skills.
(2) To discover how a study abroad experience impacted one person that you interview.
(3) To learn about how other people have changed as a result of their study abroad experiences.
(4) To reflect on possible factors that might help make some study abroad experiences "successful."

TASKS

(1) Conduct a 5-10 minute interview in English with any person who has had a "successful" study abroad experience. Although the interview must be in English, the person interviewed may have studied in any foreign country. For example, you can interview another student who has studied in Taiwan, or a foreign student who is studying in Japan, or even a relative who has studied in Europe. This interview should be digitally recorded and you need to obtain permission to use the data in class. (The person you interview may adopt a pseudonym - an invented name - to protect their privacy if they wish.)

(2) Transcribe the interview word-for-word into English and also write up a brief introductory paragraph of the person that you interviewed. When transcribing, be sure to include filler words such as "ah," "well," and "hmm" as well as long pauses or sudden breaks. At least 4 minutes of the interview should be fully transcribed.

(3) In our final class you will give a 3-5 minute presentation about the person you interviewed. You will also hear some other classmates give their presentations. What was each person's advice about study abroad? What strategies helped them overseas? Also, in the presentation mention what you learned from this interview and transcription process.

SCHEDULE

Today: The assignment is announced and questions about the three tasks are clarified.

Homework: (1) Write a short paragraph about the person you plan to interview.
(2) Write up a list of at least 5-6 possible study abroad interview questions.
   Email (1) and (2) to the teacher at least 3 days before the next class!

Next Class: Obtain feedback from other students and teacher on your questions.
Compare your list of questions with their suggested interview questions.
Learn about "informed consent."

Homework: Obtain informed consent to do the interview, then interview the person in a quiet place. Email a digital recording of the interview to your teacher at least 3 days before the next class.

In 3 Weeks: Learn about transcription in class. Notice how one sample interview has been transcribed, then attempt to transcribe part of another sample interview in class.

Homework: Email an interview transcript along with a digital audio file to your teacher. Refer to
Handout #3 for detailed information about how to transcribe the interview.

In 4 Weeks:  
Your teacher will correct your transcription within a week using the transcription symbols in Handout #3. Please notice the words or phrases you missed as well as what you correctly transcribed. In class we will cover some common transcription errors and also discuss how to do the final presentations. You will hear one sample "good" presentation and a sample "bad" presentation.

Homework:  
Work on your final presentation. The presentation should include information about who you interviewed, what their experiences were like overseas, and what that person hopes to do in the future. You should also mention what that person's advice is regarding study abroad and foreign language learning. You can either use small posters for your presentation - or if you prefer, a laptop or palmtop computer.

In 5 Weeks:  
Give a 5-minute talk about the person that you interviewed to 4-5 students in class. Your classmates will also ask you questions about the person you interviewed. An option is to have one particularly good presentation from each small group will then give their presentation to the entire class.

Homework:  
Complete the evaluation of this entire activity in Handout #5.

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC:

This activity is worth 100 points towards your final grade in total. The evaluation rubric is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INTERVIEW</th>
<th>30 points</th>
<th>25 points</th>
<th>20 points</th>
<th>15 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questions are highly natural and responses to comments by the person being interviewed are also natural. Summary is very informative.</td>
<td>Questions are fairly natural, but some difficulty is evident in response to interviewee comments. The summary is adequate, although some information is missing.</td>
<td>The interview is adequately performed. However, there are few if any spontaneous responses to interviewee comments. The summary is a bit scanty.</td>
<td>The interview is too short and/or summary is missing. The interview questions are not spoken clearly and/or the digital recording is very hard to hear.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TRANSCRIPTION</th>
<th>30 points</th>
<th>25 points</th>
<th>20 points</th>
<th>10 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The interview was accurately transcribed according to the guidelines that were given.</td>
<td>The transcription was mostly accurate, although some minor errors were evident.</td>
<td>The interview is partly transcribed and/or there were some significant errors in the transcription.</td>
<td>The transcription is very incomplete and/or contains many significant errors.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRESENTATION</th>
<th>40 points</th>
<th>35 points</th>
<th>30 points</th>
<th>20 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Content: The presentation fulfilled all of the guidelines given. Delivery: The delivery was clear; eye contact was good; audio-visual support was engaging.</td>
<td>Content: The presentation fulfilled most of the guidelines given. Delivery: The delivery was generally clear; eye contact was usually good; audio-visual support was rather engaging.</td>
<td>Content: The presentation fulfilled some of the guidelines given. Delivery: The delivery was somewhat clear; eye contact was rather lacking; audio-visual support was present, but insufficient.</td>
<td>Content: The presentation fulfilled few of the guidelines given. Delivery: The delivery was mostly unclear; eye contact was minimal; audio-visual support was largely lacking.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B: Handout #2 of the Student Study Abroad Interview Project

SAMPLE INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPHS

Kei (a pseudonym) is a third year economics major at a university in Tokyo. She studied in the United States for one semester last spring. Her dream is to work for a bank or international trading company, but no company so far has decided to hire her. This interview was conducted on July 3, 2015 near Kei's house in Yokohama.

Christina is a second year Japanese literature major from Jilin in northeastern China. She is currently studying Japanese literature at our university and hopes to work for an international publishing company in the future. She began studying Japanese in high school, is also fluent in English, and speaks some Mongolian. This interview was conducted in our university's English Lounge area on July 5, 2015.

SOME POSSIBLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What sort of study abroad experience(s) have you had?
2. What prompted you to choose your study abroad destination(s)?
3. In what ways do you feel that your study abroad experience was "successful"?
4. What was your biggest surprise while studying abroad?
5. How has your study abroad impacted your foreign language ability?
6. When you returned from your study abroad, did you do anything to help yourself retain some of the skills you learned?
7. When you speak in a foreign language(s) in what ways - if any - do you feel different?
8. What strategies have you personally found to be most effective for foreign language learning?
9. What advice would you give other university students thinking of studying abroad?

NOTE: Please add 2-3 more questions to this interview. Think of questions that might interest other students.

INTERVIEW ADVICE

* Before starting the interview, be sure to obtain informed consent.

* If the person is not comfortable with doing a recorded interview and/or answering questions about their study abroad experiences, politely thank them and try to find somebody else to interview. If you need help, contact your teacher.

* Try to do the interview in a quiet place and remember to use English during the interview.

* Make sure your digital recording device is working well and that it is close enough to you and the other speaker. (Try a brief test recording before the interview starts.)
* If you need to read your interview questions aloud, that is okay. However, do try to maintain some eye contact with the person you are interviewing.

* Feel free to ask additional questions based on the responses you hear. (Use the pragmatic filler words that we have learned in class.)

* Be sure to politely thank the person interviewed for their time when the interview is finished.

* When you email your digital audio files to the teacher, make sure it is in .AAC, .AIFF, .AU, .MP3, .MP4, .OGG, .WAV, or.WMA format. If your Internet connection is slow, you can bring a USB flash drive to class instead of emailing the file.

* Please keep one backup copy of the audio file until your final presentation is finished. Some students have lost their files, so a backup copy is wise. However, after your presentation is finished, please erase the digital files and any other confidential information about the persons you interviewed.

**Appendix C: Teaching about Informed Consent**

Before actual interviews are conducted, verbal informed consent from the interviewees needs to be obtained. Since most Japanese university students know little - if anything - about informed consent, this concept should be briefly explained. One way to explain this concept is to have students reflect on the meaning of the terms "informed" and "consent." Those words might be unfamiliar to some students.

If classes are at a sufficient level, a mini-lecture about the procedures for obtaining informed consent recommended by the United Nations World Health Organization Research Ethics Review Committee (2009) might be appropriate. After students understand the core concepts, they should be able to brainstorm what information would be actually needed in an informed consent statement for their interviews.

However, if you are dealing with less proficient EFL students, perhaps a dictation exercise might be the best way to convey the information interviewees need to receive before agreeing to the interview procedure. For such classes, I recommended dictating the following nine sentences in the second class - once at slow speed, then once at natural speed.

1. *I am conducting research on study abroad for a class assignment and would like permission to interview you.*
2. *The interview will take about ten minutes and will focus mainly on your study abroad experiences.*
3. *Participation is entirely voluntary; feel free to skip any questions that you prefer not to answer.*
4. *Your privacy will be respected and if you wish, you can use a pseudonym - an invented name - during this interview.*
5. *I would like permission to make a digital audio recording of this interview.*
6. *I will transcribe the interview and summarize it for my classmates and for my teacher.*
7. *After my presentation is completed, I will erase the digital recordings.*
8. *If you have any questions about this research project, you can contact me at [indicate your email address and/or cell phone number.]*
9. *Is it okay to proceed?*

Some teachers might prefer to do a cloze dictation (Taylor, 1953) rather than a full dictation. Others might prefer to have students translate the nine sentences above to/from Japanese to insure they are adequately understood.
The notion of informed consent can be conveyed in a variety of ways. The point to emphasize is that before any students actually start their interviews, interviewees should give full verbal consent.

Appendix D: Handout #3 of the Student Study Abroad Interview Project

STUDENT TRANSCRIPTION SYMBOLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>****</td>
<td>unknown sounds or words: sounds heard that</td>
<td>And he said ****** to me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>represented word(s) you could not catch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(?)</td>
<td>words that you transcribed, but feel uncertain</td>
<td>She rarely (?) spoke.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>about</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt; &gt;</td>
<td>a note or observation</td>
<td>&lt;laughing&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAPS</td>
<td>capitalized words indicate words that are</td>
<td>He shouted &quot;COME!&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>spoken loudly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SAMPLE UNEDITED STUDENT INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION

NOTE: This is part of an actual unedited student interview. No errors are corrected

Taro: Why did you study abroad?

Kei: Why did I study abroad? Let's see . . . I really like English for a long time. And I just **** learn English in a English speaking country and I also, I was interested in the English language itself. So I thought it would be greatly fly (?) to go to America to study.

Taro: I see. So you studied in America. Tell me more about that.

Kei: Well, I studied for three months at a language school in . . . near San Francisco. I did a homestay with an American family and made a rot of friends.

Taro: That's grate! I'm glad to here that. What was your biggest surprise when studying abroad?

Kei: My biggest surprise? Let's see. Well, I think American food surprised me. Sizes were big! And American fashion was an other surprise. Also, many people had guns. That was surprising.

Taro: Indeed. I cannot imagine such a thing. In what ways did you feel your study abroad was 'successful'?

Kei: Successful? Let me see. Well, I gained more confidence in my ability to communicate in English. And I changed my image about other Asians. Now I have many friends from Taiwan, China, and Korea.

Taro: Wonderful. Just one more question . . .
ADVICE ABOUT GIVING PRESENTATIONS

* Before giving your presentation, rehearse it several times and use a stopwatch to
time yourself. Your presentation should be at least 4 minutes in length. If it is less
than 4 minutes, add more material. If it is over 5 minutes, delete some material.

* You may use flash cards or notes, but please avoid reading from paper word-for-
word. Reading word-for-word from a paper creates an impression that you do not
actually understand what you are saying. It also reduces eye contact.

* If you are using posters to give your presentation, then make the posters engaging -
but not too cluttered. People should be able to read the words on your poster at a
distance of three meters. I recommend using B4 or A3 size paper.

* If you prefer to use a laptop or palmtop to give your presentation, at least an 8-inch
screen is needed. Design the screen content so that people can read it from up to
three meters away. Fonts should be at least 36-point in size. In most cases, 48-point
fonts are better. (Cellphone screen sizes are too small for presentations.)

* When giving your presentation, maintain ample eye contact. At least half the time
you should be looking directly at your audience.

* Check your speech tempo. Normal speech is about 110-160 words per minute. If
your tempo is under 90 words per minute, consider ways to speed things up: use
simpler words, practice more, and get more comfortable with the materials.

* Vary your voice tone and speed. Monotone speeches tend to be boring.

* Be sure to mention the following information during your presentation:

  WHO -  the interviewee is, was, and wants to become

  WHERE -  the person came from, where they studied abroad, and where
they are living/working/studying now.

  WHEN -  the person studied abroad and started learning the target language(s).
Also, mention when this interview was conducted.

  WHAT -  the interviewee is doing now and hopes to do in the future. Also mention
what the person believes helps/hinders study abroad experiences.

  HOW -  that person felt when overseas and how they feel when speaking foreign
languages now. Also mention how you contacted this person, and how you
felt when listening to them closely.

  WHY -  that person studied (or studies) abroad and continues to learn the target
language.
Appendix E: Handout #4 of the Student Study Abroad Interview Project

TEACHER CORRECTION SYMBOLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symbol</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>text</em></td>
<td>sounds/words that were typed by the student-interviewer, but not actually spoken during the interview.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[]</td>
<td>sounds/words spoken, but not transcribed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;&lt; &gt;&gt;</td>
<td>a teacher comment, note, or observation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>text</em> → [text]</td>
<td>a student-interviewer transcription error that is replaced by a teacher transcription correction. The replacement might not be correct according to standard grammar, but it was in the actual recording.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>****</td>
<td>unknown sounds/words - the teacher was also unable to transcribe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>{sic.}</td>
<td>a note indicating the transcribed expression is faithful, but incorrect according to standard grammar.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SAMPLE CORRECTED INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTION

NOTE: This is part of the student interview from Handout 3.

Taro: Why did you study abroad?

Kei: Why did I study abroad? [Ahh] let's see . . . I really like[ed] English for a long time. And I just [wanted to] learn English in a {sic.} English speaking country and I also, [ah] I was interested in the English language itself. So I thought it would be great*ly fly* → [if I could] to go to America [ahm] to study.

Taro: I see. So you studied in America. Tell me more about that.

Kei: [Uhm] Well, I studied for three months at a language school in near San Francisco. I did a homestay with an American family and made a rot {sic.} of friends.
Appendix F: Handout #5 of the Student Study Abroad Interview Project

STUDENT ACTIVITY EVALUATION

1. How clear were the instructions for the following parts of this activity?
   このアクティビティの各部門の手順は、どれくらい明確でしたか？○を記入してください。

| INTERVIEW・インタビュー | unclear 不明瞭 | | clear 明瞭 |
|------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| TRANSCRIPTION・書き起こし | unclear 不明瞭 | | clear 明瞭 |
| PRESENTATION・プレゼン | unclear 不明瞭 | | clear 明瞭 |

2. How useful were the following parts of this activity?
   このアクティビティの各部門は、どれくらい役に立ちましたか？○を記入してください。

| INTERVIEW・インタビュー | useless 役に立たない | | useful 役に立つ |
|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| TRANSCRIPTION・書き起こし | useless 役に立たない | | useful 役に立つ |
| PRESENTATION・プレゼン | useless 役に立たない | | useful 役に立つ |

3. How difficult were the following parts of this activity?
   このアクティビティの各部門は、どれくらい難しかったですか？○を付けてください。

| INTERVIEW・インタビュー | easy 易しい | | difficult 難しい |
|------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| TRANSCRIPTION・書き起こし | easy 易しい | | difficult 難しい |
| PRESENTATION・プレゼン | easy 易しい | | difficult 難しい |

4. How well did this activity fulfill the goals in Handout A?
   このアクティビティは、配布資料 A に書かれていた目標をどれくらい達成したと思いますか？
   _____ Actually, I don't remember those goals.・目標を覚えていません。
   _____ very little・非常に低い _____ somewhat・まあまあ _____ very much・非常に高い

5. Which part of this activity did you find most helpful?
   このアクティビティのどの部分が最も参考になりましたか？自由に書いて下さい。

6. What changes, if any, would you recommend for this activity for next year?
   来年、このアクティビティを変更する場合、どのように変更したらよいですか？自由に書いて下さい。

7. Would you recommend using this activity for next year's classes?
   来年、講義においてこのアクティビティの活用を推奨しますか？
   _____ Yes・はい _____ No・いいえ