

RYUGAKU

STUDY ABROAD N-SIG

NEWSLETTER

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Message from the Coordinator






Dear Members,

This issue of Ryugaku contains two very insightful articles, and for future issues we are looking for more articles with the same quality of writing. The summer is a time when most of us have a little extra time on our hands, so if you have been meaning to write up something or have something almost ready to be published, we encourage you to submit it to us. We feel that the SIG will be much stronger if everyone gets involved.

After just over a year of being a forming SIG, we are now officially an affiliate SIG. This doesn't change much apart from meaning we are a little more permanent, but it is a necessary step on the way to becoming a full SIG. At the June EBM in Tokyo, the motion to upgrade our status was unanimously passed. We still do not have voting rights at EBM level, but we are hopefully only a year away from getting the vote and being able to represent our members' opinions at the national level.

The next event that the SIG is involved with is the CUE SIG conference in October. It is going to be held on 17th and 18th October at Tezukayama University in Nara. The theme of the conference this year is ESP/EAP, and there are a number of study abroad-related presentations to attend. We think it will be a very worthwhile conference for everyone, and especially for all those in the Kansai region it is very easy to get to!

The SA SIG Executive Team

				
<p>Coordinator Andrew Atkins</p>	<p>Program Chair Todd Thorpe</p>	<p>Membership Chair Russell Hubert</p>	<p>Treasurer Mark Jones</p>	<p>Publications Editor Derek Eberl</p>

Introduction

In 2008, Kyoto Sangyo University established a new department in the Faculty of Foreign Languages. The Department of International Relations has the goal of fostering students who can proficiently contribute to the international community. To contribute students must have awareness and understanding of our increasingly globalised world. Therefore, the department has the twin academic goals of studying Social Science and the English language, including a core component of studying Social Science *in* English. For this reason, all students take the compulsory intensive English Language courses in the first and second years, the purpose being to prepare the students for the International Relations in English [国際関係英語] courses in the third year. Furthermore, to “bridge the gap” between Social Science and the English language, all students must also take the compulsory Overseas Field Research (OFR) [海外フィールドリサーチ] course. The main component of this course is a three-week research trip to one of the four following countries; New Zealand, Australia, Canada or the United States. Students could choose to study at the English Language Academy at Auckland University (New Zealand), the Faculty of Languages at Curtin University of Technology (Australia), the Sault Program for English Language Learning at Algoma University (Canada), or the Center for English as a Second Language at the University of Arizona (United States). In line with the twin goals of the Department of International Relations, students attended regular English Language classes in the mornings and in the afternoon the focus was on a research theme. The rationale for the OFR course is to provide real opportunities to not only study Social Science *in* English, but to also carry out independent field research *in* English. The research theme for New Zealand was “Nature and NGOs”, for Australia “Multiculturalism”, for Canada “Volunteerism”, and the theme for the US was “Business”. The afternoon classes/ activities therefore included attending lectures related to the research theme, visiting businesses and factories, visiting NGOs, volunteering in hospitals, etc. Students were required to complete research projects connected to the theme. In the case of New Zealand, for example, before

leaving Japan, students made a questionnaire survey related to nature and NGOs, and once in Auckland, the students interviewed their host families, other international students, as well as Auckland University students. After the field research trip, students were required to give group presentations on the survey results and to submit an essay.

Feedback Survey

Upon their return to Japan, students were asked to fill out a “feedback survey” on the Overseas Field Research. This paper will present the findings of this feedback survey. The survey had a total of nineteen questions relating to homestay, language, classes and activities, as well as some general questions. Also included was a final section for students to freely write comments. So as to provide more reliable results, and to reduce the probability of erroneous answers, the survey was written in both English and Japanese. Students could also write their comments in either language. The survey was conducted in class time, although there was no real time constraint. The feedback survey and the results survey are in the appendix.

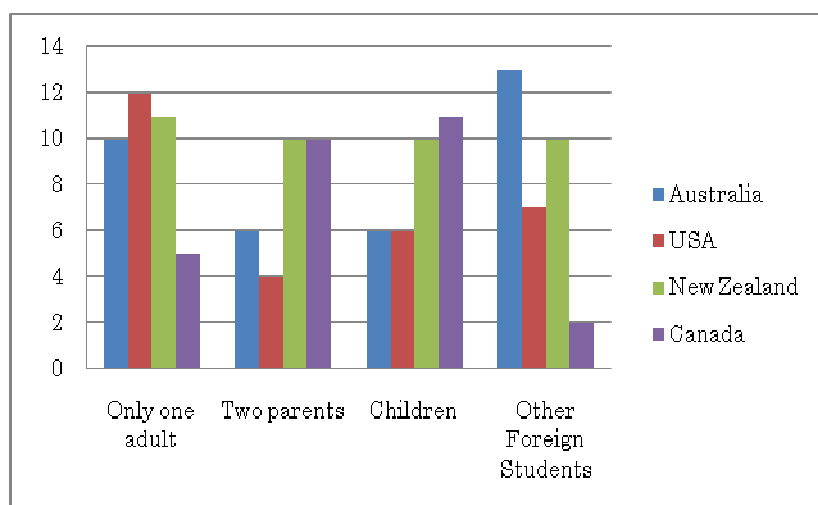
Results

A total of 69 students completed the feedback survey, 21 (30%) from the New Zealand group, 17 (25%) from the Australia group, 16 (23%) from the US group and 15 (22%) from the Canada group. As is shown in the answers to question four, of the 69 students, it was the first time to experience an overseas homestay for 41, or 60%. In other words, 40% of the first intake of the new Department of International Relations had already gone on some type of overseas study trip that included a homestay before they entered university. The national average for high school students studying overseas for three months or more (presumably including a homestay) is less than 1%. It is therefore not unreasonable to very generally say that students at the Department of International Relations are relatively “international”.

Homestays

The type and character of the homestays varied between the different countries, and this is shown in the answers to questions two and three, which ask about the members of the homestay family and the presence of other foreign students. The question on the members of the homestay family was asked to determine the extent to which the homestay was really “a family”, by which is meant parent(s) and children. The question concerning the presence of other foreign students was asked to determine the extent to which the invitation to host a foreign student was done for financial goals, as opposed to cultural exchange. It is evidently the case, and this is supported by the data, that the homestay experience has become “a business” for many hosts. As can be seen from figure 1, the character of the homestays in Canada were far more likely to be described as “typical” families, in that children and two parents were far more prevalent than in other destinations. Half or more of Australian, New Zealand and US homestays consisted of just one adult, while this figure was just one-third for Canada. While children were present in just one-third of Australian and US homestays, and less than half of New Zealand homestay, children were present in more than two-thirds of Canadian homestays. Furthermore, supplementing this, other foreign students were virtually completely absent from homestays in Canada, and this is in stark contrast to other countries. In Canada, only 13% of homestays had other foreign students, which is compared with almost half of New Zealand and US homestays, and three-quarters of Australian homestays. Overall, more than half of homestays had more than one student, and this can be interpreted as evidence of the growth of the homestay “business”.

Figure 1: The Character of Homestay Families (Questions 2 and 3)

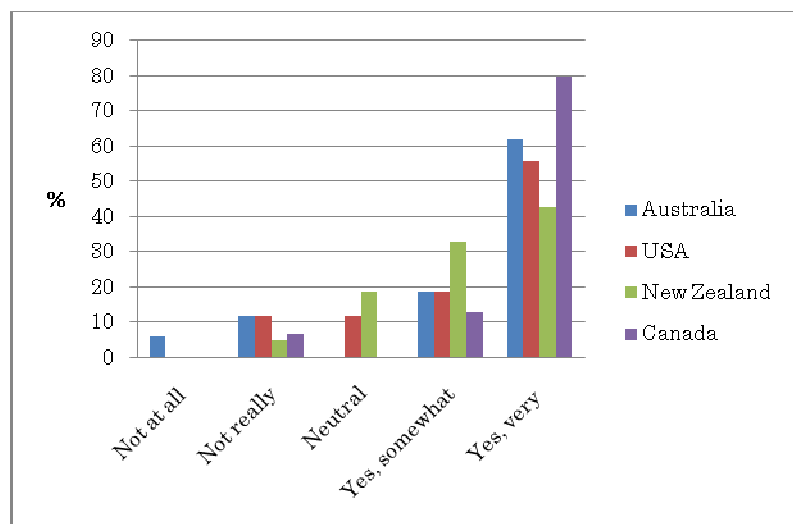


Needless to say, the prevalence of more “typical” homestay families in Canada is explained by the character of Sault Ste. Marie, the hometown of Algoma University. Sault Ste. Marie is a town of just 75,000, and this compares to 1.2 million for Auckland, 1.5 million for Perth, and 1 million for Metro Tucson. This contrast is also paralleled in the size of the respective universities. Algoma University has 1200 students, while Auckland University and Curtin University of Technology each have about 40,000, and the University of Arizona has over 30,000 students. Evidently, Sault Ste. Marie is a “small town”, compared to Auckland, Perth and Tucson.

While it may seem obvious that Algoma University and Sault Ste. Marie would have more “typical” family homestays, the results from our feedback survey indicate that it is likely that our students find such homestays preferable. Question ten asked students to grade their overall feeling about their homestay family, and while almost 90% of students responded with either “happy” or “very happy”, *all* Algoma students responded such, with three-quarters responding with “very happy”. While in each of the other countries, a very small number of students responded negatively, which was presumably based on a negative experience, no such incident seems to have occurred in Canada. For example, while 65% of Australian students also responded with “very happy”, 25% responded negatively or neutrally, presumably reflecting an experience that fell short of expectations.

This positive feeling towards the homestay family is supported by the responses to question nine, which asked whether the students found their hosts to be helpful. As can be seen from figure 2 below, while between 40% and 60% of students in Australia, New Zealand and the US responded with the most positive answer, 80% of those students who went to Canada answered that their homestay families were “very helpful.” Furthermore, while about 80% of Australian, New Zealand and US students responded in the positive (i.e., thought their hosts were helpful), over 90% of those in the Canada group thought so.

Figure 2: Were your homestay families helpful? (Question 9)

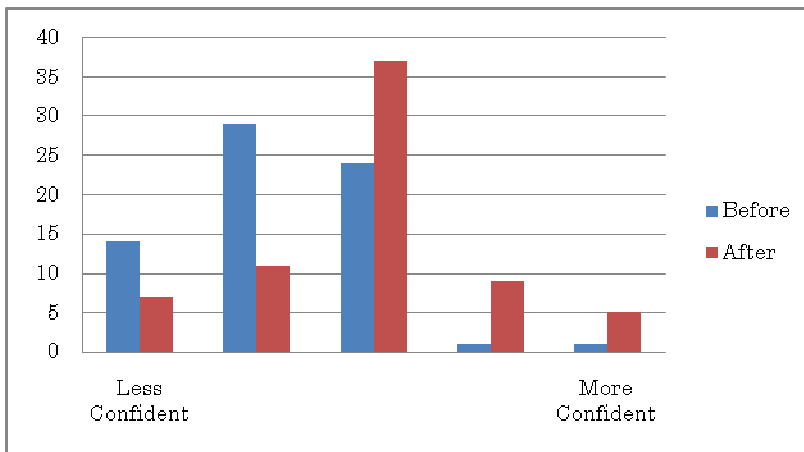


It must be pointed out, nevertheless, that the overwhelming majority (over 80%) of our students found their homestay families to be helpful, and this is despite the reality, as is shown by the answers to question three, of the prevalence of the homestay “business”. In other words, it shows that even though many homestay families may be accepting students into their homes primarily because of the financial reward, the students do not feel that this negatively impacts their homestay experience. Having said that, a significant number of students commented that, while they were expecting to have dinner with their homestay families, this was not the case. The following comment from a student who went to New Zealand is one example, “my host family often go to somewhere leaving me, so it is difficult for me to communication with them.”

Language

Questions five and six asked students to grade their level of confidence in English first before going overseas and then on their return to Japan. As would be expected, we saw an overall improvement in confidence. This is shown in the figure 3 that vividly shows the general shift from “less confident” towards “more confident”. Of course, such a response is to be expected, but it is significant in that it shows that students recognize this increase in confidence and its cause.

Figure 3: Confidence in English (Questions 5 and 6)

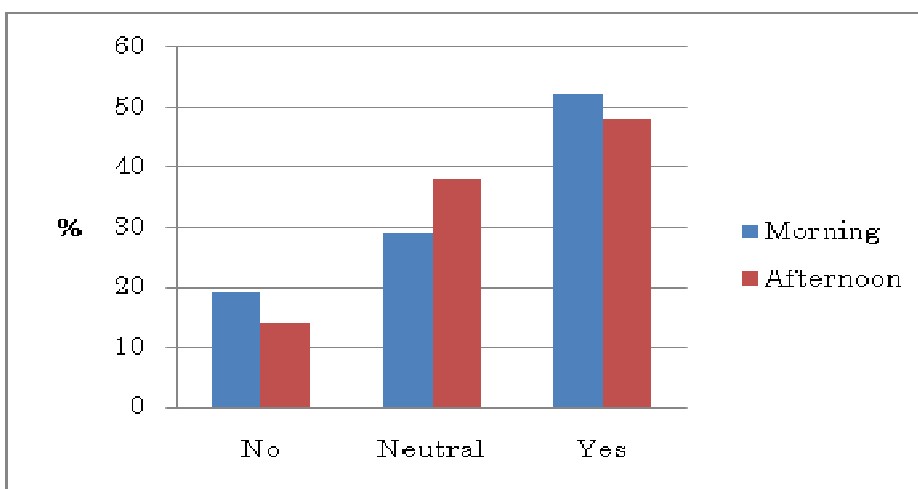


Question 16 asked the students whether the length of three weeks was too short, just right or too long. As would be expected, but also indicating the level of satisfaction, three-quarters of students responded with “too short”. Not one student answered “too long”. A number of students commented that extending the trip to four weeks would be highly beneficial for both the language classes and the research theme study.

Classes and Activities

Regarding the English language morning classes (question 11) and thematic afternoon classes/ activities (question 13), figure 4 shows that half of the students thought them to be beneficial, about one-third of students were neutral and less than twenty-percent had negative feeling about the classes.

Figure 4: Were classes beneficial? (Questions 11 and 13)

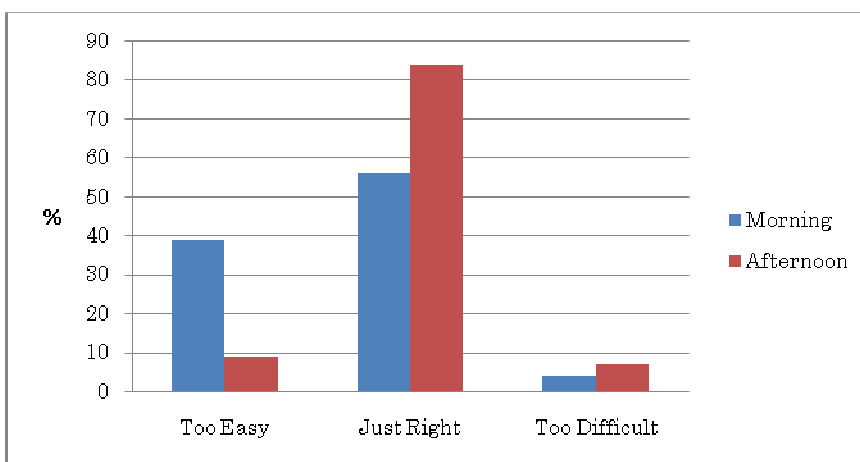


One important comment that was voiced by a number of students who went to New Zealand, Australia and the US was that there were “too many Japanese” in their

language classes. Obviously, our students had an image of their Overseas Field Research trip that did not include studying English with other Japanese. Unfortunately, our students went overseas in February and March and this is the peak season for Japanese university students to go overseas for short study trips. In the case of Auckland University for example, there were at least another six groups of Japanese university students attending the same English Language Academy (ELA). In fact, Japanese students make up only 10% of the students of the ELA, and this compares with Chinese (40%), and Koreans (15%). However, the majority of this 10% go to Auckland in February/ March.

It is likely that the neutral or negative responses to questions 11 and 13 can be partially explained by the results to questions 12 and 14 which asked students about the suitability of the class level. As can be seen from Figure 5, while over 80% thought the afternoon classes and activities were “just right”, this figure dropped to just over 50% for the morning English language classes. Indeed, nearly 40% of students thought that the English language classes were “too easy”, and this is despite the fact that all students took a placement test either before leaving Japan or on their first day at the language school overseas. Students were therefore placed according to the results of this placement test, and it is therefore probable that many students cannot realistically judge their own English language ability. It may be also true that Japanese students do not perform well in the language tests that are used in English language schools in English-speaking countries.

Figure 5: Class Level (Questions 12 and 13)



General

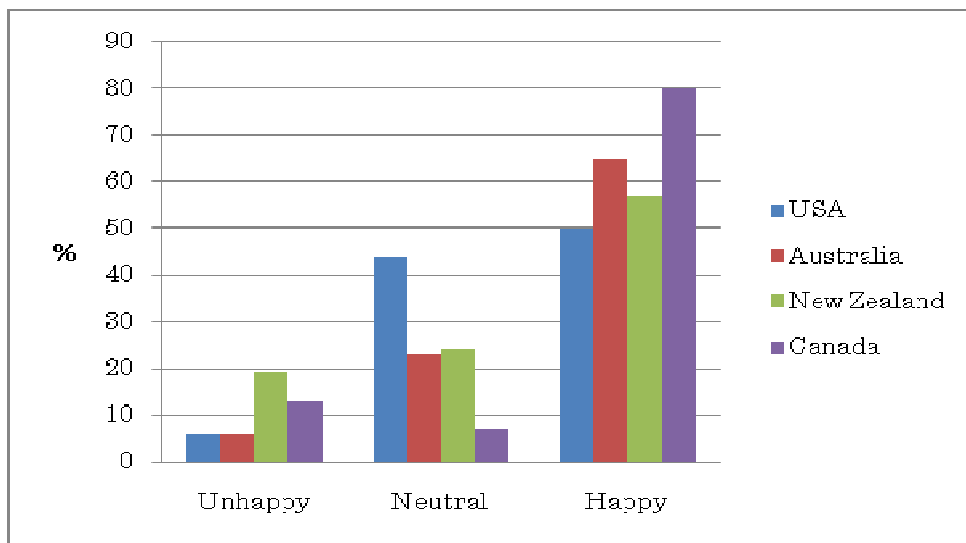
Question 18 asked students if they were *now* more interested (as a result of the OFR) in going overseas to study for a longer period. 80% of students responded positively, with either “somewhat interested” or “very interested”. This is extremely important and encouraging response, particularly as Japan lags behind other countries in both the number of foreign students it accepts and the number of Japanese students studying overseas. While recognizing that the number of Japanese students going overseas “falls short of international standards” (only 1.5%, compared with 2.6% for France) MEXT recognizes “that emphasis is primarily on accepting international students; support for Japanese citizens to study overseas is insufficient” (see “我が国の留学生制度の概要/Outline of the Student Exchange System in Japan” 2006, MEXT).

A recent Japan Times article cited a Japan Youth Research Institute survey that found that Japanese high school students are less willing to study abroad than their counterparts in the U.S., China and South Korea. According to the survey results, 37 percent of junior high and 41 percent of high school students hope to study overseas. The comparable figures were 49 percent and 56 percent in the U.S., 84 percent and 61 percent in China and 47 percent and 64 percent in South Korea (“Unlike in China, South Korea, high schoolers here less willing to study abroad”, *Japan Times*, March 18, 2009). Considering that many of our students wish to pursue a career with an international “flavor” (hence their interest in studying International Relations), and taking into account the importance of overseas study experience in getting such a job, it is indeed encouraging that the Overseas Field Research experience is having such a positive influence in this regard.

Question 19 asked students if they thought that the Overseas Field Research gave them some ideas for their plans for the future, and three-quarters of students answered in the positive. If we consider that many students at higher education institutes both in Japan and abroad have yet to decide on their future career path, and assuming that the role of such institutions is to prepare students for life beyond education, then it is indeed encouraging that students found the course to be beneficial in this regard. In this regard, one student who went to the US commented that, “it was really great experience for me and after this program, I almost decided the way of my life”.

Finally, question 17 asked students for an overall evaluation of the Overseas Field Research course. As can be seen from Figure 6, the majority of students were “happy” with the OFR. Overall, 63% of students were “happy”, 25% answered neutrally and 12% said they were “unhappy”. Again, as can be seen from the graph below, students who went to Canada were more positive, with 80% answering “happy”. This is compared with 50% for the USA, 65% for Australia and 57% for New Zealand.

Figure 6: Overall Feeling about Overseas Field Research (Question 17)



Conclusion

There are a number of reasons to consider the adoption of a compulsory Overseas Field Research course as a core component of the new Department of International Relations at Kyoto Sangyo University as a success. The course was conceived with the principle of studying Social Science *in* English, and this meant selecting research themes around which students conducted independent research projects in English.

In terms of comparing destination countries, the data shows that the Canadian homestays were generally more “typical” homestay families, and that the students seem to have found this preferable. Having said this, it is also evident that the overwhelming majority of students in other countries had a positive homestay experience.

It is evident from the aforementioned data that students feel more confident in English as a result of the trip overseas. Indeed, teachers have commented that the

second year students are considerably more active in their English classes, and it is not implausible to assume that this is at least partly (if not mostly) the result of the OFR trip.

The OFR has had a demonstrably positive influence in encouraging our students to pursue longer periods of study overseas, and because the OFR course is a compulsory course, this influence is equally distributed across *all* students in the department. This means that while the decision to undertake longer overseas study is left to the individual student, *all* students have some experience of studying overseas and this forms a very real foundation for the “international” in the Department of International Relations at Kyoto Sangyo University.

Contribute to *Ryugaku*

Deadline for Winter Issue is October 31, 2009

(See back page for details)



The Chaperone in University Short-term Study Abroad Programs

Byron O'Neill
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Introduction

Full-time faculty and administrative staff are often dispatched by universities to accompany their students on short-term study abroad programs. To the uninitiated, these trips appear to be care-free, all-expenses-paid junkets. However, those who have experienced being a chaperone may disagree. This article will describe the various roles I assumed while leading a group of students from Kyoto Notre Dame University (KNDU) on a three-week study abroad tour to the Institute for Applied Language Studies (IALS), University of Edinburgh, Scotland, in the summer of 2008.

KNDU is a small women's university with a relatively high proportion of students who elect to study abroad. Its Center for International Programs currently offers several programs catered to students wishing to improve their English skills while experiencing English-speaking cultures. All of the short-term excursions are offered annually with the exception of the tour to Scotland, which is offered once every two years because of its lack of popularity among students due to high cost.

Chaperone Selection

Chaperones accompany all groups of students on short-term study abroad tours. With the exception of the Australia program, which only requires an escort to and from the destination, all chaperones remain with their groups for the entire duration. There are no specific qualifications required of chaperones other than the ability to communicate in both English and Japanese.

Volunteers are solicited annually from among the full-time KNDU faculty and the selection process begins in the fall term for the next academic year's programs. Teachers rarely offer their willingness to assist. Other than the separation from home and family, regular work and continuing Japan-based research obligations inevitably accumulate during any absence.

All senior professors in my department have accompanied students abroad at least once during their tenures and the task has traditionally been relegated to junior faculty. Seniority also plays a role in the selection of short-term study abroad destinations. Senior teachers who volunteer are allowed first choice of which program they will lead. There are more desired assignments among KNDU faculty, such as Edinburgh, Scotland, and less attractive locales such as Saskatchewan, Canada due to various reasons including personal interest and research opportunities.

I learned that I was to become a chaperone when a call for volunteers was announced during a monthly faculty meeting in October, 2007. One teacher from my department was being requested to either accompany students to Canada or to Scotland the following year. A period of extended, uncomfortable silence followed. Even though I was the most junior member of the department at the time, a lecturer who had joined the faculty the year before me had yet to offer his assistance for this particular duty. Just as the atmosphere of the meeting room started to become awkward, I raised my hand to offer my services on the stipulation that I be allowed my choice of destination. I did this because I knew that I would eventually have to put myself forward for this school service assignment and by volunteering at that time, I could at least make it less inconvenient as the Scotland tour was rumored to be less demanding and more interesting for accompanying teachers than the Canada tour. To the relief of the other junior faculty member, my proposal was immediately accepted.

Pre-departure Preparation

I was anxious about becoming a chaperone as it was to be my first time and I would be doing it alone. I directed some initial queries about duties and responsibilities to two colleagues who had led the same tour in previous years. Both reported that the IALS was well-organized and that they had not encountered any significant problems with students. One joked about having spent most of his time there relaxing in pubs, while the other told me that he had had enough spare time to make a personal trip to London by train. After hearing several other amusing anecdotes from them, I no longer felt a need to be proactive in my preparation for the trip, and believed that the two officially scheduled orientations conducted by the

Center for International Programs in the week before the commencement of the tour would suffice. I purchased a Scotland guidebook and eagerly started reading about all of the things I could do during the “free time” I was expecting to have.

I met the group of 11 students that I would be accompanying at the first orientation. Even though eight were students from my department, I had only spoken to one of them before. After everyone introduced themselves, the Center for International Programs staff distributed personalized information packets to the students and made a series of short lectures on their contents. These packets included information on the families they would be staying with, a detailed schedule of language classes and extracurricular activities, and advice on what to take with them. This was followed by a presentation from a travel agent who covered issues related to travel insurance, health insurance, traveler’s checks, and immigration procedures. Finally, I was given an impromptu opportunity to address the student group. As I have experienced homestays in foreign countries and have also played host to foreign students, I chose to speak at length about having reasonable expectations of the homestay experience. I normally have an English-only policy when teaching and associating with students out of class, but chose to speak this time in Japanese as I wanted to make sure everyone understood me completely. The orientation had already passed the two-hour mark, and as the students were already overloaded with information, I also wanted to make sure they retained as much of what I had to say as possible.

The second orientation took place three days before departure in the Center for International Programs office. I met one-on-one with a senior administrator for almost three hours and we went over an exhaustive chaperone-specific information packet that I was to keep with me at all times. Its contents consisted of the following:

A reconfirmation of departure date, meeting times, and places
A flight schedule
A document outlining the official rules and regulations for chaperones

A set of protocols to be used in various emergency situations
A list of participants including cellular phone numbers and cellular phone email addresses
A list of participants including names of parents and their contact information
Five copies of student name lists that could be used when calling role
A list of all student homestay residences with maps and contact information
Information on my living arrangements while in Edinburgh
An official KNDU business trip form with per diem allowance information
A set of student surveys to be given out after three days inquiring about satisfaction with homestay arrangements
A set of student surveys to be given out on the return flight inquiring about satisfaction with the study abroad tour
A set of student medical release forms signed by parents
A copy of a note from a doctor for one student with a chronic illness
Copies of official student invitation letters from the University of Edinburgh
Copies of the application forms students completed when initially applying for the study abroad tour
Copies of student passport identification pages
Contact information for IALS, KNDU, travel agency, Japanese consulate and embassy, and the airline we used
A student study and social program schedule
A copy of the official agreement between IALS and KNDU
A set of KNDU publicity materials

I also received an international cellular phone with a local Scottish number, a first-aid kit, 200,000 yen of emergency money to be exchanged into local currency, and a digital camera to take pictures of students, facilities, and the city for future in-school advertising purposes.

The Center for International Programs counselor then informed me of the minimum duties required of a chaperone. First, I was to call KNDU immediately upon arrival in Scotland, and once a week thereafter to give updates. I was also asked to

check up on students at least once every other weekday, either before or after their classes and to accompany them on all weekend excursions. In addition, I was instructed to make sure that the certificates of completion that were to be issued to students at the conclusion of the course were properly formatted, as they would be used to grant students two credits. Finally, I was asked to give a speech that was written by the president of the university to thank the IALS staff at the student farewell party. Ten individually boxed and wrapped Kyocera fountain pens embossed with the KNDU logo were also provided for me to present as tokens of appreciation.

The Roles of the Chaperone

During my 23 days as a chaperone, I encountered various situations that required me to assume a variety of different roles. I have divided them into 10 categories: Tour Conductor, Interpreter, Academic Advisor, Representative of Home Institution, Cultural Advisor, Problem Solver, Research Assistant, Liaison, Peacemaker, and Protector.

Role #1: Tour Conductor

I was a tour conductor on the first and last days of the study tour. While some students had previous international travel experience and were familiar with airport procedures, there were two students in the group who were going abroad for the first time. We passed through security and immigration as a group, and after confirming the departure gate and time, I allowed the students to roam freely. Some students took advantage of duty-free shopping and others visited newsstands or had a snack. I did the first of many head counts before boarding, and upon entering the aircraft and locating their assigned seats, the students began to switch places among themselves as the travel agent had assigned seating according to alphabetical order in an aft section. I was strategically seated a few rows ahead of the group. After the students finished negotiating for their preferred seating, I informed the group of where I would be and then settled in for the long, uneventful flight.

Things became tricky with our five-hour layover in Amsterdam. After reminding everyone to reset their watches to local time, I showed the students how to reconfirm the departure time and gate for our connecting flight on the monitors in the transit area. We then proceeded to the departure gate. Once there, I allowed

students to do as they pleased. They quickly divided themselves up into pairs and small groups and set off to explore the expansive airport. A few wanted to leave the transit area so as to be able to collect EU entry and departure passport stamps. Those who wanted to shop or eat needed euros, and I assisted students with currency exchanges after allowing them to try on their own first. One student complained of a sore throat, and I accompanied her to the airport clinic and later to a pharmacy. I situated myself in an open lounge in the central part of the airport with a good view of passersby. Students who had been separated from their friends came and waited with me until being able to rejoin their friends. One unexpected incident that occurred during the stopover was that the departure time for our next flight had been advanced by 25 minutes and the departure gate switched to a different wing of the airport three hours into the layover. Two students failed to recheck the departure flight information boards and were not present at the gate when the first boarding call was made. I was not able to call them as the cellular phones they carried could only work in the UK. I organized a small search party and set off to locate the two missing students while the rest of the group waited anxiously at the gate with instructions to commence boarding. At the last moment, with the final boarding call being announced in the background and with the rest of the group having already entered the aircraft, they happened to hear their names being called on the public address system and came in time to catch the flight. If they had not, I was to have activated the provided protocol for this situation by allowing the rest of the group to fly as scheduled, to inform KNDU and IALS of the situation, and to accompany the delayed students on the next available flight.

My assistance was also required at immigration and customs in Edinburgh. Japanese students on short-term study abroad programs to the UK do not need a student visa and usually enter on tourist visas. However, things did not go smoothly when an immigration officer could not understand why the first student from my group in front of him said that she was going to study at the University of Edinburgh but did not require a student visa. The proximity of the start of the new Scottish academic school year may have made him cautious. While I thought it best for the students to get as many real-world opportunities to use their English speaking skills on this trip, I eventually had to assist by explaining the nature of their temporary stay and living arrangements. There were no further complications as we collected

our baggage, passed through customs, and made contact with a representative from IALS, who accompanied us to the chartered vans that would take the students to their homestay families and me to my hotel. After reconfirming the meeting time for a city tour the next day, I wished everyone luck.

The tour conductor role recurred on the trip back to Japan. While the students were by then familiar with airport procedures, my assistance was necessary when checking-in for the flight. The students had made numerous purchases while in Scotland and their suitcases were all over the 20 kg weight limit. After inquiring with the airline and then informing students of the excess baggage fees, a redistribution of heavy items to carry-on bags ensued. I was then called upon to assist with placing students in their preferred seating at the check-in counter and with making sure they understood and were able to answer the security questions. I accompanied students through the security checkpoint, immigration, and to the departure gate. The layover in Amsterdam was shorter this time and there were no problems. Once arriving in Japan, everything was straightforward. After clearing quarantine, immigration, and customs, we all gathered in the arrivals area for one last head count where we were met by a Center for International Programs administrator.

Role #2: Interpreter

I acted as an interpreter on multiple occasions in Scotland. On average, I received a call on my cellular phone from a student or host family member once every few days, with more being made at the beginning of the tour. The calls could be classified into two types. One was from a host family who was attempting to relay something important to a student, such as the rules of the house, and felt that the student did not completely understand despite repeated verbal and written attempts. The other was from students who needed a spot translation when they experienced a breakdown in communication with someone they needed to interact with, such as a post office teller. One memorable call of this variety came from a student who was lost, and I translated the directions given to her from a helpful pedestrian.

Role #3: Academic Advisor

The main feature of the KNDU study abroad program to Scotland is the opportunity for students to study ESL. While I was not asked to teach any of the

classes, I did feel that it was my responsibility as a chaperone and language teacher to ensure that the classes were conducted properly. I acted as an academic advisor in two ways: assisting IALS in meeting the needs of the students, and making certain that the students met the expectations of IALS.

IALS has received several cohorts of students from KNDU in previous years. The tailored curriculum that was used for my closed group had been negotiated and accepted by both institutions beforehand. However, the adjunct instructor assigned to my group had never taught the prescribed course of study before. We met for lunch on the first day of instruction and I provided background information on the KNDU EFL curriculum. After observing morning classes the next day and having a brief follow-up discussion, I ascertained that the teacher did not need any further assistance nor welcome my distracting presence in her classroom.

The students encountered problems when determining topics for their final presentations, which was to compare and contrast a cultural or societal aspect of either Kyoto and Edinburgh or Japan and Scotland. Even though this was also my first trip to Scotland, I was able to provide enough suggestions for the students to build upon.

Role #4: Representative of Home Institution

Study abroad programs require a considerable amount of time and effort to establish. Maintaining the mutually beneficial relationship between KNDU and IALS was one of my relatively minor roles as a chaperone. Other than presenting the aforementioned gifts, I also answered queries from IALS administrators on how to improve their program for future KNDU students. In addition, I received a plaque and letter addressed to the KNDU president to commemorate the 10 years our two universities had been in cooperation. I also delivered to the University of Edinburgh International Office the set of KNDU publicity materials that I had been provided.

Role #5: Cultural Advisor

My role as a cultural advisor encompassed many of the peripheral aspects of the tour and ranged from dining and shopping recommendations to accompanying groups of students on informal weekend trips. I often acted as an information

exchange center with some students informing me, for example, about which brand of shortbread cookie they thought tasted the best, and me telling other students this information when the topic happened to come up during conversation. The students in my group had formed cliques and while there was interaction as a whole, the small groups that developed were established according to three tendencies: age-based (freshmen being with other freshmen), major-based (psychology majors preferring to be with other psychology majors), and interest-based (shoppers with other shoppers). I enjoyed a good relationship with each group and constantly heard and passed along any useful information discovered about Scottish culture and the city of Edinburgh.

I found myself explaining cultural differences on an almost daily basis. Convincing students that any perceived quirks of their homestay family were often acceptable in Western cultures was sometimes a challenge. One notable example was when a surprised student revealed how her middle-aged host mother dated two different men on a regular basis. Another memorable discussion began when a student reported that her host father had asked her to help wash his car.

Role #6: Problem Solver

There were a number of complications that threatened the general well-being of the group. Some of these problems fell outside of the study abroad institution's responsibility and therefore required my assistance. For example, it was inevitable that some of the students in the group would experience minor illnesses during their three weeks abroad. The first-aid kit I was provided contained enough Japanese medications and bandages to cover most needs, but accompanied trips to a pharmacy did become necessary. Furthermore, some students were not able to fully adjust to the Western diet. While I insisted that the true study abroad experience entailed eating the same food the host family ate, I located a Japanese restaurant with reasonable prices near the school for students to be able to occasionally eat more familiar food after fielding a series of complaints.

Serious problems can occur during study abroad tours. One student on the trip was asked to leave her homestay lodging after the first night. The host family was unwilling to reconsider and the accommodation placement office at IALS would not

provide an alternative homestay arrangement for the student. As the reasons for the sudden expulsion only related to her ability to live with an unfamiliar family, she was allowed to continue to take classes. After consultation with KNDU Center for International Programs administrators, it was decided that the best course of action was for the student to be placed in a room in my hotel. However, as she was unable to care for herself, I had to actively support her for three days before her mother arrived in Scotland to escort her back to Japan. This task was especially difficult as the student had shifted blame for this unexpected turn of events entirely onto me. But as she was determined to complete the course, I then found myself assisting the parent in locating a suitable bed and breakfast accommodation where they could stay. I then had the additional responsibility of watching over the mother for the rest of the tour, as she had never traveled outside of Asia and could not speak English.

Role #7: Research Assistant

The study abroad programs offered to KNDU students are sometimes selected because one or more senior professors once had an academic relationship with a school or has an interest in the region. The fact that I was going to the University of Edinburgh was therefore noted by certain colleagues who proceeded to ask favors of me. For example, to assist with ongoing research, one professor asked me to visit the university library and pick up two DVDs containing scans of old maps of the city of Edinburgh that he had ordered. Another request by a teacher required me to go to a rare bookstore to purchase hand-written scores by a particular composer if any were available. Other faculty members also recognized possible research opportunities and asked to distribute two surveys that measured the language learning motivation of the students under my care to be completed at the beginning and conclusion of the course. A fourth request was to bring back copies of the IALS placement examinations that were used.

Role #8: Liaison

The eighth role that I played as a chaperone was that of liaison. Other than the continuous reporting and consultation to and between KNDU and IALS about the student who was not able to homestay, there was one incident involving a weekend

excursion that was included on the schedule but had failed to materialize. I had to liaise between both schools to determine fault and broker a solution. Otherwise, there were no occasions for me to act as an official intermediary between the administrations of the two schools.

Many of the students in my group carried cellular phones that were capable of making and receiving international calls. However, one parent needed to contact a student without such a phone, so called me directly, asking me to relay a specific message to her daughter. Another set of parents who had thought that their daughter would call or email at least once during the stay also contacted me to inquire about their child. The student, who was thoroughly enjoying her time away from her parents, required some cajoling from me to return the call to reassure them of her well-being.

There was one instance where a complicated mistake made by IALS required my assistance. Students were all to be given unique user names and passwords for access to university computers which they could use for emailing friends in Japan and for the research required for their final presentations. The teacher had been given the slips of paper containing this information to distribute on the first day of classes, but had forgotten that she had received them. After fielding queries from the students, I had to conduct an investigation that included visits to a senior administrator, IT technician, office secretaries, the instructor, and a teacher's aid who all pointed me in other directions before eventually locating where the chain of custody had broken down.

Role #9: Peacemaker

There are bound to be conflicts among members of any group. One rather self-centered student quickly drew the ire of her classmates. Examples of this selfish behavior involved her unwelcome attachment to a certain student in the group, seemingly chosen at random, before focusing on a different student and proceeding to speak poorly of the first student, as well as openly berating anyone who chatted in Japanese during lessons. After observing how the formerly pleasant group atmosphere had started to deteriorate, I acted as a peacemaker by speaking to the offending student in private. This resulted in an immediate improvement in her

behavior to a level that was more tolerable. However, I was still forced to console the other students in the group for the remainder of the tour in an attempt to restore group harmony. This, however, was never completely accomplished.

Role #10: Protector

Japanese university students with little overseas travel experience often fail to adequately adjust their notions of safety. As the chaperone, I pointed out risky habits in an attempt to avoid any unpleasant distractions to the students' English and cultural studies plans from occurring. Some instances included a need to remind students not to leave their handbags and electronic dictionaries behind in readily accessible classrooms, to remember to bargain according to Scottish customs, and to always count their change when making purchases.

There were many occasions when I actively guarded the welfare of the students. Certain evening activities, such as Scottish C elidhs, were held in unfamiliar parts of the city and I accompanied students to the often ill-lit bus stops after the events and remained present until they each safely boarded. Another nighttime excursion involved a pub tour in which I monitored the students who were still under the official drinking age in Japan yet of legal age in the UK to make sure they were not overwhelmed by their inexperience. The student who could not be placed in a homestay also required my full attention before and after school for the three days before her parent arrived. Other than having meals together, I had to make arrangements for her laundry, accompany her on a shopping trip, and take her to the post office as she had no sense of direction and little common sense in addition to very weak English speaking skills. Without anyone in the group willing to befriend her, she would have endangered herself if I had left her to her own resources.

IALS hires local students as teacher's assistants and conversation partners for the groups of foreign students they host. This is done to ensure that the students will have contact with friendly peers with whom they can speak to in English. Having previously been employed as one, I was aware of the strong bonds that could sometimes develop between these helpers and the students studying abroad. Inappropriate behavior such as favoritism and speaking in Japanese can occur. I actively monitored our situation and was fortunate to have encountered no problems.

The students in my group were occasionally late or absent to class. I had told everyone to try to call me beforehand in these situations. IALS strictly enforced an 80% attendance requirement but did not concern itself with the reason why a student was tardy or absent, which could be serious. In the three weeks in Scotland, one student was absent once because of a cold and another missed a Saturday field trip because she chose to go on an excursion with her host family instead. Two students were late to the first day of classes and one once took the wrong bus. All of these students informed me of their situations before they were expected at school.

Conclusion

My stint as a chaperone ended where it began, at Kansai International Airport. My responsibility had been to ensure that the group of 11 students could satisfactorily complete a language and culturally-based course of study in a foreign country and I had brought everyone back safely, hopefully much wiser from the experience.

Being a chaperone is just one of many non-teaching duties required of full-time faculty at KNDU. It is a work-intensive, thankless task. No student, parent, or co-worker ever showed any sign of appreciation for all of the effort I had expended. It was also financially disadvantageous as the per diem did not completely cover my daily expenses. However, I did develop a good rapport with the students in my group, which continues to this day.

The pre-departure preparation was adequate for the students, but it did not prepare me for the roles I was to play because many of the situations I encountered were unpredictable. I was unfortunate to have had an unreasonable student in the group who was the cause of a lot of frustration and additional effort. I now fully understand why volunteers for chaperones are often hard to come by and when future calls for assistance are made, I will likely join the fraternity of experienced colleagues and contribute to the silence with a thousand-yard stare.

Announcements

Submissions

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***Ryugaku* Submission Guidelines**

Submissions related to Study Abroad are welcome in the following categories:

1. Feature articles: 1500-3000 words
2. Ryugaku Forum (short articles and interviews): Maximum 1500 words
4. Classroom Ideas: Maximum 1500 words
5. Book reviews
6. Study abroad program reviews
7. Study abroad experiences from students: Let's hear what our students have to say!

Format for submissions:

1. Attached Microsoft Word document
2. Limit the use of bold and italics in the document

Please send all submissions and inquires about submissions by e-mail to eberl@notredame.ac.jp

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