



Studying Abroad Widens Horizons

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Introduction

The college experience is one that cannot be replicated by anything short of college. **Adjunct activities**, however, can raise consciousness, inspire action, and develop citizenship of the world. One such activity is **Short-Term Study Abroad** programs for undergraduates.

This poster seeks to support this hypothesis by an informal survey from students having recently returned from a trip to Belize, in 2018 and 2019.

We hope to show by responses and literature review that funding for short term study abroad projects is money well-spent.

What is it?

Short-term study abroad describes trips to other countries outside the U.S. to expose students to culture and life different from theirs.



What is it NOT?

A two or three-week party or school break. It is led and organized by faculty.



Justglobetrotting.com



Belize Tourism Board

Non-School Related Reasons to go:

*Educational Assistance

*Medical Assistance

*Service Missions

*Culture and Language Immersion

*Building/Repairing Assistance

Methods

Since this is not yet at a stage where it is a formal study, no formal or empirical data was collected.

This was a short, 7-Question informal post-trip survey, conducted in both 2018 and 2019. Its purpose was to investigate whether the students who participated in these trips received an appreciable benefit that they could articulate without prompting.

The questions on the survey were:

Question 1: Explain your rationale for your response to question 6.

Question 2: In as much detail as possible, please describe how comparing US and Belizean schools will impact your career as a teacher.

Question 3: In as much detail as possible, please describe how comparing US and Belizean schools has impacted you personally?

Question 4: Please describe how this experience taught you to embrace cultural differences.

Question 5: List the 3 most meaningful events of your faculty-led, study abroad experience.

Question 6: If you could do this trip again, what would you personally do to improve the experience?

Question 7: If you could eliminate something from this study abroad experience, what would it be?

Results

Students were encouraged to elaborate on their responses, which will most likely translate to a qualitative pre and post survey for the study after all preliminary work and the IRB request is done. This portion is expected to occur Spring 2022 following a new trip.

Anecdotal responses were:

Question 1:

- Humbling experience
- Learned about culture
- Expanded job prospect
- Learned new classroom management techniques
- Learned more about how classrooms around the world operate

Question 2:

- They will strive to do more with less (**Reuse and recycle made impressions**)
- Have a new appreciation for the U.S. and its resources
- Will utilize new classroom management techniques
- Will learn how to engage with students from different cultures

Question 3:

- "Made me a better person"
- New understanding of being privileged
- Learned to build relationships and be more communal
- Learned to think outside of the borders of the U.S.

Question 4:

- a better understanding of diversity
- a new awareness of different cultures
- importance of learning different languages
- Learned to be culturally sensitive

Question 5:

- Isla Bonita
 - ATM Cave/Xunatunich
 - Snorkeling
 - 1st lunch
 - Whole trip
- Interactions with locals
Island Academy
Conquering Fears
Classroom Experience
Exploring the Reef

Results (ctd.)

Question 6:

- More Team Building before and during the trip
- More time at the schools
- More time at the zoo
- More time in low-income schools like Isla Bonita

Question 7:

- Eliminate nothing (x10)
- Eliminate generalizations
- Eliminate the time limit in the schools
- Eliminate phones

Conclusions:



Improved Engagement for Learning

The changes in students' perspectives and increased awareness of the world around them is almost worth the cost alone. (Lewis & Niesenbaum, 2004)

Seeing other people in other cultures makes a vivid memory and helps students LIVE diversity instead of only talking about it. (McLaughlin et al., 2018)

Being taken out of their usual environment is eye-opening and fosters independence.

AVERAGE COST: \$1800 (Storm, et al.)

STUDENT BENEFIT: PRICELESS

BECOMING A WORLD CITIZEN:

UNBELIEVABLE IMPACT

Bibliography

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