

Chapter 11

Language Teaching Strategies: Five Countries Compared Through Study Abroad

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ABSTRACT

This chapter provides tips for leading a study abroad course from professors who taught a course focused on instruction and assessment for Second Language Learners to American teachers studying abroad. The author shares information from four, two-week study abroad programs that embedded participation in the International Reading Association's, currently known as the International Literacy Association, World Congress or European Conference in the study abroad course experience. Seeing different cultures and experiencing second language instruction firsthand added depth to the course discussions. This chapter will provide readers with information about what the instructors learned over the progression of the four courses, including tips about language strategy activities to use on trips abroad.

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the authors provide a brief overview of the information covered in a study abroad course, describe study abroad activities created to meet the course objectives, and discuss how teaching the course abroad compares to teaching it on-campus. In addition, the professor shares how instruction of English learners compares in the United States versus the countries visited. That being said, the overall objective of this chapter is to provide readers with tips for activities and language teaching strategies when teaching abroad, while also providing the pros and cons of teaching a study abroad.

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BACKGROUND

Studying abroad can provide many benefits to students. In fact, according to *U.S. News and World Reports*, it is an opportunity that should be taken if at all possible because students can learn about other countries, cultures, and languages. Moreover, a study abroad course can maintain the same quality as an on-campus course if a university professor provides it. The only disadvantages of study abroad noted were the cost, being separated from family, time (perhaps not finishing a degree as quickly if going abroad), and traveling in the fall versus the spring because going in the spring allows students to extend their stay in the summer (Unigo, 2011).

Study abroad is an experience of a lifetime that bodes well on a resume, while helping students create a professional network abroad (Oral Roberts University, 2014). In addition, students that studied abroad reported that they also grew personally. Thus, it is recommended that professors include topics to reflect on while abroad for students to grow professionally as well as personally (Georgiev, 2014).

Yet, only 30% of U.S. citizens have passports, compared to 60% of Canadians, and 75% of the individuals in the United Kingdom (Avon, 2011). Some of the factors contributing to this low percentage are the vast number of places to visit in the United States., cost, and the ability to have a vacation long enough to travel abroad (Avon, 2011). Therefore, in order to make an abroad experience more appealing to students, it might be beneficial to consider short-term programs, which are between one and eight weeks in length (Donnelly-Smith, 2009).

A recent study about providing study abroad programs to teachers showed that “the participating educators later exhibited a growing sense of advocacy and commitment to better support English as a Second Language and new immigrant students in their schools” (Suh, Hur, & Lim, 2014, p. 3). This chapter synthesizes the methods used by one professor, which take into consideration this background information.

MAIN FOCUS OF THE CHAPTER

Language teaching strategies covered in the study abroad course come from the text *Reading, Writing, and Learning in ESL: A Resource Book for K - 12 English Learners* (Peregoy & Boyle, 2013) and from numerous websites posted on the course management site powered by Blackboard. In summary, they included the importance of establishing rapport, using visuals, asking questions while reading aloud to students, using technology, and teaching idioms. A concise synopsis of these strategies is provided next to show what is covered in the course and to then compare information from the reading to what was observed in the language classrooms abroad. The sections that follow outline the course assignments, the field trips provided, and the rubrics used in the course in an effort to provide an example of how a study abroad can be formatted and to provide readers with practical methods that they can make their own. The chapter ends by discussing the issues, potential solutions, and future research directions suggested by the authors of this chapter.

Language Teaching Strategy 1: Establishing Rapport

Establishing rapport is one of the first keys to developing an open dialogue with English language learners (ELLs), in addition to finding out their interests, and allowing them to feel comfortable to ask ques-

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