

Guatemala



CIMA Center Study Abroad Packet

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Before the Trip:



Passport Process

If you do not have a passport, one will be needed for this study abroad trip. Keep in mind that ALL first time applicants must apply in person. Remember to submit the application and the supporting documents as soon as possible. It usually takes the government 6-8 weeks to process the application and mail the passport out. The application can be obtained at the Post Office or online.

Supporting Documents that will be needed:

- Proof of U.S. citizenship
- Proof of identify

- TWO recent color photos (can get passport photos taken at Walgreens or U.S. Post Office)
- Paid Fees

More information can be found at: travel.state.gov/passport

Other Documents

It is recommended to make two colored copies of your passport, driver license, and social security card. Leave one of the copies at home with a trusted individual, parent, and then take the other copy in your carry on bag.

Class Descriptions

The following classes are all necessary to complete the 15 hours ESL endorsement through K-State. Below they are outlined and described as follows:

Course number- Name (Nickname)

Credit hours

Description

Requisites

When offered

EDCI 720 - ESL/Dual Language Methods (Methods)

Credits: (3)

This class is an exploration of contemporary approaches, methods, and strategies for the appropriate instruction of second language learners. Also provided is a foundational perspective on ESL/Dual Language approaches, including the communicative, cognitive, and grammatical.

Requisites: Junior standing.

Semester(s) offered: Fall, Summer

EDCI 731 - ESL/Dual Language Linguistics (Linguistics)

Credits: (3)

Explores the theoretical underpinnings of language acquisition and linguistics that educators need to understand, in order to better plan appropriately adapted curriculum and instruction for second language learners. The course encompasses problematic aspects of English language learning, the ways in which languages may differ, and certain universal aspects of languages.

Requisites: Junior standing.

Semester(s) offered: Fall, Summer

EDCI 740 - Culture and Language in Classroom Practice (Multicultural)

Credits: (3)

Examines ways teachers can address diversity in their classrooms with attention to issues such as critical reflection on practice; effective collaboration with families; diversification of the learning environment; use and adaptation of the grade-level curriculum; the differentiation of classroom instruction for cultural and linguistic diversity; and advocacy skill development.

Requisites: Junior standing.

Semester(s) offered: Spring, summer (specifically on the trip)

EDCI 742 - ESL/Dual Language Assessment (Assessment)

Credits: (3)

This class provides an in-depth examination of key issues/challenges in the appropriate language assessment of culturally and linguistically diverse students. Among focal topics in theory, research and practice discussed will be: pre-and post-instructional assessment, authentic and alternative assessment, language testing and placement for programming in ESL/Dual language classrooms.

Requisites: Junior standing.

Semester(s) offered: Spring, summer

EDCI 745 - ESL/Dual Language Elementary Practicum (El. Practicum)

Credits: (3)

The practicum is a portfolio-based experience providing the student with application experiences in ESL/Dual Language methods, assessment, and multicultural competence as well as the opportunity to demonstrate understanding of second language acquisition. Students will be required to spend 60 hours in a school setting where they can practice and implement ESL/BE lessons/ methodology.

Requisites: EDCI 720, 731, 742, and 733 or 740.

Semester(s) offered: Fall, spring (or summer on the trip)

EDCI 746 - ESL/Dual Language Secondary Practicum (Sec. Practicum)

Credits: (3)

The practicum is a portfolio-based experience providing the student with application experiences in ESL/Dual Language methods, assessment, and multicultural competence as well as the opportunity to demonstrate understanding of second language acquisition. Students will be required to spend 60 hours in a school setting where they can practice and implement ESL/BE lessons/ methodology.

Requisites: EDCI 720, 731, 742, and 733 or 740.

Semester(s) offered: Fall, spring (summer on the trip)

Details for each class/ Expectations before trip

Methods—Methods is best to take first, as it is a good introduction to ESL. In Methods, you will learn strategies, theories, and acronyms that are built off of in the remainder of the ESL coursework. If you plan to study abroad on a CIMA center trip, it would be extremely to your benefit to have completed this course. It is traditionally not offered as a class to take abroad.

Linguistics—The Linguistics course builds off of what you have learned in Methods and explores: how and where sounds and words are produced in the body, how people acquire language, and the great debate between phonics and holistic literacy instruction. It is encouraged that this course *not* be taken on the study abroad trip, as it is too much information for only three weeks and holds a lot of valuable information that is found on the licensure test.

Assessment—Assessment explores exactly that—all types of assessment strategies, tools, accommodations, and actual tests that can be informally and formally given to CLD students. Again, it would be helpful to have already taken Methods. Like Linguistics, Assessment coursework is a big chunk of the licensure test and would be more difficult to complete on the trip. A few class meetings and reading may need to be completed prior to the trip to complete this class.

Multicultural—Multicultural is a class that discusses all types of diversity. It explores stereotypes and personal feelings of multiple cultures. Before the trip, you will watch a couple of videos with your group and complete a project as well as a daily journal for coursework.

Practicum (both Elementary and Secondary)—During both practicum experiences, you will have over 50 contact hours with children. You will plan and teach SIOP lessons for ESL instruction. During the trip, you will complete several Reflection Wheel Journals and write 2-3 narrative stories about your experience. It is important to note that you will most likely be teaching explicitly in English. As a final project/assessment for this course, you will complete a portfolio and 8-9 page platform paper.



Cost of Trip

The cost of the trip to Guatemala is relatively inexpensive. Here is a breakdown of the Summer 2010 expenses:

Tuition	\$618.60	a credit hour
Distance Education Fee	\$21.50	a credit hour
Airfare	\$726.62	roundtrip
Lodging	\$300.00	paid to host family
Additional Expenses	\$300.00	paid to CIMA Center includes: First night lodging at hotel, bus transportation, admittance to weekend excursions, food at weekend excursions, breakfast and lunch for first full day in Guatemala, payment for school contact people

Weather and Food

Guatemala covers an area of 42,042 square miles and is bounded on the west and north by Mexico; on the east by Belize, the Caribbean Sea, Honduras and El Salvador; and on the south by the Pacific Ocean. Although the country lies within the tropics, its climate varies considerably, depending on altitude and rainfall patterns. The northern lowlands and the Atlantic coastal area are very warm and experience rain throughout much of the year. The Pacific lowlands are drier, and because they are at or near sea level, remain warm. The highlands are temperate. The coolest weather there occurs during the rainy season from May or June to November, with daily temperatures ranging from 60 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit in Guatemala City, which is about a mile above sea level. "Summer" denotes the period between February and May, when the temperature during the day in Guatemala City often reaches into the 80s.

Corn made into tortillas or tamales, black beans, rice, and wheat in the form of bread or pasta are staples eaten by nearly all Guatemalans. The people also consume chicken, pork, beef, fish and shellfish. Fruits that are commonly eaten in the Guatemala include: pineapples, papayas, mangoes, variety of melons, citrus fruits, peaches, pears, plums, guavas, and many others. Fruit is typically eaten as dessert, or as a snack in-between meals.

Packing List

I would recommend bringing the following items:

- Pepto Bismol
- Imodium
- 3 pairs of nice bottoms for school: khakis, black bottoms, and nice jeans.
- Additional bottoms, 2-3, for the weekends or just hanging out with your family: shorts, capris, and jeans.
- 5 tops appropriate for school, polos, solid crew necks, etc.
- 2-5 tops to wear on the weekends or when you are at home.
- A nice top incase your family takes you out to a nice dinner.
- Swimming Suit
- Remember all of your chargers/batteries for your electronic devices.
- Travel size toiletries including sunscreen and aloe
- 30 or more of: mechanical pencils and pens
- Fun size chex mix or other moderately healthy snacks

- A pack of dry erase markers and an eraser for your teaching use – when you leave you can donate them to a teacher at the school
- A ½ to 1 inch 3-ring binder with paper for your class needs
- School Supplies: construction paper, glue, scissors, rulers, crayons, markers, colored pencils, erasers.
- CD of children’s songs (useful in the younger classrooms)

Blending In

Below are tips from the article “How to Blend in with the Locals” by Ed Hewitt written May 4, 2010. For the full article visit <http://www.msnbc.msn.com/id/36803175/ns/travel-tips/>

Wear muted clothes. When it comes to blending in, the clothes you wear are your first line of defense. Simple, muted clothing is almost always the way to go when traveling. It might turn out that a Flyers T-shirt or Mariners cap is really popular at the moment in the country you are visiting, but you are taking a risk if your goal is to blend in.

Pack clothes you can wear anywhere. One of the challenges of blending in is being able to do so when visiting the local barber as well as dining at the best local restaurant. If you pack clothes that are versatile, and neither flash nor trash, you have a better chance of being able to blend in many different situations. Unfortunately, clothes specifically designed for travel —cargo shorts, or pant legs that zip off to become shorts, for example — don't always fit in. For ideas on how the locals dress where you are headed, see tip No. 6 below.

Douse the camera and other tourist accoutrements. Taking photos of your travels is a natural and very enjoyable thing, but if you want to blend in, you may want to tone it down a bit. Having a big honking camera hanging from your neck everywhere you go acts like an outsider's scarlet letter — not to mention an attraction for thieves. Bring the camera, but keep it under wraps a bit, and don't point it where it is not welcome. The same goes for things like fanny packs, guidebooks and the like; you can bring them, but try to keep a low profile.

Douse the shoes. It seems that in particular white shoes or running shoes paired with white socks are an outsider's freak flag. In many European countries, for instance, this type of shoe is only worn when working out — not in any other sort of public situation. I'm not sure about the fashion component here, but it makes sense that bright white shoes attract attention, the antithesis of "blending in."

Do an image search on the Web. Here's a tip I learned from a friend who recently took a "gap year" after college to go around the world: pictures of a place found in the news and other online resources really can tell you what a place will look like when you get there, and how people dress — unlike idealized tourist brochures or glossy guidebooks.

Have your money under control. If you understand the value of the local currency and various denominations, carry it in a straightforward way (wallet, purse), and can make transactions competently, you will blend in much better. Fumbling with money not only outs you as an outsider, but also can make you a mark for thieves. Keep in mind, however, that you should carry only what you need for a single day in a wallet or purse. If you're carrying a big wad of cash, a passport, etc., it should still go in a money belt under your clothes or stay in the hotel safe for more security.

Be courteous without being fawning. I grew up in a tourist town, and know the love/hate relationship the locals have with their money-spending interlopers. Locals do often need the revenue that tourists bring, but in the worst cases it can be like having an awful boss — almost not worth the dough. Finances aside, locals want neither to be treated like they live to please you, nor to be treated like you are doing them a favor by saying hello. Take your cues from them, and you will start to blend in. When in doubt, err on the side of being overly courteous — trying to be a little bit likeable never hurts — so long as you remember that you're not doing anyone but yourself any favors.

Learn — and use — some of the language. Arguably mangling the local language just makes it clear you aren't from around here, but you would be surprised how much slack you get for trying. If you don't know how to say something, ask — many locals are happy to help you learn. And the more you practice, the better you get at the language, which can open doors that lead you deeper into the local culture.

Say hello. At the very least, say hello to folks you encounter. You would do this at the local Wawa, so you should do the same at the panaderia.

Modulate your voice. Don't be the obnoxious American in the corner booth whose loud laughter disrupts everyone else's dinner. It's not like people in other places are quiet — every neighborhood has a local or two who is really noisy — but that person shouldn't be your role model if you're trying to blend in. (Some travelers recommend you speak at about half your usual volume.) Keep in mind that there are exceptions to this rule, though; in some cultures and settings (like a noisy public market), you'll need to speak up in order to be noticed and fit in with the locals. Also on this topic: If you don't speak the language, talking even louder in English is not going to make you understood. Volume does not equal comprehension. Lower the volume!

Pay attention. If you want to blend in with the locals, pay attention to how the locals act, what they do, where they congregate, how they dress — and follow suit. If you want to walk the walk, it's going to have to be their walk. And don't assume that your custom is their custom. If you are paying attention, you might find that things like prolonged direct eye contact or a giant smile don't go over too well in a particular location, even if at home these are always the way to go. Change up your style to match their style as you go along, accepting that you won't get it right immediately.

Carry yourself with confidence. Locals tend not to walk wide-eyed around their own neighborhoods. Look like you know what you are doing and where you are going, and other people will think you do — even if you don't have a clue.

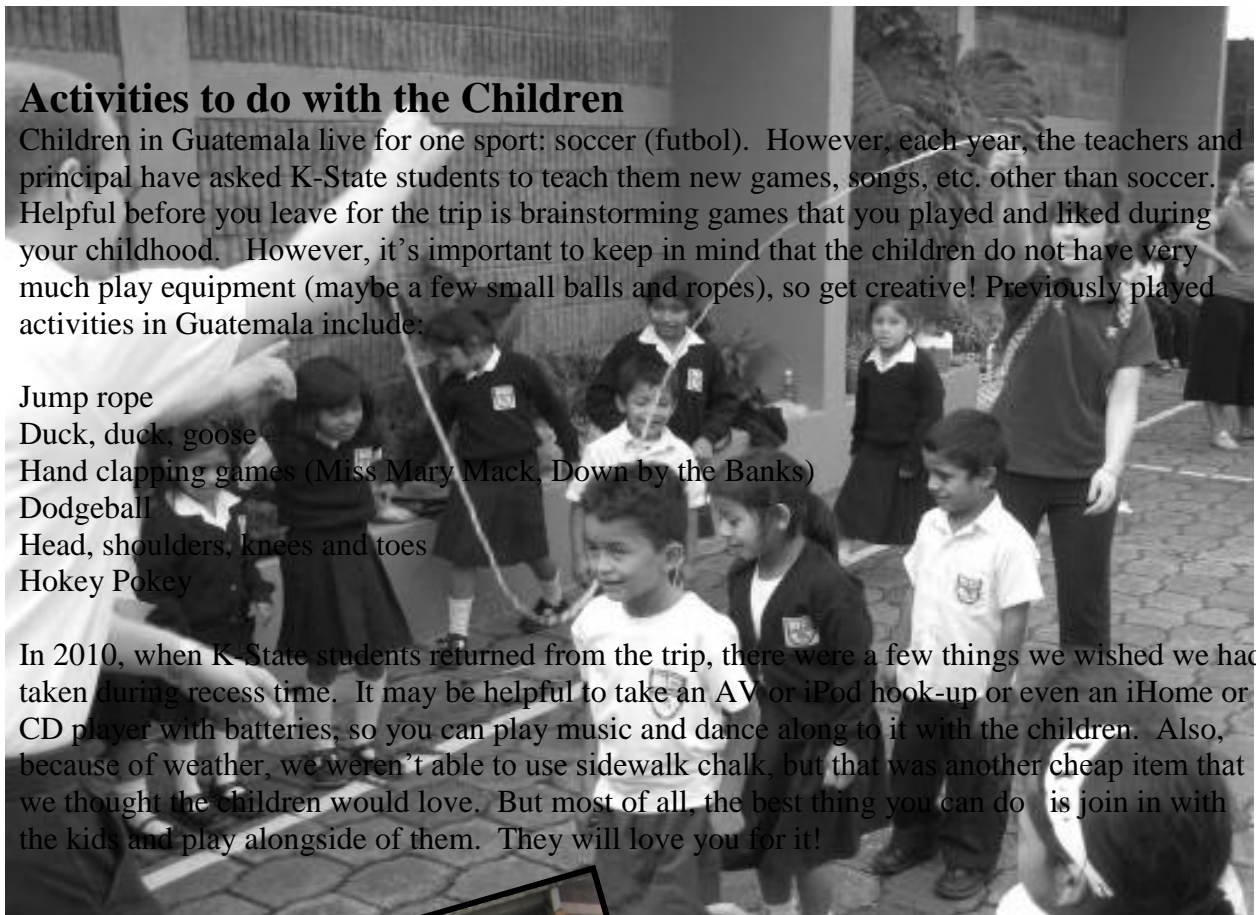
Be yourself. There is only so much you can do to make yourself disappear into the local culture. When I was in Beijing, I could have worn a dragon costume in a street parade and I still would not have been able to blend in. But I met a lot of great people merely by saying hello and being myself from there on out; if I had tried to be too cool, it would have been a far lesser experience.

Activities to do with the Children

Children in Guatemala live for one sport: soccer (futbol). However, each year, the teachers and principal have asked K-State students to teach them new games, songs, etc. other than soccer. Helpful before you leave for the trip is brainstorming games that you played and liked during your childhood. However, it's important to keep in mind that the children do not have very much play equipment (maybe a few small balls and ropes), so get creative! Previously played activities in Guatemala include:

Jump rope
Duck, duck, goose
Hand clapping games (Miss Mary Mack, Down by the Banks)
Dodgeball
Head, shoulders, knees and toes
Hokey Pokey

In 2010, when K-State students returned from the trip, there were a few things we wished we had taken during recess time. It may be helpful to take an AV or iPod hook-up or even an iHome or CD player with batteries, so you can play music and dance along to it with the children. Also, because of weather, we weren't able to use sidewalk chalk, but that was another cheap item that we thought the children would love. But most of all, the best thing you can do is join in with the kids and play alongside of them. They will love you for it!



During the Trip:

Ambiguity

When traveling abroad, one word is extremely important to always have in mind: ambiguity! Remember that you are experiencing a new place, new people, maybe a new language and everything that goes along with that culture. At the same time, you must fulfill responsibilities of planning, teaching and completing your own schoolwork. This is stressful enough, and when schedule changes occur, you might just want to squirm or yell. Be flexible! Know that changes will happen, and most likely, these are out of your personal control. Don't get stressed out, and try to "go with the flow" as best as you can. Complaining or having a bad attitude will do nothing but lessen the amazing experience that you have at your fingertips. When the going gets tough, grin and bear it, and talk it out with a friend or roommate if you need to.

Living Accommodations

While in Guatemala you will be staying with host families. One requirement for the host families is that at least one person in the family knows some English. Also, when the CIMA Center assigns roommates they do their best to put one fluent Spanish speaker with someone who doesn't have a strong background in Spanish. There could be anywhere from 2-4 people in each host family house. The families chosen have gone through an interview process to ensure that they would provide a good living environment for the students. However, if there are major problems with the family, just tell the advisor and they will look for a new family for you.

The majority of the families are very loving and excited for you to be there. They will take you to the market and bank when you need to, so don't be afraid to ask them. If you need or want different foods than what they are feeding you just let them know and they will be very accommodating. Most families understand that you are used to a different eating schedule, meal sizes, and food types. The families will not be offended if you ask them for something different than what they have made for lunch or dinner. Just remember to be respectful and loving towards them.



Communication Back Home

There are many different ways to communicate with people back home while you are in Guatemala:

- Skype: you and whoever you are wanting to talk to can set up Skype accounts. Skype allows you to talk to other people through a computer microphone and speakers. Also, if your computer has video capabilities you can video chat with people as well.
 - Skype also has an option where you can go online and pay \$5 or \$10 and then use Skype to call home or cell phone numbers for two cents a minute. You can also send text messages through Skype.
- International Phone Card: You can buy these when you get to Guatemala or when you are in the United States, just make sure you get the international ones. They work just like normal phone cards and you can buy them in many different increments.
- Facebook/E-mail: All of the houses have Internet connection so you can always send messages or chat using Facebook or your E-mail provider.

Exchanging Money

Cash can be exchanged at specific banks within the host country. The group advisors will update you on these locations and their times of operation. The act of exchanging money in the host country is a convenient process, but a slightly more challenging one is ensuring you bring a proper amount of money for your trip. Of course the amount of cash to bring depends on your souvenir desires and so on. In terms of 2010 value, aim to bring about \$50 to 150 USD. Another important issue is to make sure that you travel in a group to the bank with at least one fluent Spanish speaker. It is ill advised to be alone in the host country, and it is outright stupid to be alone with a pocket full of cash.

Prices, similarities and differences

Traveling anywhere means differences in prices. Guatemala City is no different. Most items are similar prices to those in the USA. Going out to eat, shopping at the mall and small things like a cup of coffee or ice cream are just about the same. However, some sweet items are super cheap. At the super market, soda pop and snack foods like Oreos cost little to nothing. Also, the super market has a bunch of little kiosks with foods that are cheap, too. Chocolate covered frozen fruit

is only about \$.75! You can also find cheap DVDs and deals from vendors at markets. Postcards can be found very cheap in Antigua, as well. One activity that was a little expensive was developing photos, and some nicer restaurants can be pricey, too. On the trip, depending on how many gifts you want to take home, you should expect to take at least \$100 extra dollars for spending money. Those who took less found themselves pinching pennies at the end of the trip.

Trip Tips

What to wear:

The most important rule of dress is comfort. You will be doing a lot of walking during your trips, so make sure you have a comfortable pair of shoes. It would be beneficial to check the weather the night before.

Safety:

Guatemala is a safe country. You will see Guatemalan Police Officers on the streets and in the stores, working hard to keep people safe. As with any travel, there are certain things you should keep in mind to ensure safety during your stay:

- Always be alert of your surroundings
- Never carry a large amount of cash on you at any given time
- Keep your belongings close to your body

Respect the Culture and Laws of the Country You're In

Wherever you come from, traveling in a group to Guatemala is going to mean you're going to have to adjust your behavior accordingly. It will already be obvious to the locals that you are foreign (especially when there is a group of you), so be as polite and aware of customs and regulations as much as possible.

Respect Your Group Leader

Your guide or group leader has likely had more experience than you have taking groups of travelers to and around your common destinations. They know the rules and regulations, so listen to them when they outline those rules before any excursion. Also remember that it is a huge job keeping track of a group of opinionated, jet-lagged travelers; it's your group leader's job to lead, but he or she has the right to be stressed at times.

Respect the Other Members of Your Group

There are bound to be personality clashes in any group of travelers. Close quarters, jet lag, hunger, and any number of other discomforts can make group members' cranky sides show. The more understanding and patient you are with yourself, your travel companions, and your group leader, the more easily you will get along after everyone has acclimated to their new environment.

Stay with Your Group

Unless it's a designated personal time, stay with your group. Wandering off causes unnecessary worry on the part of your group members, can make your group late, or can cause other disruptions if you stray too far from the day's program. At the same time,

keep an eye on others in the group to make sure no one gets left behind at the museum or while standing at a bus stop.

Help Each Other

Lines of communication can get tangled when you travel in a group. If you don't hear your group leader say that you're leaving the hotel at 10 am, you'll want to verify with other members of your group. Sometimes, one or more of you won't understand how to exchange currency, so offer a hand to anyone who is struggling. This will streamline the group's travel experience greatly and give your group leader a break.

Keep Irreverent or Negative Comments to Yourself

While we all love a little appropriately timed irony to lighten the mood, constant, unrelenting sarcasm can really drag down morale for the whole group. Waiting is not always fun, your excursions won't always be idyllic countryside escapes, and the locals are under no obligation to understand you. The strange, awkward, and downright unpleasant are all a part of the experience, so take it in stride.

Include Other Group Members

Often times, sub-groups will form in your travel group, and so it's easy to overlook that one person who is consistently stuck in his or her hotel room while the rest of the group goes out dancing at night. Invitations are always appreciated, whether or not they are accepted.

Leave Biases at Home

Personal biases can throw a wrench into any group's works. Just leave them at home. After all—you're all traveling to Guatemala for roughly the same reasons. The person sitting next to you on the flight over might have different religious or political beliefs, they might have a different sexual orientation, or they might just be . . . different. What's not different is that they're on the same trip that you are—and that should be enough common ground for both of you.

Suffer a Little

Travel to Guatemala is going to come with its own share of discomforts, and these discomforts may be amplified depending upon how many members are in your travel group. If the beds at the hotel are lumpy, rest assured that no one else's was any better. If your feet hurt, most likely so does every other group members'. Ignoring these small things (at least outwardly) can go a long way in keeping up a positive attitude.

Teaching and Preparation

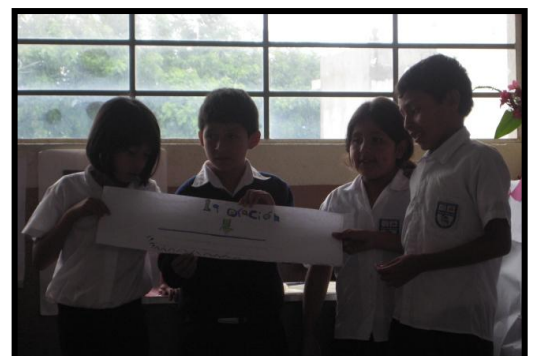
With in the first couple of days of school, I recommend setting up a meeting with the ESL teacher to get an outline of the topics he/she wants covered during your time abroad. This is extremely helpful in planning lessons and knowing where you need to go next.

For the first lesson I would recommend teaching the students common classroom commands in English. For example, who would like to volunteer, sit down please, raise your hand, be quite please, and listen carefully. This is useful because the ESL teacher does not want Spanish used in the classroom while teaching English. So when the students have an understanding from the beginning it makes the teaching process a lot easier.

Prior to preparing lessons become familiar with your classroom surrounds and tour the school. This way you know what recourses you have available when making your lesson plans. Always feel welcome to talk to the other teachers, secretary, and principal if you need something you cannot find. They are always eager to help you in anyway they can and are excited you are there.

Some general observations from teaching in Guatemala include:

- Students enjoy working in groups, although it is a new concept to them
 - An efficient method to organize them into groups is to place students of an entire column (or row) of desks into a single group
- Students absolutely love competition – boring group work can be transformed to the most riveting game ever by simply keeping score between groups
 - They love it even more when they have the opportunity to win the other group’s point if the other group misses the question
 - This is ideal for the instructor, because this keeps all of the other groups glued to the edge of their seats instead of losing interest and talking to one another
- Another key point is to keep a high level of discipline in the classroom
 - There is no need to become upset; merely calmly and professionally help students keep their behavior reasonable for the classroom
- They enjoy learning and ultimately appreciate a productive classroom
- If a student refuses to behave, he or she can be asked to step outside the classroom or be sent to the principal’s office
 - This is rarely needed





Workload During

While in Guatemala you will have a lot of assignments that you will have to do while you are there. Besides those assignments, you will have to work on during the trip are materials that you will need for your lessons. If you are taking more than one class you need to make sure that you stay on top of the tasks that you have assigned. It might seem overwhelming at first but it is not as bad as it might seem.

The majority of the assignments are for the Action Wheel Journals, and other things you will have to do.

Weekend Trips

On the weekends you will most likely be going on trips to different culturally relevant places in Guatemala. We were only able to go to Antigua, which was a great experience. Antigua is a beautiful city in Guatemala with many beautiful churches, markets for shopping, and many other tourist sites. We were able to visit a coffee plantation, which was one of the highlights of the trip. We learned how coffee was made and the process they use to make superior coffee. We also saw a gorgeous church and were able to visit the market and buy souvenirs for very inexpensive prices.

While on these trips you will have extra adults to ensure that everyone stays in the group and is safe while out in the city. The adults can help you barter with the locals as well. One trick we learned was to offer half or less than half of what they originally ask, and then work your way up. If you feel like they are still asking too much simply wave your hand and walk away, chances are they will chase after you and lower their prices. Also, if there is something you really want for cheap send a native to buy it for you, if you are white you will be charged more for everything because they think that all white people are rich.





alone. Do not travel in a group smaller than four people. During past experiences, K-State students have done the following with friends and host families:

1. Movie nights (usually Tuesday nights are super cheap at the theaters, and most movies play in English, too!)
2. Go out to dinner- this can range from a drive-thru at McDonald's, a chain restaurant like Chili's or a nice sit-down traditional meal at places like Kacao
3. Share cultures—help cook a traditional meal with your host family, share family photos with each other, teach them American dances like the “Electric Slide”
4. Call friends and family back home. Skype costs \$.02 a minute to call a land line or cell phone and can be used to simply type, call like a phone or video chat.
5. Take a siesta (nap). It's important that you are taking care of yourself and resting up for long teaching days.
6. Go shopping. Guatemala offers both huge shopping malls and small traditional markets. Both offer their own neat experience depending on what you want to buy. The mall prices reflect that of American stores. Usually the markets offer cheaper prices for souvenirs and gifts because you can barter and talk merchants down on prices.





Culture shock

When adapting to a new culture, you may experience culture shock. *Culture shock is the anxiety and feelings (of surprise, disorientation, uncertainty, confusion, etc.) felt when people have to operate within a different and unknown culture such as one may encounter in a foreign country. It grows out of the difficulties in assimilating the new culture, causing difficulty in knowing what is appropriate and what is not. This is often combined with a dislike for or even disgust (moral or aesthetical) with certain aspects of the new or different culture.*
(http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_shock)

Symptoms of culture shock can include:

- Excessive concern over cleanliness and health
- Feelings of helplessness and withdrawal
- Irritability
- Glazed stare
- Desire for home and old friends
- Physiological stress reactions
- Homesickness
- Boredom
- Withdrawal
- Getting "stuck" on one thing
- Excessive sleep
- Compulsive eating/drinking/weight gain
- Stereotyping host nationals
- Hostility towards host nationals

The best way to avoid or deal with culture shock is to know the most about your host culture that you possibly can before you leave. Realize that you will be going through a big adjustment, and give yourself time to do so. Tap into things that make you feel more at home—talk with a loved one on the phone or a friend on the trip. Journal. Get support to keep enjoying your travels.

What to expect/ bring if you don't know Spanish

(Learn simple phrases)

If you have time to take formal Spanish lessons, it would be for your benefit to take them. However, if that is not an option, you can pick up many important daily phrases from other students as well as host country nationals.

Crucial phrases include:

- Greetings
- Hi / hello
- Hola
- Good morning, good afternoon, good evening / night
- Buenos días, buenas tardes, buenas noches (noche)
- Goodbye
- Adiós
- Gratitude
- Please
- Por favor
- Thank you
- Gracias
- Apology
- Excuse me
- Perdón
- I'm sorry
- Lo siento

Of course this list is not exhaustive, nor will it be enough for you to navigate personal conversations and relationships in the host country. It will however provide you with a basis of how to not come across as a careless, self-absorbed American.

U-Curve

The concept of the U-Curve is that undergoing an exciting and life-changing experience, such as studying abroad, starts out very positive, includes a low-point, and typically ends on a positive note. For my personal situation, I can attest to the accuracy of this image. When I arrived in Guatemala, I was excited to hear so many people speaking a language which was foreign to me, as well as see so many palm trees and motorcycles, and so on. However, a week or so into the trip I got a slew of digestion problems and I grew tired of not being able to communicate with my host family and my students. Nevertheless, after a couple days of those feelings of isolation, I began to find new ways to connect to the host country nationals. In the end the study abroad experience was an enlightening and positive one.

Language Differences—

Spanish / Non-Spanish Perspectives

Your experience in the host country will be unique no matter what your background is, but your linguistic skills will definitely impact how you relate to the situation. Here our focus is on the

classroom, but language issues will overshadow every single experience you have with others in the country.

Speaking the local language (Spanish in Guatemala) will in general be an enormous benefit, as it will enable you to form personal and professional relationships with host country nationals. Ironically it will also create some challenges as well. For one thing you will automatically be tapped as a translator, which will introduce some level of mental fatigue. Additionally, it cannot be turned off, so if you find yourself listening to personal issues of the host family, you will not be able to opt out of the conversation. Moreover you may be asked in ESL instruction to not speak Spanish, which may create hardship for you. One bilingual student in English and Spanish actually had to step out of the room because he could not bear to look at the students in confusion when he knew he could simply explain the subject material in Spanish.

On the other hand if you do not speak the local language, you will be highly limited in your abilities to form close personal relationships with the nationals. You may not be able to communicate your thoughts and feelings adequately with your skills in the local language, and you may feel guilty to force the locals to use their potentially limited English. An alternative may be to use an interpreter, but this introduces another layer of disconnect between you and the nationals. In my personal case, I spoke literally no Spanish upon arriving in Guatemala, and while I learned a substantial amount in the time I was there, I was initially stalemated in the classroom due to my limited Spanish linguistic skills.

In conclusion, I would recommend a compromise of sorts. Most instruction in the ESL classroom tends to work best in English, but the local language tends to significantly improve activities when it is used to explain exercises before they begin. This way students have the ability to organize themselves in groups, generally know what is expected of them, and to help them feel less threatened and intimidated by the subject material. This also benefits the limited Spanish-speaking instructor, because then he or she is able to continue the lesson in English, as the students already understand what is expected of them. It also avoids pressuring the multilingual English-Spanish instructor into abstaining from using Spanish. In the end the experience is a highly collaborative one.

After Trip:

Course Requirements

Work for the multicultural course (EDCI 740) is very reasonable, and for the most part it is pretty useful. Assignments consist of watching CIMA videos, writing journal entries, and completing a final course project. The most beneficial aspect was keeping a daily journal. It helps to capture current feelings about the study abroad experience, and gives the student a better opportunity to come to terms with the general differences of the host culture.

Reintegrating in Kansas

It can be a little challenging to readjust to the pace of life back in the States, but the transition is not too difficult given the length of the trip (3 weeks). For my experience, I was elated to be able to regain my independence. While I was in Guatemala, the host family did my laundry, cooked for me, and drove me everywhere I went. That was easily the most taxing experience of the trip. Thus the benefits of returning home outweighed the distress of readjusting as well as the reminiscence of leaving the host country. Everyone's experiences will be different, but all can gain from maintaining a flexible outlook.

Encourage others to study abroad

Have you considered studying abroad, but not sure whether it is worth your time? Well if you ask anyone who has traveled abroad before, they will tell you that it is a life-changing experience and probably some of the rewarding thing he/she did while abroad. If that is not enough for you, perhaps some of the following reasons will persuade you to go.

Studying abroad provides the opportunity for you to travel. Weekend and academic breaks allow you to venture out of your surrounds. These travels usually get you much closer to places you might not have otherwise had the opportunity to visit. On this trip we went to a coffee plantation,

had the opportunity to feed the homeless, and work one-on-one with Spanish speaking students on a daily basis.

Spending this individual time students and being immersed in a new culture is the optimal way to learn a new language. When you are surrounded by the language on a daily basis and are seeing and hearing it in the proper cultural context it enhances the learning process. While in Guatemala many people have picked up on the language and are able to carry on a conversation in Spanish.

While studying abroad you often learn a lot about yourself. You will likely encounter challenging experiences that force you to reconsider or perhaps strengthen your own beliefs and values. It is also an opportunity to discover new strengths and abilities, conquer new challenges, and solve new problems. In these situations you will learn to adapt and respond in effective ways.

Finally a student who has studied abroad is considered to be self-motivated, independent, willing to embrace-challenges, and able to cope with diverse problems and situations. When an employer has seen that a student has studied abroad it will set you apart from the majority of other job applicants because you are more informed and are much less bias towards other cultures and people. Not to mention it enhances your language skills, which could make you more marketable.

With all fears aside, is this something that you could see yourself doing? Experiencing a new culture first hand while living in another county, developing your communication skills, and learning a new language all while making yourself more marketable to potential employers. Not to mention you will likely learn a lot about yourself from the challenges you will face. If is something you believe sounds exciting then a study abroad trip is the right choice for you.

