

The Amazing Race: London

An Innovative Active Learning Experience for Study Abroad

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ABSTRACT

Study abroad programs are increasingly recognized as important for global business education. Faculty face challenges in designing study abroad curricula and implementing creative active learning experiences. This article outlines an experiential learning activity, known as The Amazing Race of London, which was implemented in a short term study abroad program to London, United Kingdom. It is a variation of a scavenger hunt designed for a first day activity. We discuss its objectives, basic structure, benefits, suggestions for implementation, and student comments.

Keywords: Study abroad, experiential learning, internationalization of curriculum

INTRODUCTION

Students benefit from active global learning experiences in study abroad programs. The programs broaden students' cultural outlook and help prepare for global business. Study abroad programs vary significantly based on several factors including: university and background of its students, academic objectives, and duration. They can be led by faculty, partner universities, or conducted by students on their own (Womble, De'Armond, & Babb, 2014). Short term study abroad consists of trips ranging from one to eight weeks in length, while long-term study abroad programs can range from a semester to an academic year. Short term study abroad are the fastest growing format. Due to their short length, design and implementation are of critical importance (Mills, 2010; Womble et al., 2014). The focus of this article is on an introductory activity to a short-term, 2-week, faculty-led study abroad program to London, United Kingdom.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND PREVIOUS RESEARCH

The Amazing Race of London (hereinafter, Race) is an introductory, first full day after arrival experience for a short-term, faculty-led, study abroad program. It is an experiential learning activity designed to foster team building, quickly acclimate students to a foreign environment, and develop a deeper understanding of the local culture by reinforcing knowledge introduced before the activity. Experiential, or immersion learning activities are effective methods to introduce students to international business and culture. They are hands-on approaches to actively involving participants in learning. The Race allows for greater interaction, application of learning, and development of skills to be used in future careers and life. Experiential learning allows students to observe, interact, and become familiar with a new environment. Activities such as the Race are best exercised in small groups. However, these activities include many formats such as projects, tours, interviews, and scavenger or treasure hunts. The Race is an experiential learning activity which is a variant of a scavenger hunt (Doyle, Helms, & Westrup, 2004).

The benefits of study abroad experiences are noted in a number of studies. Table 1 lists Learning and Other Objectives of an Initial Study Abroad Activity. Benefits include developing cultural awareness, fostering personal and intellectual growth, understanding biases and ethnocentrism, and understanding global issues (Eckert, Luqmani, Quraeshi, & Wagner, 2013). Short term study abroad programs are usually cost effective options for students and often more practical (Duke, 2000) than longer courses. Due to economies of scale, large groups can often travel for less than if a student embarked on a study abroad trip as an individual (Babb, Womble, & De'Armond., 2013; Womble et al., 2014). This design also offers opportunity for intense and focused experiences (Mills, DeViney, & Ball, 2010). Faculty led trips allow instructors to focus more deeply on course objectives and to control course content. (Womble et al., 2014). Courses could closely align to one taught at the home university (Babb et al., 2013).

Table 1: Learning & Other Objectives of an Initial Study Abroad Activity

1. Safety of students
2. Enjoyable cross-cultural experience
3. Foster team building through friendly team competition
4. Develop deeper cross-cultural knowledge
5. Foster personal and intellectual growth
6. Quickly acclimate students to a foreign environment
7. Connect classroom cultural preparation with in country experience
8. Increase comfort of in-country travel with local transportation
9. Create a cost-efficient and academic degree-efficient cultural experience
10. Encourage interaction of students with different academic preparation
11. Develop deeper and more diverse friendships among students

Research supports a correlation between immersing students in host country culture and learning. These activities are a quick mechanism to replace culture shock with familiarity in a new environment (Doyle et al., 2004). Koernig (2007) identified scavenger hunts as effective tools to acclimate students to a new culture. Students learn to adjust to new surroundings as well as utilize public transportation. After such an activity, students familiarize themselves with the layout of the city and how to navigate. Similarly, Duke (2000) identifies treasure hunts as an effective activity for cross-cultural comparisons on study abroad trips visiting either one location or multiple locations. This type of activity immerses students in culture, and observations can be made on variances between home and host country. Scavenger hunts force students to interact with their new environment and provide confidence needed to navigate. Students also become skilled at reading maps, observing cultural behavior, and questioning. Additionally, research stresses the importance for activities such as scavenger hunts to occur at the beginning of the trip, the first day or two. Students become confident and focused for the rest of the trip (Ensz, 1988). Scavenger hunts acclimate students to particular aspects of the host country including transportation, currency, and cultural nuances. The activity expands their comfort zones as they learn to interact with various aspects of the foreign culture (Mills, 2010).

Gordon and Smith (1992) view public transportation as a mechanism to acclimate students to a new culture. Transportation in a foreign country is a useful tool to introduce students to the local economy, the local currency, and the city itself. Students learn foreign exchange equivalencies and learn to interact with the host country's economy (Koernig, 2007). One of the most important benefits received from teaching students to use local public transportation is the confidence it builds regarding navigation skills in the present and future travel to other countries. Once students acclimate to local public transportation they are more comfortable embarking on activities without their leaders. In many cities, public transportation is an efficient way for students to experience more locations (Gordon & Smith, 1992; Johnson & Mader, 1992). In a large city like London streets can be crowded making it hard to walk or take a car or bus. This leaves the "Tube" as one of the most effective methods of transportation but also one of the most intimidating for foreigners (Neild, 2017). Forcing students to navigate the "Tube" on their own in activities like the Race can provide benefits. Mastering public transportation in a foreign country is a daunting task, however once completed it, "affords students a great sense of satisfaction and appreciation of its practicality (Ensz, 1988, p. 332)."

While participating in the Race, students become accustomed to locals and the culture they are a part of in a short period. Intercultural awareness is important in study abroad programs. By interacting in the new culture, students learn to better understand it and how to behave in it. They also learn how to compare their home country to the host country. Experiential learning allows students to immerse themselves in the culture for the duration of the activity. Additionally, from this intercultural awareness, students gain a global perspective which can benefit in future work and life upon returning home (Bandyopadhyay, S. & Bandyopadhyay, K., 2015).

Employing ethnographic research techniques increases intercultural awareness in study abroad programs. The technique may include reading non-fiction descriptions or a novel set in the host country. Assignments ensure students draw observations and connections from readings prior to the trip (Schaefer & Lynch, 2017). Prior to the London study abroad trip, students read assigned portions of two books regarding life in London, *Watching the English* by Kate Fox (2014), and *London: The Autobiography* by Jon E. Lewis (2009). *Watching the English* details implied rules of English behavior from the view of an English national anthropologist (Fox, 2004). *London* details 2000 years of London's history through essays written by individuals who experienced it (Lewis, 2009). While completing The Amazing Race activity students were required to identify observations from *Watching the English*, and then present these observations to the class. The Race also included locations students read about in "London." The "London" book became a valuable tool for students understanding historical significance and interesting facts about various locations. By sharing observations with the group as a whole, students learned about aspects of the culture they previously did not understand. Students deepened their intercultural awareness. The more students know, the more they observe. Students will have a greater appreciation for, and knowledge of, the culture they are engaged in if they gain a basic understanding of the ethos beforehand (Mills, Vrba, & Deviney, 2012).

A scavenger hunt is cost-effective. Budgets can be tight and faculty must think outside of the box to develop activities working within spending constraints. According to McKenzie, Lopez, and Bowes (2010), financial constraints of study abroad pose challenges to implementing both meaningful and relevant activities. Learning activities such as the Race provide such an experience while also remaining economical (Doyle et al., 2004). Incremental costs of the Race are limited to maps, and minor supplemental materials. Tube passes were already included in the budget; maps and prizes are of minimal additional cost.

Scavenger hunts such as the Race are especially effective for short study abroad programs. During a 2-week study abroad trip, time is limited. Finding time to include all necessary academic content and also provide students with free time is challenging. Similar trips have allowed approximately one or two days where students may choose their own activities (Koernig, 2007). The Race provides an opportunity to include academic content while also allowing students some degree of freedom to explore the city. Within parameters of the activity teams have ample time to make their own decisions. Student comments suggest leisure activity coupled with academic activity strike an appropriate balance.

Some students prefer structured activities more than others (McKenzie et al., 2010). Koernig (2007) concludes that most students enjoy activities and cultural exploration over academic content. By combining academic and cultural content, instructors provide students with a meaningful experience which meets program objectives and student desires. The Race provides an opportunity to balance learning and a self-guided tour. The post-activity reflection ties in concepts students have learned and observed, while the activity itself satisfies students' desires for interesting experiences (McKenzie et al., 2010). The Race required teams to research unique facts regarding locations before the Race. Students commented that a fact finding requirement effectively combined recreation and learning.

There is strong research to support pre-trip meetings to enhance student learning and develop team social and working relationships. Allowing students to work in teams prior to the activity allows them to develop deeper relationships, perform better as a team at the beginning of the activity, research locations they will be visiting, identify places they may want to visit, and identify what they will gain from the activity (Mills, 2010). Allowing students to participate in the development of the trip itinerary can be an effective mechanism to begin teambuilding and provide students with a sense of ownership over their learning (Orpett, Akande, Purdy & Nakano, 2010). We suggest for a smoother activity that students meet with their teams and begin planning before they commence the activity. Students can use this opportunity to meet their team and choose locations they may want to visit later.

Short-term faculty led trips have drawbacks of being too short in duration, lacking freedom for students, and being prone to group conflicts. Since the trip is only a few weeks long, there is little time to cover course content while in-country. Academic preparation prior to the trip is encouraged. Instructors try to fit as much academic content as possible into the course which leaves students without much free time or flexibility (Babb et al., 2013; Duke, 2000). Additionally, since students are together constantly for the duration of the trip, they are likely to experience conflict (Babb et al., 2013). This article provides a format for a learning activity that may lessen negative aspects of short-term, faculty-led trips and help instructors and students derive additional benefits from the experience.

EVOLUTION OF THE RACE

The Race was conducted on a short-term, faculty-led, 2-week study abroad program in London, United Kingdom. The program is designed primarily for business students, but is open to all majors. Students travel to London and surrounding areas, and live in co-ed residence halls at Regents University, in central London. The program's purpose is to explore U.K. culture and history and study corporate governance and ethics in Western Europe. The orientation of the program could be modified for other academic courses. Activities include lectures, primarily prior to going to London, and field trips to historical, cultural, and business sites in London. The sites and activities could be modified to fit various course objectives and backgrounds of participating faculty. The program runs in the summer semester which is a six week session from late June – to early August. Students spend the first four weeks in lectures at Grand Valley State University (GVSU) located in Grand Rapids, MI studying International Business and Culture in the U.K. and (as currently constructed) Corporate Governance and Ethics, and then travel to London for the last two weeks of the semester. The program is led by two GVSU Seidman College of Business faculty members and includes approximately 12 to 18 students each year.

The Race was developed over a span of five years. The activity was originally planned with the help of a London Blue Badge guide in 2012. During the 2012 trip, faculty recorded places of interest and locations to be used in the following year. Places to include were discussed and modified with input from the guide. The Race began in 2013. In 2014, modifications were made to the rules. After 2014, it was concluded that the activity took too long, and would benefit from an increased academic focus. Therefore, in 2015, the academic focus increased. A London blue Badge guide was again consulted to identify appropriate sites. After three years of trial and error, a well-balanced activity was developed which met objectives of rapid acclimation while mixing fun with an academic experience. Utilizing both personal and professional contacts abroad can diminish planning difficulties and costs associated with various activities. These individuals can consult with faculty regarding logistics and provide guidance (McKenzie et al., 2010). The 2016 version of The Amazing Race of London is detailed below along with benefits, shortcomings, and suggestions for implementation.

DESCRIPTION OF THE 2016 RACE

Each year, approximately, twelve to eighteen students participate in the Study Abroad program. Prior to leaving the United States, the study abroad group is divided into small teams (3 or 4 students each). Teams are given culturally significant names such as: Brilliant, Posh, Smart, Clever and Aces, all representing common British slang. The assignment is distributed to teams, including their locations, prior to leaving the U.S. to allow opportunity to work together and plan. This also permits students to become familiar with each other prior to London. Table 2 contains an example of assigned locations for five groups. Table 3 shows a sheet that group one would be given at the start of the Race. Table 4 is the assignment description (for group one) given to students several weeks before the trip to allow preparation time.

Table 2: Example Race Locations by Group

Location	Group One	Group Two	Group Three	Group Four	Group Five
North East of the Thames	Bank of England	St Paul's Cathedral	Leadenhall Market	Lloyds of London	The London Wall (just a section of it)
South West of the Thames	Westminster Abbey	Palace of Westminster where Parliament meets - also House of Commons meeting area	Churchill Statue in Parliament Square	Big Ben	Churchill's War room
South East of the Thames	Tate Modern	Globe Theater	Southwark Cathedral	Borough Market Southwark	Original Globe Theatre Location
North Central	Covent Garden	Gate to China Town	British Museum	Lions in Trafalgar Square	National Gallery
West of the Thames	Peter Pan Statue/Kensington Gardens	Victoria Memorial/Near Buckingham Palace	Speaker's Corner Hyde Park	Albert Memorial Kensington Gardens	Marble Arch/Hyde Park
Bridges	Westminster Bridge	London Bridge	Tower Bridge	Millennium Bridge - Locks	Blackfriars Bridge

Note: Bolded locations represent areas that may be more difficult, or require more time to locate.

Table 3: Example of What Students Received on Day of Race

Group 1 (Brilliant) Locations and Addresses	
Group One	Address
Bank of England	Threadneedle St.
Westminster Abbey	20 Deans Yd.
Tate Modern	Bankside
Royal Opera House in Covent Garden	Bow St
Peter Pan Statue/Kensington Gardens	Nearest tube station: Lancaster Gate
Westminster Bridge	Location not provided

Table 4: The Amazing Race of London Assignment

Brilliant - Group 1 Assignment	
Locations:	
Bank of England	
Covet Garden	
Peter Pan Statue	
Tate Modern	
Westminster Bridge	-
Westminster Abbey	
Basic Rules:	Assignment:
1. You MUST stay together - no splitting up for ANY reason.	1. Visit each location above. The order is up to your group, however, you must have an agreed upon plan prior to leaving Regent's University.
2. You must use a paper map; no GPS or electronics or smart phones, etc.	2. You must have the following for each location: an interesting unique fact - not an obvious fact, and a group picture of all of you in front of the location (take a selfie, ask someone for help, or figure it out).
3. You must be back by 4pm and ready to present by 4:30pm. Otherwise there is a 20% penalty on your grade. If this means you do not finish; then you do not finish your list. YOU must be back by 4pm.	3. Fact: Please research this ahead of time. Your group must agree upon what is unique and interesting regarding each location.
4. You can use your phone only to take pictures and call in an emergency. No other use is permitted.	3. Throughout the day, collect interesting observations or experiences that happen to your group. Funny stories and events are priceless during this activity.
5. Work as a team and function as a team. Do not make individual decisions or denigrate a team member's opinion. You MUST agree as a team. One of the most important points of this assignment is working together.	4. Discuss as a group during this activity and draw 2 conclusions based on the information you read in the <i>Watching the English</i> book. Either in support of what Fox claims relates to Englishness or what you expected to see but did not. One of you may want to have a copy of the book in your backpack. This can be anything your group decides upon. (E.g., No one looked at each other on the Tube or were reluctant to talk to us on the Tube. YOU CAN NOT USE THIS AS ONE OF YOUR 2. It is just my example and it is too easy!) You are welcome to try one of the "experiments" she notes as well and see what happens. You can use the items you presented in Professor Goldberg's class in this part of the assignment but you must come up with 2 cultural "Englishness" conclusions from <i>Watching the English</i> .

6. Have fun and soak up the environment and culture!	I am thinking this will be the most thought provoking and discussed topic of the day for your group. Really consider the items Fox notes from the reading assignments. You can feel free to talk to locals - ask them questions and see what happens and how you can relate it back to the book.
7. You must eat before you go - no one leaves before 10am. Pack a lunch for you to take - you can grab bananas, granola bars, etc. at the Refectory. Have a solid breakfast. We meet at 9:30am and everyone eats.	5. Upon returning you will have 1/2 hour to create a 10 min presentation on your day. Your group will discuss the best FACT, PICTURE, STORY and 2 OBSERVATIONS you wish to present. Your presentation must be organized and informative and only present those 5 things. You can't go over 10 min or you are docked 20%.
8. You can plan, research, discuss, etc. as much as you want prior to leaving. You may use the Internet to gather your interesting fact and plot out your locations. This can be done in Grand Rapids, the Airport, etc. You just can't use a GPS or Smart phone maps on the day. I suggest you discuss this with your group and do ample research ahead of time.	6. There are prizes for each group member for the top (1) PICTURE, (2) STORY, (3) FACT and (4) CULTURAL OBSERVATION. These will be voted up on by all students. A team could win more than one prize!

Research and planning prior to leaving facilitate team building and cohesiveness. Each year, the Race was scheduled for a Sunday, the day after arrival in London. On the day of the activity, teams are provided detailed and quality maps of London and an overview of the activity. Each team receives six locations from each of the following general areas of London: north east of the Thames, southwest of the Thames, southeast of the Thames, north central, west of the Thames, and a bridge. Within each set of locations is a challenge location which is more difficult to locate. The Race begins at ten in the morning following breakfast the day after arrival. Teams are given a strict time limit for the Race and all teams must be back to the University and accounted for by 4 p.m. An enforced time limit is required to ensure ample time for wrap up, and presentations before dinner. Teams are required to work cooperatively and are not permitted to split up. This promotes safety and team building. Each team must make decisions and give equal weight to others' thoughts. GPS and electronic devices are not allowed. Students are required to use maps and rely on each other. Phones may only be used for emergencies and photos. Grade penalties are enforced for arriving back late. Even if teams have not completed their list, they must return by 4p.m. As part of students' welcoming packets to London, each receives a two week Oyster Travelcard allowing unlimited access to the London Underground (Tube) and buses for the period they will be in London.

The Race requires teams to visit each assigned location and to return with an interesting fact and a group photo for each location. Interesting facts require teams to research sites before the activity and encourages teams to obtain background information on the culture and history of each location. A picture serves as proof of visiting a location and as a memory for the students. Students are asked to present two cultural observations and experiences from the day which they share during the wrap up meeting. Prior to leaving for London, students were assigned readings from *Watching the English* by Kate Fox (2014). This book is written by an anthropologist and provides cultural observations of the English; thus, students develop insight into British culture prior to arrival. During the activity, each group is asked to draw two conclusions based on Fox's observations. The observations may support her conclusions in *Watching the English* or may be observations of behaviors the students expected to experience or view but did not. Thus, students critically apply what they have learned and actively observe the host culture.

Upon return from visiting assigned locations, teams are required to quickly compile facts, stories, pictures, and cultural observations from their experiences of the day into a presentation that requires visuals optionally using Prezi or PowerPoint. Teams are allowed thirty minutes (4 to 4:30) to prepare a ten minute presentation. Presentations cannot exceed ten minutes or a grade penalty is assessed. Presentations facilitate teams sharing their experiences and newly acquired knowledge. Each team experienced a unique and different day. The Race has never failed to evoke cultural insights and experiences in an enjoyable manner and, thus, helps set the tone for a two week cultural and

academic experience. Small prizes are awarded to each team member for the best picture, story, fact, and cultural observation, which are based on a vote by peers. These prizes are of minimal cost and are part of the study abroad budget. They are purchased by faculty members while the teams are racing. Prizes are fun, thoughtful, and souvenir like items. Teams may win more than one or none. The prizes serve to keep it competitive and fun, while presentations accomplish academic objectives. Students vote on prize winners and tend to spread out winners among teams, but that is up to students.

STUDENT BENEFITS

The Race builds cooperative teams, acclimates students to a foreign environment, is cost effective, utilizes time efficiently, and provides a balance between recreation and learning. Students learn the geography of London and how to efficiently use the transportation system. The group setting of study abroad trips also forces students to actively consider their role in the group and their personal identity. Study abroad groups allow students to form new friendships and develop existing ones, as well as learn from other group members. Research shows some students felt they learned more from their group than from the host country itself. This advances the ability to work as a team and promotes enjoyment of the study abroad experience (Jessup-Anger & Aragonés, 2013; Younes & Asay, 2003). Additionally, Younes and Asay (2003) point out that unique relationships can be formed between those who have to face new challenges in a foreign country together.

Group composition has a strong influence on team building and the relationship aspect of study abroad. Group management can be as important as academic preparation. According to Younes and Asay (2003), students have identified that larger groups can cause conflict, and smaller groups can increase the quality of the experience. They suggest students be placed into smaller teams within the overall group. Students indicate benefits of large groups include safety, differing personalities, and comfortability while traveling, however large groups have drawbacks. Complaints of large groups include: too many leaders, bickering, and constraints of individuality. The Race activity offers an opportunity for a large group to be divided into teams where additional learning can occur. Some of the complaints of a large group can be relieved while small teams can improve the quality of the experience. Small teams also allow students to share information and knowledge with group members to understand how other students perceived the same information (Mills et al., 2012). Utilizing small teams for reflection and learning can assist students to develop deeper relationships within their group (Jessup-Anger & Aragonés, 2013).

Younes and Asay (2003) conclude that students prefer diversity within their teams and note it does not necessarily impact learning, however, it does impact the overall experience. Diversity includes gender, ethnicity, and age. Gender was one of the largest complaints as students did not gain as much enjoyment from teams consisting of predominantly one gender. They point out it is not always possible to gain diversity within the group. However, the Race provides an opportunity for facilitators to control composition of teams. To promote diversity, each team includes at least one male and one female. Students were not able to choose their team. Faculty tried to ensure teams were as diverse as possible. The team context plays a large role in this activity and provides an opportunity to develop relationships among teams and encourage learning. Teams tend to learn and socialize together for the remainder of the study abroad trip (and often much longer after the trip).

Students that participated in the Race were asked to share comments regarding their experiences. Students commented on benefits of a small team activity including teambuilding, developing friendships and learning about London and its culture:

“I think a big part of the activity was the teamwork. People may not have been familiar with each other but they were required to work together and help each other out in a city that everyone was unfamiliar with.”

“In my experience, breaking out into small groups allowed me to form friendships outside of the initial “clique” that I fell into. It forced me to interact with individuals that I may have had limited interactions with otherwise. I was also able to better absorb other’s opinions and observations of the culture because I could discuss in a small group rather than trying to engage with a large amount of people. This activity also developed my teamwork skills because I not only had to learn to work with two other students, but I also had to do so in an unfamiliar environment making it

more difficult. The activity challenged me and the others to cooperate better and listen to each other because more was at stake.”

“In my experience, navigating the “Tube” without faculty instruction was one of the scariest but most rewarding parts of our trip. We were forced to work as a team, trust others, and learn the proper way to behave in a foreign country. Something as simple as learning how Londoners wait in line or board a train was extremely helpful in developing our cultural awareness. After the Amazing Race activity I felt more than ready to take on the “Tube” on my own.”

“Personally, reading these two books prior to the trip greatly enhanced my experience. I noticed and learned things that I may never have without reading about it before arrival. It was also beneficial to hear what other students had learned and observed in their interactions because it broadened my thinking about the culture I was immersed in.”

“It was cool to look for the cultural traits that we had read about prior to our trip. Overall, it was a very useful activity.”

“I think that the cultural observations from all of the teams were a good addition because everyone had different opinions and it made you think about your perspectives and experiences in comparison to theirs. The presentations at the end of the activity were also interesting because you gained knowledge and then could apply those perspectives when you saw things later on in the trip.”

Students gained knowledge of other team’s sites, activities, cultural observations, and highlights of the day. Additionally, students were able to identify areas of interest for their free day that they may not have discovered on their own. The time constraints of this two-week trip make group discussion a critical component since each student cannot experience what multiple teams experienced as a whole.

McKenzie et al. (2010) suggest students take responsibility for their learning and think critically about what did and did not work. Reflections also develop and improve activities for future programs. Each year after the Race was completed, faculty met to discuss what worked well in the current year and what might be improved. Faculty also engaged students at a wrap up session to hear views on what did and did not work well. According to Mills (2010), student learning is encouraged when students reflect on activities of the day with their teams. Group discussions allow students to develop a more holistic perspective of the trip. Presentations following the Race activity allow students to share experiences with other members of the trip. Students also enthusiastically participated in a “reunion” several months after return clearly demonstrating camaraderie that developed in the program.

Student comments support the benefit of post-activity reflection. Many students enjoyed learning about London through the eyes of their classmates and found it helpful to gain knowledge about locations they might visit later in the trip. Students also found presentations at the end of the activity helped them experience the “big picture.” Some students enjoy presentations while others do not. The open-ended format of presentations allowed students to be creative at their own comfort level and encouraged participation.

ADAPTATIONS AND CHALLENGES

Depending on the location where the “Race” activity is implemented, faculty may encounter difficulties. One such difficulty may be a language barrier. The activity described in this article was designed for English speaking students, visiting an English speaking country. Students need not possess any additional language skills to participate. However, if the Race is implemented in a country where students need to use a foreign language it is important for faculty to consider implications. Populations of many countries have significant knowledge of English so adaptation may not be difficult. In other situations, enough students may speak the language of the host country which would likely enhance the experience. Variations in culture may offer students a more interesting and challenging experience (Doyle et al., 2004). This activity should be implemented with careful consideration of difficulties that might be encountered. Faculty must have a working knowledge of the study abroad location and cultural peculiarities to ensure they are taken into account.

Students universally commented the Race would not have been as beneficial if it was conducted at any time other than the beginning of the trip. Other students commented they enjoyed having their locations chosen for them, however, admitted to wanting some degree of input in the location planning process. We might suggest perhaps having one location open for students to choose, striking a compromise between structure and freedom in choosing locations. Students could select a location from a list provided to them or at their own choosing subject to faculty approval.

The Race did not always proceed as fluidly as students and faculty desired. Holding the activity on a Sunday has its benefits and drawbacks. While the city is slower on Sundays, at times Tube stations would be closed unexpectedly for cleaning or maintenance. This caused some frustrations for students trying to move from location to location efficiently according to their plan. Teams had to work closely together to develop an alternative plan which reinforced teamwork and learning environment. However, this also produced additional stress. Uncomfortable weather conditions can also pose challenges. The schedule for the trip is tight due to the two week time span and changing the day of the Race was not considered an option. Despite challenges students rose to the occasion and muscled through with relative ease. Faculty observed that often the challenges posed by closed Tube stations, unsavory weather and other unexpected conditions enhanced teamwork, creativity and the benefits of the overall experience.

CONCLUSION

The Amazing Race of London offers opportunity to acclimate students quickly to a new cultural environment, as well as to encourage team building. The activity is cost effective, an efficient use of time, and a good balance between recreation and learning. Students have indicated the Race is both enjoyable and an effective educational experience. Research encourages experiential learning activities. By actively engaging students in a foreign culture immediately and challenging them to adapt quickly they are better equipped for the remainder of the trip. The structure of this activity allows flexibility to include selected cultural, historic and business content. The basic format of the Race could be adapted to other destinations as well as other learning objectives.

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