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INTRODUCTION – GOING ABROAD TO COME HOME

Those of us drawn to travel go to great lengths to seek out new experiences. Why do we go to all of this trouble? Travel may potentially have many negative effects. It can reaffirm prejudices, reinforce historical power dynamics, irreversibly alter cultures, damage fragile landscapes, and add to the carbon in the atmosphere. Yet, with all of these potentially-negative consequences, we still find it worthwhile.

How can we develop a travel ethic to ensure that its positive effects outweigh its negative ones? It is worth talking about the ethics and methods of responsible travel as a foundation for global education.

At Where There Be Dragons, the answer to the ethical question of “why we travel” is that our world has a deep need for greater intercultural understanding and celebration of diversity.

There is also a unique developmental window in adolescence and young adulthood that allows students to look honestly at their cultural biases and personal strengths and grow into the best version of themselves. It is only by experiencing difference and adversity that we can truly know ourselves. In order to know our own home we must go sit in other peoples’ homes. In order to know our own language, we must learn others. Contrast and comparison create connection. Except when it doesn’t.

In our early days of running learning adventures for students, we thought it was enough to take students abroad and expose them to different cultures. Our mistake was in assuming that students could make sense of these experiences on their own. The consequence was that they often returned home with no idea of what to do with what they had just discovered, and no framework to make sense of their experiences. Over the past twenty years, and over 250,000 student-days in the field, we have learned how to engage students in, and not merely expose them to, other cultures. From our pre-course application process to our transference activities, our programs intentionally create a space for students to engage fully in their experiences abroad. The reason we now have a 72-hour orientation plan, a course progression map, nine program components, briefing and debriefing activities, and a common language for our core values, is because we recognize that it is not enough to pick and choose a few interesting activities and call that a plan for student engagement.

As you create a plan for a single trip abroad or for all of your school’s global initiatives - remember to weave the why of your travels into the itinerary with as much energy as you incorporate the what and then build the story of your journey in a language that your students will understand. What you hear from your students when they return will be worth the extra effort.

This Toolkit is not a step-by-step account of how to travel with students. It is a collection of some of our best practices in developing curriculum for authentic, safe, rugged, and profoundly engaging journeys all over the world. We hope that it spurs creativity in you and offers some useful tools for engaging students in safe and meaningful ways with their experiences abroad. We begin with Dragons core learning outcomes of Global Citizenship, Awareness of Self, and Leadership and Skill Building. This can be summed up as “Why We Travel.” We set our intentions towards fostering these outcomes on every course we run, from trekking intensive courses in North India to service-focused trips in Nicaragua.
The second half of this volume is given to the "How We Travel," which includes core components of a successful educational experience abroad, as well as stylistic elements for the facilitator, chaperone, or guide responsible for these experiences.

We finish with “Integration,” or the process of bringing acquired learning back home. This should not be an afterthought, but rather woven through every activity. Ultimately, we go abroad in order to come home in both a literal and metaphorical way.

Like all systems of categorization, this one is imperfect and by no means exhaustive. Each organization or institution will have its own culture, norms, standards, expectations, and other nuances. We hope that this volume will help you safely bring students to a more profound place with their international experiences while also ensuring that the places we visit receive the greatest benefit from the exchange.
1. **Program Design: Begin with Learning Outcomes**

Whether Malaysia or Mali, two months or two days, a program should be designed with a students’ return home in mind. Beyond the more tangible outcomes of language acquisition, cultural understanding, and a grasp of key themes and concepts, Dragons strives to build programs that consistently deliver personally transformative experiences to students. For this reason, we have defined our “learning outcomes” as our Core Values listed below. While we recognize that we cannot “teach” a student about Global Citizenship, Awareness of Self, or Leadership, our goal is to create a safe and supportive space where a student is free to engage with local culture and landscape in a profound and meaningful fashion.

When students, under their own free will, choose to engage in physical and intellectual challenges, they are more likely to catch our learning outcomes—our core values. For this reason, we have to be intentional about our course design, about the sorts of “spaces” we open to students, and how we do that.

In the pages to follow you’ll see a brief overview of our defined learning outcomes, and a rubric that we use to help guide our work with students. This is just an example, and we encourage you to use this same process to develop your own learning outcomes, and tools for intentionally designing transformative experiences.

**Dragons Course Design Flow**

- Programs are designed with the return “Home” in mind, emphasizing relevancy to students' lives
- **We begin with our learning outcomes, defined as** Global Citizenship, Awareness of Self, Leadership and Skill Building
- We employ 9 Program Components in a safe, intentional and responsible fashion towards our learning outcomes
- Our program components are facilitated in a **3 stage course progression** with lessons and activities of increasing challenge and participation by students
- With the goal of integrating experiences abroad into the rest of a student’s life
Global Citizenship

“Sometimes I’d like to think I have nothing to worry about, that I’m a normal man with a steady job and average life…But then I go out into the street, look around me, and realize that would only be possible if I had no feelings. I don’t think anybody who has the least bit of humanity could enjoy a banquet with hundreds of starving children begging beside them. The people who do it have convinced themselves that they can’t do anything about it, and they think it’s natural for there to be kids starving. They accept this type of violence and can’t understand that we can’t accept it, that we don’t consider it natural.”

-Gioconda Belli, The Country Under My Skin

Cultivating an ethic of global citizenship is not a course-long, but rather a life-long process. Leaders should approach this challenge with humility, role modeling an essential quality of Global Citizenship. Abroad programs can provide phenomenal opportunities for students and instructors to engage with issues concerning social justice and equity, globalization, and sustainable development. As leaders, we want to expose students, to provide information, to demonstrate our own dedication to social justice and a respect for diversity, and, we hope, to help promote a sense of responsibility, and the belief that every individual can make a difference.

How can we help students harness privilege and opportunity for a common, global good?

Awareness of Self

“The questions which one asks oneself begin, at last, to illuminate the world, and become one’s key to the experience of others. One can only face in others what one can face in oneself. On this confrontation depends the measure of our wisdom and compassion. This energy is all that one finds in the rubble of vanished civilizations, and the only hope for ours.”

-James Baldwin, Nobody Knows My Name

For many of us, reaching a heightened sense of awareness, within our self, within our culture, and within the global community, is the reason we travel. Dragons programs offer opportunity for students to reflect on their own life through new perspective and experience, through a coming to know and perhaps deconstruction of “other.” Dragons programs aim to cultivate student curiosity and awareness and ultimately, to help students embrace their most authentic selves.

How do we facilitate a students’ awareness of personal values, strengths, and challenges?

Leadership and Skill Building

Go to the people. Learn from them. Live with them. Start with what they know. Build with what they have. The best of leaders when the job is done, when the task is accomplished, the people will say we have done it ourselves.

-Lao Tzu

In addition to an improved understanding of self and the world, a traveler should boast new skills (savvy travel, language, expedition skills, self-directed learning and research) and hold a refined sense of his/her leadership. Trip leaders can facilitate this process by modeling skills and leadership, teaching skills and lessons that explain why, providing experiences for student application, and offering feedback.

How do we elucidate our students “best self” and empower them to work well with others?
# Global Citizenship Map

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparation and Skill Acquisition</th>
<th>Experience and Practicing</th>
<th>Expedition and Transference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guiding Questions:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Guiding Questions:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Guiding Questions:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>For students:</em></td>
<td><em>For students:</em></td>
<td><em>For students:</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How well do I listen to thoughts and feelings of others in different situations? Do I typically seek understanding or make judgments?</td>
<td>- How well am I expressing myself and listening to others in different situations? Am I seeking understanding or making judgments?</td>
<td>- How has my capacity to express myself and listen to others in different situations changed? Am I more understanding?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How does my life relate to and influence the lives of others and the environment?</td>
<td>- In what ways am I acting mindfully of the global impact of my actions?</td>
<td>- In what ways has my understanding of how my life relates to and influences the lives of other and the environment evolved?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities:</th>
<th>Activities:</th>
<th>Activities:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Students will:</em></td>
<td><em>Students will:</em></td>
<td><em>Students will:</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Develop a basic introductory language foundation</td>
<td>□ Increase language proficiency and use while engaging host culture</td>
<td>□ Increase language proficiency and initiate more engagement with host culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Be given opportunities for cultural engagement</td>
<td>□ Be given opportunities for cultural engagement</td>
<td>□ Begin initiating and coordinating cultural activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Be introduced to basic history</td>
<td>□ Actively participate in development discussions and lecture series</td>
<td>□ Facilitate discussions and potentially lead classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Participate in workshops on “Cultural Do’s and Don’ts”</td>
<td>□ Regularly engage with ISP mentor/topic, home-stay family and local community members</td>
<td>• Initiate engagement with various community members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Have opportunities for observation of people and places</td>
<td>□ Have expanded opportunities to participate in service learning, both in roles in the group and/or with communities</td>
<td>□ Have expanded opportunities to participate in service learning – in roles in the group and/or with communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Be introduced to themes of service both within the group and in greater context</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Express ways of bringing global learning back home</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Awareness of Self Map

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparation and Skill Acquisition</th>
<th>Experience and Practicing</th>
<th>Expedition and Transference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guiding Questions:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Guiding Questions</strong></td>
<td><strong>Guiding Questions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For students:</td>
<td>For students:</td>
<td>For students:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What are my values? What</td>
<td>- Are my values changing?</td>
<td>- What have I learned about</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>motivates and inspires me?</td>
<td>Are my motivations and</td>
<td>my values, motivation and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>inspirations expanding?</td>
<td>inspiration?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What are my challenges? How do</td>
<td>- How am I managing my</td>
<td>- What tools/skills have I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I respond to and integrate</td>
<td>challenges? What</td>
<td>gained to manage my</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unfamiliar, uncertain and complex</td>
<td>experiences are helping me</td>
<td>challenges and engage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>situations?</td>
<td>learn from unfamiliar,</td>
<td>with unfamiliar, uncertain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>uncertain and complex</td>
<td>or complex situations?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Activities:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Activities:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Activities:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students will:</td>
<td>Students will:</td>
<td>Students will:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Complete pre-program personal</td>
<td>□ Re-evaluate personal</td>
<td>□ Complete a “letter to self”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>journaling assignments</td>
<td>goals</td>
<td>Identify ways to continue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Set personal goals and</td>
<td>□ Continue to use</td>
<td>creating solo space for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expectations</td>
<td>journaling as a tool</td>
<td>themselves back home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Be provided with solo time to</td>
<td>□ Continue with solo</td>
<td>□ Articulate ways that they</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>reflect (perhaps with prompts).</td>
<td>and possibly participate</td>
<td>will continue to engage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Be given opportunities to</td>
<td>in extended solos.</td>
<td>spirituality, religion, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>engage with spiritual, religious</td>
<td>□ Continue engagement</td>
<td>morality back home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and moral issues.</td>
<td>with deeper aspects of</td>
<td>□ Conduct activities and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Participate in daily routines</td>
<td>spirituality, religion,</td>
<td>create rituals appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and rituals – health check-ins,</td>
<td>and morality</td>
<td>to their skill level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meetings, group roles, etc.</td>
<td>□ Begin to facilitate</td>
<td>□ Be given appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ Be given appropriate</td>
<td>increasing amount</td>
<td>individual and group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>individual and group challenges</td>
<td>of daily routines/rituals</td>
<td>challenges based on their</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>based on their development.</td>
<td>□ Be given appropriate</td>
<td>development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>individual and group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>challenges based on their</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>development.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Leadership & Skill Building Map

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Preparation and Skill Acquisition</th>
<th>Experience and Practicing</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GUIDING QUESTIONS</strong></td>
<td><strong>GUIDING QUESTIONS:</strong></td>
<td><strong>GUIDING QUESTIONS:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>For students:</em></td>
<td><em>For students:</em></td>
<td><em>For students:</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What are my gifts and skills? In what way am I a leader? What new skills am I hoping to build or discover?</td>
<td>- In what ways am I developing my gifts and skills? In what ways am I stepping into leadership roles? What new skills am I building and discovering?</td>
<td>- How do I share and integrate my newly developed skills back home? In what ways can I continue being a leader?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- What is my ability to communicate openly, honestly and respectfully with others?</td>
<td>- Am I effectively communicating with my instructors, with group members and with locals?</td>
<td>- How can I effectively communicate with those back home to share the transformations experienced on this journey?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **ACTIVITIES:**                  | **ACTIVITIES:**           | **ACTIVITIES:**            |
| *Students will:*                 | *Students will:*          | *Students will:*           |
| □ Learn how to navigate in the local environment | □ Be given increased opportunities to work with local systems of transportation, lodging, eating, etc. based on demonstrated level of proficiency | □ Assume increased levels of responsibility around transportation, lodging, eating, etc. |
| □ Be introduced to ISP options, approaches, methodologies, etc. | □ Continue to develop their selected ISP | □ Present their ISP topic to the group |
| □ Learn leadership models and have opportunities to begin practicing appropriate leadership | □ Plan and execute student led activities/excursions, using acquired leadership skills | □ Shift to a more self-directed experience of possibly identifying and leading day to day group or individual activities and rituals |
| □ Be given opportunities and learn tools to solve problems and make decisions | □ Continue to work with and potentially employ conflict models | □ Have skills to effectively address conflict as it arises |
| □ Learn how to identify and confront conflict | □ Give and receive feedback on group activities and participation in group norms | □ Demonstrate an ability to effectively give and receive feedback in their final instructor-student 3-on-1 session |
| □ Be introduced to giving and receiving feedback | □ Be moving through a rotation of group roles | □ Complete a list of ideas for how they can continue using acquired skills back home |
| □ Be introduced to group roles and begin taking ownership of them | | |
2. Risk Management

Risk Management stands alone from all other aspects of programming as the single most important thing we do as global educators. Simultaneously it is woven into every aspect of taking students abroad. Indeed, “taking a risk”, i.e. “stepping out of one’s comfort zone” is the fundamental reason to travel abroad in the first place. Taking calculated risks in programming and safely managing them is the best way to bring students to profound experiences of learning and personal growth. The question proposed here is not how do we eliminate risk? But rather how do we safely engage risk to allow for profound learning opportunities? And furthermore, how do we assess actual risks and make safe decisions as guides and trip leaders? Risk management should be approached both in terms of developing institutional standards as well as developing personal risk management skills. With our trips abroad as well, an essential aspect of risk management is knowing the places we are traveling, both in its particular local hazards as well as local resources available for managing risks and responding to emergencies.

Components of Risk Management
• Proactive Risk Management
  o Policies and procedures
  o Risk assessment
  o Identifying and understanding local hazards
  o Developing judgment and decision making skills
  o Teaching risk awareness to trip participants – especially in the first 72 hours
  o Trainings
• Reactive Risk Management
  o Critical incident management
  o Evacuations Protocols

Our aim is to create an atmosphere of safety awareness that goes beyond the standards we adhere to. To achieve this goal, we continually seek to appropriately match our participants with our activities, objectives, and environment. Our instructors are hired with consideration give to their competency in local knowledge, academics, group dynamics, teaching skills and most importantly, risk management.

Resource 2.A: Four Quadrant Model

Most decisions around risk and safety are not simply “is it safe or not” or “do we go or not”. The model below gives you a simple way of understanding when greater management is necessary. Most activities will not be a straightforward solution as in the “GO” or “NO GO” categories. After realizing this, your work can be directed into identifying ways you can either reduce the probability of an accident happening or of the severity of the consequences-

- **Probability** represents the likelihood of something going wrong or an accident happening, or the amount of unknowns in an activity. The greater the number of unknowns the higher the probability. “How likely is it for something to go wrong?” or “If we do this long enough, and in this same way – what accident will occur?”. It is important to look at the scene realistically and play out any scenario to it’s logical end. It takes a lot of thought to be able to accurately assess the probability and it is certainly not sufficient to conclude that “it won’t happen”. The law of statistics states that it is simply a matter of time before a serious accident or situation does occur for any given activity. Train yourself to carefully assess the probability.
- **Consequence** represents the seriousness or degree of injury, accident, delay, or other problems including death. “How hurt would I be if something did go wrong?” or “What is the worst thing that could happen?”

You always have the option of a) continuing, b) stopping what you are doing and doing something else, and c) making a plan to reduce either the probability or the consequences or BOTH. For most of our day-to-day decisions on a course we are operating in the realm where it is not a clear stop or go situation.

Ways we can reduce Probability and/or Consequence:

1. Training of students in skills and in judgment
2. Careful assessment and choosing appropriate activities
3. Plan your response so if things don’t go according to plan you know what to do to avoid further problems.
4. Make sure leaders are 100%: well rested, fed, hydrated, thinking clearly.
5. Appropriate equipment
6. Appropriate supervision
7. Good, clear communication
8. Better information: reduce the “unknowns”
9. Time management: rushing and haste can lead to mistakes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Low Probability</th>
<th>High Probability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low Consequence</td>
<td>GO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Consequence</td>
<td>Stop and Make a Management Plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some additional of whether to proceed with an activity or not would be:

1. Educational Value to the course
2. Educational Objectives that you want to achieve
3. Is this integral to the course you want to provide?
4. What probability and consequence factors can we control? Which factors are outside our control?
5. What are the alternatives?
6. What are my reasons for wanting to do this?
7. Quality of student experience?
8. How would an accident affect the students’ experience?
9. Is time and convenience a factor?

### Resource 2.B: Course Start Checklist

This checklist is meant to ensure that leaders have taught the most fundamental lessons and have done the necessary evaluation, feedback, and communication to ensure a safe, high quality experience for students.

You should begin pre-trip with other trip-leaders by planning and time-lining these important activities, discussions, and lessons.

#### Pre-Course:

- [ ] Understand relevant policies/guidelines.
- [ ] Design & Plan first 24 & 72 hours

#### Pre-International Travel:

- [ ] Welcome ceremony/activities w/ students
- [ ] Have Students Phone Home
- [ ] Individual Check-ins/Pack checks
  - Collect medications if possible

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Within the first 24 HOURS</th>
<th>Within the first 72 HOURS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Safety 1: Anticipated hazards of course/country</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Solo Travel &amp; Boundaries</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Petting Animals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hitch-hiking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- After Dark Protocols</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Dress and behavioral codes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Gender Roles &amp; women’s safety</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Banned Transport - motorcycles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Money and Valuables</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Contact Cards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Lost and alone – what to do?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Hygiene/Health</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How to go to the bathroom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- How/Where to eat safely:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Collect student medications</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- If you couldn’t before international flight</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|   - Wipe silverware, dishes and glasses (no water droplets) |
|   - How to stay clean (and discreet) |
|   - Water & drinks: “always question them” |
|   - Hydration while traveling: options  |
|   - Ice |
|   - Showers and open mouths |
|   - Bottled drinks |
|   - Sharing, etc |
|   - Brushing teeth |

- [ ] Brief students on course itinerary and educational flow
- [ ] Course Expectations
  - Instructor Expectations
  - Student Expectations
    - How did I get here?
    - Why am I here?
- [ ] Leaders’ roles
  - Time off
  - How to contact leaders
- [ ] Safety 2:
- Communication:
  - How to use phones and internet
  - Country codes/Area codes
- Safety 2 (cont.):
  - How can parents contact you
  - Country codes/Area codes
  - How to get around on local transport
  - Avoid demonstrations and political gatherings
  - Local laws, Alcohol, Drugs, Police, and Corruption
- Cultural Do’s and Don’ts
  - When in doubt watch the locals
  - Bargaining
  - Gestures and greetings
  - Photography
  - Religious sites
  - Beggars
  - Home-stay respect
  - Stereotypes of Americans
  - Local Views of Sexuality/Public Displays of Affection
- Medical Kit: who, what, why?
- Local Pharmacies/Local Medicine
- Locations of Hospitals and Clinics
- Gastrointestinal issues:
  - Common Issues & How to avoid them
  - What to do if it happens
  - When to come to Instructors
- Individual Student Check-ins
- Anxieties
- Home-stay interests
- Independent study interests
- Goal setting
- Review student medical info w/ Co-leaders.
  Inform administrators of changes
- Language Lesson 1:
  - 5 key questions and/or phrases to facilitate further discovery and safety
- Group goal setting & expectations re: expedition behavior
3. Orientation

“Our answer is the world’s hope: It is to rely on youth – not a time of life but a state of mind, a temper of the will, a quality of the imagination, a predominance of courage over timidity, of the appetite for adventure over the love of ease.” - Robert Kennedy

This first stage of any group program course is like a student’s first school experience – students need tools to make the most of their program. Forming or Orientation is the stage when the group first meets through the first days of the program. As an instructor, during this stage you set the tone for the rest of the program. Seize the opportunity to create a positive course culture and to set clear expectations. Perhaps more importantly, teach your students to ask for help and directions when they need it. Make yourself accessible as you are their greatest resource at this stage. Create a positive group atmosphere where listening is sacred and trust grows.

You can do all the right activities and still miss the tone if you yourself are not inspired and energized. Positive tone setting is an expression of attitude, a communication of wonder, compassion and excitement. We infuse our students with these values, first, by enlivening them within ourselves. Ideally, plan to hold your orientation in a special place. Grab your students’ attention. Blow their minds with beauty or cultural difference. Balance cultural immersion with lots of group time. Intentionally separate your group from the hustle and bustle to effectively transfer tools, information and place the infrastructure for increasing empowerment.

Section 6 on “Container Building” is also pertinent to this time of the course, as orientation is the most essential for establishing a solid container for the experience.

Activity 3.A: Scavenger Hunt

Learning Objectives: Students must work as a team and use their newly acquired knowledge of the local language, health and safety and cultural do’s and don’ts to navigate around a new city. They must work as a team to complete a list of tasks and organize a thirty-minute presentation of their findings where all team-members voices are equally heard.

Material:
- Scavenger Hunt list
- Notebook and pen
- Water
- Sun protection
- Camera
- Money
- Hotel business card and Instructor Phone Number card

Time Needed: four to six hours

Procedure:
- Each student group of four receives a sealed envelop that contains their group’s task list, money and the hotel business card
• The instructors brief students on the activity and the rules
  o No one should ever be alone completing a task
  o Keep an accurate budget of your expenses
  o Review health and safety – food, water, traffic, etc.
  o Speak about culturally sensitive photography
  o Speak about begging and bargaining
  o All teams must be back by 5 pm and ready to present by 5:30

• Each group has 30 minutes to present their findings and their experience of the day. The time should be split evenly between team members.

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**SAMPLE NEPAL - BHAKTAPUR SCAVENGER HUNT – TEAM NAGAS**

**Rules:** Do NOT Separate from your group. Do not eat any food from the street. Make sure your dishes are wiped clean. Drink only bottled/filtered water. Avoid Ice. Keep your emergency and hotels cards in your pocket. Keep track of how much you spend on each item you purchase. It is okay to talk to people: make some friends!

Buy or find out about the following:
  o 1 dozen Haatko “Chura” (Rs ______)
  o 1 Postcard of Himalaya Mountains w/names – send it home
  o What is AusadhiPasal? Get 3 JeevanJal and 1 Sancho from AusadhiPasal (Rs ______)
  o What is Changa? Purchase 3. (Rs ______)
  o 1 Fruit or vegetable you don’t recognize: name: ________(Rs ______)
  o 1 k.g. Mausam (Rs ______)
  o ½ dozen Kera (Rs ______)
  o Newspaper in English (Rs ______)
  o What is an important current event in this country?
    o 2 sukkaNariwal (Rs ______)
    o 2 phoolko mala (Rs ______)
    o ½ pauSukmel (Rs ______)
    o 20 thulokhaam (Rs ______)

Find Out / Do the following
  o Trace the hands of 3 kids
  o Price of an hour of internet use? Rs_______
  o Exchange rate of US Dollar to Nepali Rs______________
- Price of a roll of toilet paper? Rs________
- A hand sketch of a Hindu God on the back of this sheet of paper.
- Call (instructor) from local telephone when you are half way done with your list
- Find a unique style of architecture and take a picture in front of it
- Take a photo of your group in front of your team name.
- Gather information about Nava-durga temple and visit it; take a group photo
- Find out the names and ages of 3 women wearing traditional newari sari?
- Three historical facts about bhaktapur
- What does “JuJuDhau” mean?
- Name & Picture of the current Prime Minister of Nepal
- What is a thangka? What is a mandala? What does it symbolize?
- What is a Ghaat?
- Who was the last Malla king of Bhaktapur?

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**Resource 3.B: Icebreakers and Initiatives**

All educators should have a bag of tricks including icebreakers and other activities to do with a group that is first coming together. Below are a few fun ones to use during the orientation period of the trip:

**String Exercise**

There are about 1001 different things that can be done with a ball of string; here is just one:

*Materials needed:* One ball of string - not thread and not p-cord, but something in between - something along the lines of kite string.

Stand in a tight circle as a group and begin with one of the instructors holding the string. Come up with a few things that you want students to talk about - any thing from *why am I here?* *what am I most excited about?* *where am I from?* *Name, age, place of birth?* *Something interesting about me?* *Favorite Pez container?* As the person is talking and telling the group these different things, they are also wrapping the string around their waist. Give the students enough to talk about so that each person has a few loops around their waist. After one person is done, they should hand the string to anyone else in the circle.

*Variation:* have one student state his/her introductions and then have another student take the string based on a “connection” to what that student has said, such as “I ALSO love cabbage!” or “I’m also from Maine!” etc.

Once everyone has spoken there should be a tangled web of string that connects the group. At this point, have everyone in the group, slowly, lean back until everyone is leaning against the string - each member of the group holding everyone else up. This truly only works if everyone is equally involved! At this point you can talk about the metaphor that exists in front of the group - that everyone in the circle is a family connected by an invisible thread and creating an intricate web; that, as long, as everyone is equally committed, no one will fall and they can each count on each other. You can talk about the fragility of this web and that if one person does something to break the web (maybe breaking a Red Rule), that everyone will fall. For emphasis you can use one of the students as an example and use scissors to cut them from the web. Everyone really will fall.

After you have sufficiently made your point, you can have everyone cut themselves loose. Then, as a final part of this activity, have everyone turn to someone next to them and take a piece of their string to tie to their wrist. This string can serve as a reminder throughout the program of the connection they have to the rest of the group. If there is some cultural significance also to tying string, you can even use this as a moment to elaborate on the significance.
Disclosure Line

Objective: To learn more about each person in the group in a somewhat entertaining and silly way.

Split the group up into 2 groups and have them stand in 2 lines facing each other. An instructor can begin the facilitation of this activity and then, after a few rounds, students can begin facilitating it as well.

This game is like the game “I’ve never.” One person begins by saying something that they have done before or that is unique about them. Then everyone who shares that thing walks across the line to the other side. Encourage students to be creative and have fun, but make sure the game stays appropriate and doesn’t begin to isolate anyone.

Inside/Outside Circle
Susan Daily shared this activity with everyone at instructor orientation in 2002 and, consistently I find it to be a great icebreaker; allowing students to share information about themselves in a one-on-one totally non-demanding way.

Split the group up into 2 groups and have them make 2 circles; one inside of the other. Have the inside group turn out to face the outside group, so that each student on the inside is paired up with a student on the outside.

An instructor should stand on the outside of the circles to be able to facilitate the activity. The instructor tells everyone they will be given 1 minute to talk about something with the person they are facing (some examples of topics: name, age, where your from, why are you here, how many people in your family, where have you traveled before, what are you excited about, what will be the hardest thing about this trip, what do you want to be when you grow up, etc, etc)- the questions should be interesting, but not too personally uncomfortable to answer. Using a watch tell the group when they can begin. After one minute, tell them to stop and have the outside circle rotate 2 people to their right (it doesn’t matter what the rotation is as long as they are paired up with a new person each time).

Begin the time again. Keep doing this, but as you do increase the time each rotation by a little amount without telling the group. In general, students will enjoy talking about themselves with someone else so much and will not really notice that suddenly they have been talking for closer to 5 minutes!

*This activity can also be done by changing the questions every few rotations or even by shortening the time after you have increased it just for entertainment’s sake.

Fears, Hopes, Goals in a Hat
There are many different ways to do this, but here is just one:
At the beginning of your program- at your departure airport or at an airport that you might have a layover in, but before you arrive in country- give students 3 scraps of paper each. Have each student anonymously write down on each piece of paper:
1) Their greatest fear about the up-coming program.
2) Their desired personal outcome (i.e. what they personally want to accomplish).
3) Their desired group outcome (i.e. what they want the group to accomplish as a whole).

Although writing these different things down may stir up some anxiety (especially fear), I try to avoid doing any processing right away. It’s ok for students to sit with these emotions for a little while. Then, throughout the program- go back to these different pieces of paper. For example:
Upon arrival in the country, and maybe after a day (maybe at your 1st in-country tea time!) in a comfortable place, take out the envelope with the fears. Pass it around and have each student take a piece
of paper (it doesn’t matter whose fear they get). Then have each person read, out loud, the fear that they got. After everyone has read theirs (and some of them may be the same), facilitate a group discussion about these fears. Although each student wrote down one fear, they will likely share some of the same fears of the rest of the group. Even after one day in-country students may begin to see that some of their fears aren’t such a big deal after all. Also, students will find comfort in knowing that other students share some of their same anxieties - they are all in the same boat after-all! The idea behind this processing should be to both allay students’ fears, but also to let them know that they are well supported.

Generally, after some time in-country, sometimes even when the group is at a low point in terms of working together, have the same type of group meeting, but this time pull out the envelope with the “Desired Group Outcome.” Again, have everyone take a piece of paper and read it out loud. Process in the same way. Have they met their group goals? What do they need to do for the rest of the program to meet them? This can definitely be a reality check for students, especially if they have not met their goals.

The 3rd envelope can really be opened at any time (and can certainly be opened before the “group” envelope if you wish). I think that a great time to open the “Desired Personal Outcome” envelope is right at the end of the program- even as a part of the final processing of the entire program. Do the same thing and have the students discuss whether or not they met their goals. Often times they did, sometimes they did not, sometimes they realize that their initial goal was way off mark and that’s ok too.

**Yurt Circle**
In a circle, have everyone join hands. Every other person leans in or out of the circle on the count of three. The circle should support everyone if done slowly. Do this in conjuncture with going over the course expectations and group contract, pointing out to students how we all depend upon each other and that each individual’s choices affect the group at large.

**Blindfold Walk**
Have the group get into pairs. One person in each pair is blindfolded and the other person leads them around. This is another good introduction to trust. Switch roles after awhile.

**Wind in the Willows**
Group gets into a tight circle in the spotters position (staggered stance, both hands up in front of his/her body). One volunteer stands in the middle of the circle. They cross arms and close their eyes. Body stiff as a board, they lean and the circle passes them around. Emphasize safety and trust here, as the person in the middle is very vulnerable.

**Five minutes of fame**
One at a time students sit on the “hot spot” in front of the others and have 5 minutes to introduce themselves. This could be structured with questions agreed upon by the group or could be done open-ended with no specific questions to address. This game gets more interesting as students get to know one another better and puts one person in the spotlight. Instructors will have to lay out guidelines beforehand (no questions pertaining to sex, drugs, emotionally sensitive topics, etc.) Make sure leaders take a turn too!

**When the wind blows**
One person is in the middle of the circle. S/he says one thing true about self, such as, “The wind blows for all people who speak a second language”, then everyone else with a tattoo has to move to a new spot in the circle. The person in the middle strives to find a spot on the sides and a new person is left in the middle to continue the game.

“Wham-bam Welcome to Asia”
This is taken from the North India trip, whose Instructors liked to shock their students upon arrival in Delhi. Split students up into three or four groups (depending on the number of instructors) and ask them to find their way to a certain place in the city, i.e. the Red Fort. One instructor stays with each group, but is mute and therefore lets them bumble their way around town. Of course the group must not split up and must stay with the instructor at all times. This exercise can give students a sense of how important it is to stay with the group and to never wander out on their own, while at the same time, empowering them to find their own way around. Safety note: One instructor must stay with the group at all times and, of course, should intervene if the students get into any dangerous situations.

First 24 Hours Observations/Last 24 Hours Reflections (A good integration exercise)
During the first 24 hours of the course, have students record everything they observe that is new and different from what they know at home. This might include architecture, dress, food, language, sounds, driving methods, money, anything! At the end of this period, discuss what people found, but have them save these lists.
At the end of the program, reflect again on the lists. Discuss the relative strangeness of these things 6 weeks later. Project what might be strange upon return home.

Silent Introduction
GREAT for modeling the fact that people can communicate without words! Participants are paired-up, and they have a few minutes to introduce themselves by using only gestures and expressions. After a few minutes, the pairs come back, and each participant takes a turn at telling the group what he/she learned about the other person.

Interviews/Paired sharing
In pairs students interview one another (can provide questions or let them come up with their own) and then introduce one another to the group.

Gordian Knot
Form a circle and have each person reach across the circle and take the hand of a person, right hand to left. No one should have the hands of only one person. Untie the knot without letting go.

Log Jam
Have group line up on a log and number off in order of their placement on the log. Then have them reverse their order so that number one is at the opposite end of the log from where s/he started and all others are in correct opposing order.

Trust Fall
There must be a minimum of 6 spotters and the leader should feel fully comfortable facilitating this activity. All spotters will be in a position to catch the person who is falling before beginning this activity. Additional spotters may be needed depending upon the weight of the person who is falling and the emotional status of the group. It is also important to note that this can be a challenging activity for participants with trust issues or that are uncomfortable with touch.
Have spotters line up in two lines facing each other on either side of a stump, chair, or small boulder. By alternating standing arms, palms up towards the facing member, a cradle is formed. The person who will be falling backwards from on top of the stump should fall with her/his arms folded across her/his chest, with her/his body as stiff as possible.
Safety Notes: Avoid flamboyant falls. Lightweight shoes are preferred over hiking boots, as those catching closest to the feet may be hit by the feet of the falling person. Be sensitive to those who do not want to fall out of fear of a previous back injury.
Retrieval
For this activity, you will need: sticks, rope, cloth for a blindfold, a secret message or special object (chocolate works well!). Make a circle of sticks, approximately ten feet in diameter, on the ground with a tree touching the circle at one point and place your message/object at the center of the circle. Blindfold one student and give your students the rope. The blindfolded student must retrieve a message/object that the Instructor placed on the ground from within the circle without touching the ground. None of the students can touch foot inside the circle.
Safety Note: If students hang from the tree, a helmet must be worn. If helmets are not available advise students not to hang from the tree, and to use other solutions.
4. **Container Building**

The materials, communication, activities, concepts and participants that go into defining the structure and integrity of your experience can be referred to as the “container” of the experience. The container defines the opportunities and limitations of a participant’s engagement with *the other*. Within an abroad trip, there are numerous overlapping layers of structure and integrity, i.e. numerous containers that work together to shape the parameters of the experience. These containers are:

**The individual container**: The container at its simplest form is the identity of the individual and the frames of reference that an individual brings with him or her that ground the person in who s/he is. This container frames that person’s reality. While an individuals’ container will likely grow and change on a Dragons course, it is not our task to construct an individual’s container. Nonetheless, at times of personal crisis, such as emotional or physical trauma, our job may be to prop up the individual’s personal container with references to home, familiar comforts, and direct emotional support.

**The student group container**: Beginning during pre-course, and especially when together, the student group creates a container of its own. The student-group container forms organically as students bond and can trend towards healthy and integrated or unhealthy and exclusive. The instructor team can affect the outcome of this dynamic by tone-setting and enforcing limitations on exclusive/alienating behaviors and promoting inclusive behaviors.

**The instructor-team container**: Within an experiential education program, there are identities of the instructor-team and the container that defines them and their work. The instructor-team container is defined by Dragons through contractual relationships but is also built stronger and made more resilient through intentional care and maintenance. Open sharing of goals and expectations, positive reinforcement, I-team rituals, norms of professionalism and timeliness, and a culture of open communication and feedback all bolster the instructor-team container.

**The course container**: The integrity and structure of each program, with its unique itinerary, goals, activities, participants and norms of behavior has its own identity. The ways in which the program marketing message aligns with what students experience in the field, the Yak Yak prompts, fluidity of arrival in-country, and use of Core and Country-Specific Curriculum will largely define the Course Container.

**The container of the Dragons experience**: Finally, there are the institutional definitions, norms, expectations, language, and protocols that give definition to a Dragons Experience. To create a space in which the student is open to growth, willing and able to be present and to inspect himself and engage in a more authentic reality, we need to build and maintain solid outside containers, beginning with the outermost container, which is really the structure of the entire organization.

**Activity 4.A: Setting Goals & Expectations**

Once a safe atmosphere has been established within your group, students will be much more comfortable discussing their goals as well as their fears. **Give them a platform to release built up anxieties, so that they can move on to more constructive thoughts.**

Most trips abroad are both a group and individual experience, and therefore goal setting is important on both levels. The order you address individual and group goals is up to you, as are the activities you choose. Some leaders feel that individual goals should precede group goals; others feel that establishing group goals help students clarify their own goals. However you choose to introduce goal setting, make
sure that you have established a tone that supports open discussion. Students will need direction for setting group and individual goals, and oftentimes, introducing your trips learning objectives is a good way to introduce goals. Following are some other suggestions and thoughts on goal setting:

**Individual Goals**

Give students the time to take a step back and ask themselves questions to help instill a tone of introspection and self awareness:

- How did I get here?
- Why am I here?
- What do I want to get out of this experience?
- What are my goals/hopes? How can I achieve them? What will stand in the way of achieving them?

These guiding questions can be explored through many activities, like Letters to Self, etc. Be creative with activities. The intention is to create an effective space for students to dive into their personal self-exploration. Anything that gets them thinking deeply about the awaiting experience is great! And anything that gets them thinking that they are not just along for the ride, but rather creating it, is even better!

**Group Goals, Mission Statement, and Contract**

There are 2 essential things to consider in group goal setting. First, what are the group goals? Second, what are the methods for reaching those goals? You want your students to begin goal setting for themselves and to begin thinking about how they can achieve their goals within the first 72 hours.

We recommend that instructor teams initiate the group goal setting process by asking the group to create both a mission statement and contract. A mission statement tackles the question “What hopes and goals do we have, and how do we plan to get there?” Writing the mission statement can be a very creative and fun process for students.

A contract, on the other hand, is a code of conduct. The contract should be a well-articulated statement that holds the group to certain standards of behavior - patterns that are to be nurtured as well as patterns that all agree to be counter-productive. The contract should, of course, clearly reference the Red Rules (as defined by Dragons Admin), and can also reference the Yellow and Green Rules (as defined by the students themselves).

**Follow the S.M.A.R.T guide:**

**Specific** - A specific goal has a much greater chance of being accomplished than a general goal. To set a specific goal you must answer the six “W” questions:

*Who:* Who is involved?
*What:* What do I want to accomplish?
*Where:* Identify a location.
*When:* Establish a time frame.
*Which:* Identify requirements and constraints.
*Why:* Specific reasons, purpose or benefits of accomplishing the goal.
**Measurable** - Establish concrete criteria for measuring progress toward the attainment of each goal you set. When you measure your progress, you stay on track, reach your target dates, and experience the exhilaration of achievement that spurs you on to continued effort required to reach your goal. To determine if your goal is measurable, ask questions such as......How much? How many? How will I know when it is accomplished?

**Attainable** - When you identify goals that are most important to you, you begin to figure out ways you can make them come true. You develop the attitudes, abilities, skills, and financial capacity to reach them. You begin seeing previously overlooked opportunities to bring yourself closer to the achievement of your goals.

**Realistic** - To be realistic, a goal must represent an objective toward which you are both willing and able to work. A goal can be both high and realistic; you are the only one who can decide just how high your goal should be. But be sure that every goal represents substantial progress. A high goal is frequently easier to reach than a low one because a low goal exerts low motivational force. Some of the hardest jobs you ever accomplished actually seem easy simply because they were a labor of love.

Your goal is probably realistic if you truly believe that it can be accomplished. Additional ways to know if your goal is realistic is to determine if you have accomplished anything similar in the past or ask yourself what conditions would have to exist to accomplish this goal.

**Timely** - A goal should be grounded within a time frame. With no time frame tied to it there's no sense of urgency. If you want to lose 10 lbs, when do you want to lose it by? "Someday" won't work. But if you anchor it within a timeframe, "by May 1st", then you've set your unconscious mind into motion to begin working on the goal.

T can also stand for **Tangible** - A goal is tangible when you can experience it with one of the senses, that is, taste, touch, smell, sight or hearing. When your goal is tangible you have a better chance of making it specific and measurable and thus attainable.

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**Resource 4.B: Group Care and Inclusion**

Below is a laundry list of activities and routines that help build a safe and inclusive group culture.

**Table Topics**

You may find mid-trip that there are discussions you would like the group to have or lessons you would like to teach that lie outside of the lessons you present in a formal setting. Or you may find that time is limited and you haven't yet gotten to all of the discussions you had hoped to have. Table topics are a great way to get students engaged in important discussions in small group setting over meals. Identify a theme and brainstorm with co-instructors before the meal about the kinds of questions you might ask to prompt discussion and the overall goals of what you would like students to take away from the discussion.

Some topics that have worked well in the past are “Travel vs. Tourism”, “What is Communism?”, “What are Human Rights?”. After facilitating this a few times, consider having the Leader of the Day choose the table topic. Also consider requiring your students to read a pertinent article from the Development Reader. Then break the students into small groups, each group accompanying an instructor to dinner. You may be surprised at the level of engagement of some students once they're allowed to express themselves in a smaller group, even over a casual meal.
Teatime

Leading programs in the Himalayas, I have often noticed that if there is one thing at all that you can count on in terms of predictability it is being offered tea. Culturally speaking, Teatime is an opportunity to slow down, talk to the neighbors, get the daily news, have a little something sweet, warm up and simply take a break. In this vein I have incorporated something called “Tea Time” into my programs with a similar intention. Depending on the country or culture, you can pick an activity or daily ritual that would be relevant to that country.

Teatime is simply a time and space that is set-aside for the group to come together and, basically, just be together as a group. Amidst the intensity of a Dragons program it is important for students to have an opportunity in which they can come together as a group of students, re-connect with their own culture and simply have some time to reflect. As instructors we sometimes forget that, for our students, everything is new and that talking about movies, cars, prom, home, etc is a way to take a (sometimes much needed) break from everything. I have found that students are often more apt to be truly present to their experience if they know that at some point during the day they will get to come together and let their guard down a little.

In groups that I have worked with, we have front-loaded Teatime as a place and space in which students can do all of these things. Incorporated on pretty much a daily basis where we will find a nice spot- the roof of a guesthouse is often ideal- we will bring tea if we can get some and literally have “tea time.” It can take the form of a group meeting in which a topic is presented that students can address, or a quote is simply read at the beginning and then students can share any of their thoughts. It can take the form of a group processing session in which students discuss issues within the group or just as a time in which students can chat about whatever comes to mind. I have often started Teatime by simply saying, “Are there any Issues, Affirmations, Cares or Concerns?” You can throw anything in there- Quotes, Jokes, Funny stories, Feedback, Questions, etc, etc. Teatime can also take the form of a processing session if the group has just experienced something particularly significant.

Some thoughts to consider:

☐ When will you introduce the idea of teatime? (It can even be introduced at student orientation as one of the rituals that will be an on-going part of the program.)
☐ Does teatime need to be a lengthy group meeting, or can it even just be a quick group check-in before everyone goes to bed?
☐ Who will facilitate tea time- instructors? students? both?
☐ Are there guidelines to teatime that students need to know about? (i.e.: to what extent can instructors enforce an emotionally safe space?)
☐ Where will you have teatime- considering cultural appropriateness?

Milling

This is a meditative exercise designed to build intimacy within the group. Start with your students standing sporadically spaced out, preferably in a peaceful outdoor setting. Invite them to close their eyes and focus on their breathing. Guide students to “step” into their bodies, feel their feet on the ground, notice any tensions, be aware of their heads supported on their necks, etc. Next guide them to be aware of their emotional bodies. Perhaps they're feeling inspired, overwhelmed, in awe, etc today. Just guide them to notice whatever they’re feeling without trying to change it. Now gently invite students to open their eyes. Have each student gently walk to another student, make eye contact and one student of the pair can briefly tell the other where s/he’s at, how s/he’s feeling, what is foremost in his/her mind today, etc. Invite students to be gentle, to leave space for silence, and to be supportive listeners. After one student has shared, s/he can slowly move apart from
Building Appreciation
This is a great activity to do after a few weeks in-country, after students have experienced some accomplishments and perhaps even during the storming stage when students are forgetting to look at each other’s value as a person. Gather students in a circle. You will need an object that represents the “hot spot” stick (a feather, piece of drift wood, etc) and a watch with a second hand. Invite a student to volunteer to go first and give that student the hotspot object. Instruct the students that they will each take one minute to speak about their accomplishments during the past week (or since they’ve been in-country), things they are proud of, moments where they felt they shone, etc. After the minute is up, devote 2 minutes to the hotspot student remaining silent while the others “throw” him/her compliments in a popcorn style sequence (i.e. no special order to the sequence of compliments). Give each student a chance to be on the hotspot and let students know that they don’t need to feel that they need to compliment everyone. End on a meditative note, perhaps taking a few minutes in silence or reading an inspiring quote.

Gratitude Lists
Invite students to free-write a list in their journals of everything they’re grateful for. Encourage them to fill at least one page. You may like to do this both before and then after the home-stays and compare the lists, noting what they learned to appreciate during their home-stay visit.

Self-Confidence Booster
Invite students to free-write in their journals a list of everything they like about themselves, including personality traits, skills, accomplishments, physical traits, personal history, EVERYTHING. Encourage students to include both the silly and the profound.

Sharing Journals
One evening, invite all students to gather together and break up into small groups. Have students volunteer to read a journal entry aloud. When I’ve done this in the past, I was fascinated at hearing others’ writing voices and felt as though an intimate connection had been formed. This needs to be done in a safe setting and could be treated as a sacred ritual, using candles or a tea ceremony to add to the effect. Make sure you don’t force students to share if they don’t want; they have the right to keep their journal entries to themselves.

Resource 4.C: Sacred Spaces & Ceremony
Taking a moment to recognize the importance of this moment

A human being is a part of the whole called by us “the universe,” a part limited in time and space. He or she experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separate from the rest — a kind of optical delusions of consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our tasks must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening the circle of all understanding and compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.

- Albert Einstein
In many ways the entire course should be approached as a practice of sanctity. The leader team strives to establish a safe place that allows students to speak, be heard, and feel comfortable challenging themselves on physical and emotional levels. At certain junctures in the course, such as the outset, mid-point, or finish, it is effective to formally recognize the power and meaning of the experience being lived day-to-day. Ceremonies are an excellent way to convey this.

The Ceremony
Ceremonies are used in all cultures to assign a particular significance to an action, or to express gratitude for something. They are the means by which we create meaning in our daily lives. Examples include marriage, graduation, baptism, bar(t) mitzvah, prom, and so on. On group trips, ceremonies can also be used to establish significance and create meaning for the experience at hand. They are most commonly employed during orientation or integration/transference, but can also be effective tools for acknowledging milestones or alleviating stress during the storming phase. Ceremonies should be creative and organic, fitting the personality of the group and playing to the natural environment in which you are traveling. There are, however, a few themes that are reoccurring throughout the world and tend to have a strong impact on participants.

Give Thanks: Verbally acknowledging gratitude and respect for the opportunity to partake in this adventure, to be alive, to have food, water and community. Recognize and give thanks to those that brought us here, such as our parents or friends afar.

Recognize Greater Forces: Because international courses offer a powerful opportunity for individuals to discover the greatness of the world around them, they are often, in effect spiritual journeys-spirituality being nothing more than the recognition of a force greater than the personal ego. This may be God, Life itself, the Spirit, Nature, or the Universe as Einstein mentions above.

Let every voice speak: Every individual brings a unique and powerful energy and identity to the group experience, make sure to create a space where every voice is heard. One useful tool is the “talking stick,” an object that, when held, wields the power of speech. The stick helps avoid interruptions and allows students to take time with their sharing.

Cultivate community: Get people to look each other in the eyes, and engage in comfortable touch. Have one student gift something to another student, such as an object imbued with love and positive energy. Let participants know that they are safe and have the support of the group.

Materials
Fire (visual): In many cultures fire acts as a vehicle to transport worldly things (material) in to the spiritual realm (air). It is thought that breath, wind or air is the “stuff” of the spirit and when we create smoke we can see the gods. Set a group of teenagers around a fire and watch as they fall in to a deep and meditative trance.

Incense (smell): Copal, sage, nag champa, Frankincense, Myrrh, and an array of other herbs and resins are burned throughout the world in ceremonial practice. These sweet smelling substances have different symbolism attached to them, but are, like fire, associated with the spiritual realm, and often the smoke is understood as a cleansing mechanism.

Ceremonial objects (touch): objects imbued with meaning (touch/symbolism), powerful words and quotes (hear) communal drink or food (taste).

Location: Perhaps the most important component of a good ceremony is the energy provided by the place you are in. Under the stars, at dawn, on a mountain top, next to a river or somewhere
inspirational is appropriate. Assure the space is away from human activity, intimate, and inspiring. Make sure students are comfortable and able to be completely present.

SAMPLE DRAGONS CEREMONIES
Ceremony 1
Where: In an attic on a farm in Guatemala (the rain provided a soothing background sound) When: After dark on the last day of orientation.
What: Each student was given a note card with a powerful quote taken from the IM and asked to find two objects, one to be brought along for the next four weeks and one to leave behind at the fire circle. Candles, copal, and other ceremonial objects from Guatemala were arranged in a circle. One leader led the ceremony and solicited participation from all students, expressing gratitude, sharing a recent loss or difficult moment, reading their quote, and expressing one thing they would take with them and one thing they would leave behind. The ceremony ended in a group hug and a pledge to be open, supportive and loving.

Ceremony 2
Where: In a hotel room with the lights turned off and a single candle burning
When: The last night of the trip
What: All students sat in a circle and each was given a small gift to give away to an assigned fellow student or instructor (drawn out of a hat). The student chooses who he/she will present the gift, announces the recipient's name and then states something they admire about that person. The object goes around the circle and each person says something positive about the recipient until the gift is back in the hands of the person that began. It is then presented to the recipient and the ceremony continues.

Ceremony 3
Where: Near a body of water
When: During the storming-phase
What: Blindfold the group and place a rock in their hand, lead them to a body of water (best when the students don’t know the water is there). Ask them, one by one, to recognize something in themselves they need to work on and would like to leave behind. Have them throw the rock into the water and hear their troubles splash away. Uncover the blindfold and discover stars, night smells and sounds etc.
5. Service Learning

"An education that teaches you to understand something about the world has done only half of the assignment. The other half is to teach you to do something about making the world a better place." –

- Johnnetta Cole, Former President, Spelman College

How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single minute before starting to improve the world.

- Anne Frank

In accordance with the philosophy of all of Dragons’ program components, service learning is founded in the aspiration for our students to connect and exchange with the local people and gain awareness in regards to their real life situations. In general, token projects, where students actively participate in a project on a superficial level without diving into the deeper issues of community, development, and philanthropy, should be avoided. We are not talking about “service to” or “service for”, but rather “service with”, acknowledging the fact that we often receive as much or more from a service opportunity than we give. We aim to foster engaged service learning opportunities, with an emphasis on learning and exchanging. In addition to the work service, it is equally important to facilitate lessons and discussions that touch upon the ideology of service, the common good, and sustainable development.

The best service learning projects may not even have visible results; rather they will develop within students a deeper connection to local people as well as cultivate a commitment to contributing to local and global societies. Service learning is multifaceted and may arouse discussion on the topics of development and human rights as well.

Discuss student motivation for service. Many students fulfill community service requirements on abroad programs. Some students want to travel to “the third world” to “help.” How do these ambitions/motivations change with experience? What are the limits and the opportunities for service abroad vs. service in your home community? Look critically at what a youth from a place of privilege really is capable of giving. And then look critically at development and what, if anything, the community really needs to receive from our group. No service opportunities exist in isolation; they are tied inextricably to issues of poverty, ecology, justice, politics, power dynamics, and local dreams, resentments, desires, and worldview. Embrace these discussions and encourage students to reflect on their experience.
Activity 5.A: Planning a Service Project

Adapted from Peace Corps World Wide Schools

Learning Objectives: Students learn the process involved in creating a service-learning project, fostering Compassion, Responsibility, Ownership, Awareness. Students will step by step create a service-learning project and plan its implementation. They will answer the question: What can we do to support the communities we are visiting?

Materials:
- Whiteboard
- Markers

Time: two hours

Procedure:

- Considerations: At this point, instructors need to ask themselves if it would be logistically possible to engage in a service-learning project proposed by the students. Go ahead and let them brainstorm their ideas, even if you decide that it isn’t possible given the circumstances, it’s still beneficial for students to see this process. Preface the lesson with a disclaimer letting students know that you may choose to do a service-learning project that was already preconceived by the instructors so the students aren’t disappointed if they do not engage in the project they conspired.

- Another take on this lesson is to facilitate it AFTER having done your service learning project, and having each student create a project to do in their home communities. This way, students can transfer the knowledge and skills they’ve learned from their experience to their home communities. Some of the questions will need to be altered in an appropriate way.

- Ask students if they have ideas on how they can pull their energy, talents and desire together to serve the host community and note ideas on the whiteboard. Remind students that it is ideal if service-learning projects meet the following criteria:

  They meet actual community need
  They are coordinated in collaboration with the community
  They are integrated with academic learning
  They facilitate active student reflection
  They help students use skills and knowledge in real-world settings
  They help students develop a sense of caring for others
  They improve the quality of life for the persons served

  Explain that projects normally involve 5 steps:

  - Assessing community needs
  - Planning a project that addresses these needs
  - Implementing the project
  - Reflection and Evaluation
• Celebration

Once the list the students created is exhausted, have students vote on the ideas they think best reflect both the above-mentioned criteria for a project and their personal interest. Once you narrow the list down to 4 or 5 of the students’ preferred projects, briefly review what would be involved with each one. Are they logistically possible? What is the ideal location for each project? What materials would be required? How much time would it take? Etc.

Conduct a second round of scoring the proposed projects (I like to score by creating a chart and voting several times, each time proposing 2 choices and the student votes for 1 out of the 2. Go through this process with all choices, and at the end count the number of votes, determining which one got the highest number. For example, vote between choice 1 and 2, choice 1 and 3, choice 1 and 4 until all choices have been voted against each other then see what choice received the most total votes. This makes it easier for those who can’t decide on just one choice.)

Once a project has been decided upon, go ahead and allow students to plan it. Invite 1-2 students to write ideas on the whiteboard. What do students think are necessary steps in planning this project, keeping in mind not only the implementation of the project, but also the reflection and celebration after the project is complete. Guide students if they are missing information. Let students take front stage, but allow them to use you as a guide and a link to the locally available resources. Make sure students don’t miss the following pertinent aspects of implementing a service project:

- Materials needed
- Time Frame
- Location
- Local Resources
- Community Involvement
- Necessary Skills for Implementation
- Reflection: Writing, Group Discussion, Community Discussion, etc
- Celebration

Debriefing: End on a positive note, applauding students for their hard work by reading a positive quote on service and setting aside time for free-time or a fun activity.

Transference: Facilitate this same lesson with students creating service-learning projects that they can implement in their home communities.
Resource 5.B: To Hell With Good Intentions

At a certain point during any abroad trip, especially those that include service projects, it will be important to have a critical look at service. Ivan Illich’s scathing remarks to a group of volunteers in Mexico is an excellent counter-point to service conversations that focus on how beneficial it is for students to volunteer abroad. This can be a heavy conversation for many students, and conversations stemming from it can be sobering, but revealing.

To Hell with Good Intentions
by Ivan Illich

An address by Monsignor Ivan Illich to the Conference on InterAmerican Student Projects (CIASP) in Cuernavaca, Mexico, on April 20, 1968. In his usual biting and sometimes sarcastic style, Illich goes to the heart of the deep dangers of paternalism inherent in any voluntary service activity, but especially in any international service "mission." Parts of the speech are outdated and must be viewed in the historical context of 1968 when it was delivered, but the entire speech is retained for the full impact of his point and at Ivan Illich’s request.

IN THE CONVERSATIONS WHICH I HAVE HAD TODAY, I was impressed by two things, and I want to state them before I launch into my prepared talk.

I was impressed by your insight that the motivation of U.S. volunteers overseas springs mostly from very alienated feelings and concepts. I was equally impressed, by what I interpret as a step forward among would-be volunteers like you: openness to the idea that the only thing you can legitimately volunteer for in Latin America might be voluntary powerlessness, voluntary presence as receivers, as such, as hopefully beloved or adopted ones without any way of returning the gift.

I was equally impressed by the hypocrisy of most of you: by the hypocrisy of the atmosphere prevailing here. I say this as a brother speaking to brothers and sisters. I say it against many resistances within me; but it must be said. Your very insight, your very openness to evaluations of past programs make you hypocrites because you - or at least most of you - have decided to spend this next summer in Mexico, and therefore, you are unwilling to go far enough in your reappraisal of your program. You close your eyes because you want to go ahead and could not do so if you looked at some facts.

It is quite possible that this hypocrisy is unconscious in most of you. Intellectually, you are ready to see that the motivations which could legitimate volunteer action overseas in 1963 cannot be invoked for the same action in 1968. "Mission-vacations" among poor Mexicans were "the thing" to do for well-off U.S. students earlier in this decade: sentimental concern for newly-discovered poverty south of the border combined with total blindness to much worse poverty at home justified such benevolent excursions. Intellectual insight into the difficulties of fruitful volunteer action had not sobered the spirit of Peace Corps Papal-and-Self-Styled Volunteers.

Today, the existence of organizations like yours is offensive to Mexico. I wanted to make this statement in order to explain why I feel sick about it all and in order to make you aware that good intentions have not much to do with what we are discussing here. To hell with good intentions. This is a theological statement. You will not help anybody by your good intentions. There is an Irish saying that the road to hell is paved with good intentions; this sums up the same theological insight.

The very frustration which participation in CIASP programs might mean for you, could lead you to new awareness: the awareness that even North Americans can receive the gift of hospitality without the slightest ability to pay for it; the awareness that for some gifts one cannot even say "thank you."

Now to my prepared statement. Ladies and Gentlemen:
For the past six years I have become known for my increasing opposition to the presence of any and all North American "do-gooders" in Latin America. I am sure you know of my present efforts to obtain the voluntary withdrawal of all North American volunteer armies from Latin America - missionaries, Peace Corps members and groups like yours, a "division" organized for the benevolent invasion of Mexico. You were aware of these things when you invited me - of all people - to be the main speaker at your annual convention. This is amazing! I can only conclude that your invitation means one of at least three things:

Some among you might have reached the conclusion that CIASP should either dissolve altogether, or take the promotion of voluntary aid to the Mexican poor out of its institutional purpose. Therefore you might have invited me here to help others reach this same decision. You might also have invited me because you want to learn how to deal with people who think the way I do - how to dispute them successfully. It has now become quite common to invite Black Power spokesmen to address Lions Clubs. A "dove" must always be included in a public dispute organized to increase U.S. belligerence.

And finally, you might have invited me here hoping that you would be able to agree with most of what I say, and then go ahead in good faith and work this summer in Mexican villages. This last possibility is only open to those who do not listen, or who cannot understand me.

I did not come here to argue. I am here to tell you, if possible to convince you, and hopefully, to stop you, from pretentiously imposing yourselves on Mexicans.

I do have deep faith in the enormous good will of the U.S. volunteer. However, his good faith can usually be explained only by an abysmal lack of intuitive delicacy. By definition, you cannot help being ultimately vacationing salesmen for the middle-class "American Way of Life," since that is really the only life you know. A group like this could not have developed unless a mood in the United States had supported it - the belief that any true American must share God's blessings with his poorer fellow men. The idea that every American has something to give, and at all times may, can and should give it, explains why it occurred to students that they could help Mexican peasants "develop" by spending a few months in their villages.

Of course, this surprising conviction was supported by members of a missionary order, who would have no reason to exist unless they had the same conviction - except a much stronger one. It is now high time to cure yourselves of this. You, like the values you carry, are the products of an American society of achievers and consumers, with its two-party system, its universal schooling, and its family-car affluence. You are ultimately-consciously or unconsciously - "salesmen" for a delusive ballet in the ideas of democracy, equal opportunity and free enterprise among people who haven't the possibility of profiting from these.

Next to money and guns, the third largest North American export is the U.S. idealist, who turns up in every theater of the world: the teacher, the volunteer, the missionary, the community organizer, the economic developer, and the vacationing do-gooders. Ideally, these people define their role as service. Actually, they frequently wind up alleviating the damage done by money and weapons, or "seducing" the "underdeveloped" to the benefits of the world of affluence and achievement. Perhaps this is the moment to instead bring home to the people of the U.S. the knowledge that the way of life they have chosen simply is not alive enough to be shared.

By now it should be evident to all America that the U.S. is engaged in a tremendous struggle to survive. The U.S. cannot survive if the rest of the world is not convinced that here we have Heaven-on-Earth. The survival of the U.S. depends on the acceptance by all so-called "free" men that the U.S. middle class has "made it." The U.S. way of life has become a religion which must be accepted by all those who do not want to die by the sword - or napalm. All over the globe the U.S. is fighting to protect and develop at least
a minority who consume what the U.S. majority can afford. Such is the purpose of the Alliance for Progress of the middle-classes which the U.S. signed with Latin America some years ago. But increasingly this commercial alliance must be protected by weapons which allow the minority who can "make it" to protect their acquisitions and achievements.

But weapons are not enough to permit minority rule. The marginal masses become rambunctious unless they are given a "Creed," or belief which explains the status quo. This task is given to the U.S. volunteer - whether he be a member of CLASP or a worker in the so-called "Pacification Programs" in Viet Nam.

The United States is currently engaged in a three-front struggle to affirm its ideals of acquisitive and achievement-oriented "Democracy." I say "three" fronts, because three great areas of the world are challenging the validity of a political and social system which makes the rich ever richer, and the poor increasingly marginal to that system.

In Asia, the U.S. is threatened by an established power - China. The U.S. opposes China with three weapons: the tiny Asian elites who could not have it any better than in an alliance with the United States; a huge war machine to stop the Chinese from "taking over" as it is usually put in this country, and; forcible re-education of the so-called "Pacified" peoples. All three of these efforts seem to be failing.

In Chicago, poverty funds, the police force and preachers seem to be no more successful in their efforts to check the unwillingness of the black community to wait for graceful integration into the system.

And finally, in Latin America the Alliance for Progress has been quite successful in increasing the number of people who could not be better off - meaning the tiny, middle-class elites - and has created ideal conditions for military dictatorships. The dictators were formerly at the service of the plantation owners, but now they protect the new industrial complexes. And finally, you come to help the underdog accept his destiny within this process!

All you will do in a Mexican village is create disorder. At best, you can try to convince Mexican girls that they should marry a young man who is self-made, rich, a consumer, and as disrespectful of tradition as one of you. At worst, in your "community development" spirit you might create just enough problems to get someone shot after your vacation ends_ and you rush back to your middleclass neighborhoods where your friends make jokes about "spics" and "wetbacks."

You start on your task without any training. Even the Peace Corps spends around $10,000 on each corps member to help him adapt to his new environment and to guard him against culture shock. How odd that nobody ever thought about spending money to educate poor Mexicans in order to prevent them from the culture shock of meeting you?

In fact, you cannot even meet the majority which you pretend to serve in Latin America - even if you could speak their language, which most of you cannot. You can only dialogue with those like you - Latin American imitations of the North American middle class. There is no way for you to really meet with the underprivileged, since there is no common ground whatsoever for you to meet on.

Let me explain this statement, and also let me explain why most Latin Americans with whom you might be able to communicate would disagree with me.

Suppose you went to a U.S. ghetto this summer and tried to help the poor there "help themselves." Very soon you would be either spit upon or laughed at. People offended by your pretentiousness would hit or spit. People who understand that your own bad consciences push you to this gesture would laugh condescendingly. Soon you would be made aware of your irrelevance among the poor, of your status as middle-class college students on a summer assignment. You would be roundly rejected, no matter if your
skin is white-as most of your faces here are-or brown or black, as a few exceptions who got in here somehow.

Your reports about your work in Mexico, which you so kindly sent me, exude self-complacency. Your reports on past summers prove that you are not even capable of understanding that your dogooding in a Mexican village is even less relevant than it would be in a U.S. ghetto. Not only is there a gulf between what you have and what others have which is much greater than the one existing between you and the poor in your own country, but there is also a gulf between what you feel and what the Mexican people feel that is incomparably greater. This gulf is so great that in a Mexican village you, as White Americans (or cultural white Americans) can imagine yourselves exactly the way a white preacher saw himself when he offered his life preaching to the black slaves on a plantation in Alabama. The fact that you live in huts and eat tortillas for a few weeks renders your well-intentioned group only a bit more picturesque.

The only people with whom you can hope to communicate with are some members of the middle class. And here please remember that I said "some" -by which I mean a tiny elite in Latin America.

You come from a country which industrialized early and which succeeded in incorporating the great majority of its citizens into the middle classes. It is no social distinction in the U.S. to have graduated from the second year of college. Indeed, most Americans now do. Anybody in this country who did not finish high school is considered underprivileged.

In Latin America the situation is quite different: 75% of all people drop out of school before they reach the sixth grade. Thus, people who have finished high school are members of a tiny minority. Then, a minority of that minority goes on for university training. It is only among these people that you will find your educational equals.

At the same time, a middle class in the United States is the majority. In Mexico, it is a tiny elite. Seven years ago your country began and financed a so-called "Alliance for Progress." This was an "Alliance" for the "Progress" of the middle class elites. Now it is among the members of this middle class that you will find a few people who are willing to send their time with you. And they are overwhelmingly those "nice kids" who would also like to soothe their troubled consciences by "doing something nice for the promotion of the poor Indians." Of course, when you and your middle class Mexican counterparts meet, you will be told that you are doing something valuable, that you are "sacrificing" to help others. And it will be the foreign priest who will especially confirm your self-image for you. After all, his livelihood and sense of purpose depends on his firm belief in a year-round mission which is of the same type as your summer vacation-mission.

There exists the argument that some returned volunteers have gained insight into the damage they have done to others - and thus become more mature people. Yet it is less frequently stated that most of them are ridiculously proud of their "summer sacrifices." Perhaps there is also something to the argument that young men should be promiscuous for awhile in order to find out that sexual love is most beautiful in a monogamous relationship. Or that the best way to leave LSD alone is to try it for awhile -or even that the best way of understanding that your help in the ghetto is neither needed nor wanted is to try, and fail. I do not agree with this argument. The damage which volunteers do willy-nilly is too high a price for the belated insight that they shouldn't have been volunteers in the first place.

If you have any sense of responsibility at all, stay with your riots here at home. Work for the coming elections: You will know what you are doing, why you are doing it, and how to communicate with those to whom you speak. And you will know when you fail. If you insist on working with the poor, if this is your vocation, then at least work among the poor who can tell you to go to hell. It is incredibly unfair for
you to impose yourselves on a village where you are so linguistically deaf and dumb that you don't even understand what you are doing, or what people think of you. And it is profoundly damaging to yourselves when you define something that you want to do as "good," a "sacrifice" and "help."

I am here to suggest that you voluntarily renounce exercising the power which being an American gives you. I am here to entreat you to freely, consciously and humbly give up the legal right you have to impose your benevolence on Mexico. I am here to challenge you to recognize your inability, your powerlessness and your incapacity to do the "good" which you intended to do. I am here to entreat you to use your money, your status and your education to travel in Latin America. Come to look, come to climb our mountains, to enjoy our flowers. Come to study. But do not come to help.
6. **Trekkning and Wilderness**

“Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature’s peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves.”

“I only went for a walk, and finally concluded to stay till sundown, for going out, I found, was really going in.”

– John Muir

The activities in this section teach hard expedition travel skills—trip planning, gear management, staying warm, altitude concerns, food and water—and is designed to foster a heightened sense of awareness, curiosity, and stewardship in the natural world as well as encourage students to make environmentally mindful choices in the backcountry.

However there is also a powerful sense of *difference* when spending time in wilderness abroad, especially for those accustomed to North American wilderness. Making opportunities to converse about definitions of wilderness and expectations of what makes a place *wild* when, for example, you are staying with a community in the Amazon or with nomads on the Tibetan plateau, or even high in the Swiss villages. Locals here aren’t weekend adventurers into wild-lands, they actually subsist on the land, while wilderness in the US is established to be “without the print of humans”. How do we teach students about “Properly disposing of waste” when we are hiking through a community whose trash collection is literally blowing in the wind and all through the mountains? What can be learned from setting up a “backcountry camp” in a farmer’s fields?

There are countless ways to encourage students to increase their sensitivity to and care for their surroundings. And at its essence, the goal of this section is to remind instructors of the value of physical activity and connection to the natural world. Even if an abroad program is unable to venture into the backcountry for extended time, physical activity and exploring the local culture’s connection to land are still important. Observing local ecology, hiking through parks, or venturing into rural landscapes all fall within this category.

Physical challenges, and the bonds which often form during times of “hardship” while trekking give us the chance to look more closely not only at the physical environment, but our “internal environment” and our personal development. Whether small group time, solo time, or one-on-one time with instructor, being outside gives us time to think, to breathe, and to process the many complex issues which have been introduced throughout the program. It allows us time to be silent during what can feel like a very chaotic, disorienting experience, and provides us with the space to re-orient before diving back in.
Activity 6.A: 24-Hour Trekking Plan

Learning Objectives: To have students feel well prepared to and understand how to take care of themselves immediately upon entering a new and different wilderness environment. This reduces their anxiety and discomfort and reduces safety concerns early on.

Time: These topics can be broken up among your leader team and presented in short talks or presentations at different times before a trek and during the first day. In total this should take about 5 to 6 hours to cover these topics well so plan ahead when and where you can present these. See individual topics for time break-downs.

Procedure: This outline is meant to lay out clearly all of the teaching topics that should ideally be covered before or in the first 24 hours of a trek. Many of these topics can be and should be covered before the trek actually begins.

For those who have a lot of outdoor experience this may come as elementary, but for those who haven’t done a lot of leading or traveling in the backcountry it will help you to avoid a lot of problems if these topics are covered early on. For students who have not done much trekking, going through these topics will help to alleviate a lot of concerns and help to empower them in their own experience. As you will see many of the topics have to do with the most basic human needs: food, health, safety, and one’s connection to others.

Though it is in note form it can be broken down into individual lessons and some creativity in teaching brought in for many topics.

Safety Briefing (20 mins):

I. Consider what hazards exist and discuss them with the group. Ask questions about how the group will deal with them safely.
II. Brief the group on the first Aid Kit, Instructors level of First Aid Training and experience. Is there a PAC bag or Sat Phone? How to use them correctly.
III. Discuss what options exist for evacuations and emergency resources. Where do they go, what do they do if an Instructor gets hurt? What if’s?

Expedition Behavior – “EB” (20-60 min’s):

I. Structure a discussion on HOW you want to do the trek. In what style. Agree on some rules and/or behaviors
II. From NOLS: Training Room: Expedition Behavior – The Foundation of NOLS Leadership:

On an expedition, a group is self-supporting, living and learning together. This demands that the group functions well as a unit. Expedition behavior is partially explained by good teamwork and personal responsibility. It also includes what it takes for a group to thrive over an extended time period. This involves the balancing of group and individual needs, flexibility, risking conflict for growth, encouraging group members to feel the consequences of their actions with empathy, play, and hard work. Expedition behavior requires instructors and group members to treat each other with dignity and respect and take responsibility for working through their problems. Good expedition behavior creates an atmosphere that is supportive, fun, comfortable and enables learning. Also at the heart of superior expedition behavior is a good sense of humor that allows for mistakes both in oneself and in others. With good expedition behavior, leadership becomes an activity and process that people participate in together.
Often times when an expedition fails, it is due to poor expedition behavior. Members become so caught up in their own personal goals that they lose sight of the mission of the group. Soon to follow are poor relations and communication that break down the cohesion of the group and can also put the group at risk. This same breakdown can happen in the workplace when team members become self-serving without looking for possibilities that can be achieved by the group as a whole.

By modeling good expedition behavior, an instructor will incorporate trust, support and well being among group members. With this foundation teams achieve their goals in a productive way that allows for reaching further goals in the future.

### Packing a Pack (45 min’s):

I. The ABC’s of packing a pack:
   a. Accessible- Pack quickly needed items in side and top pockets and in the top of your pack. This includes H2O bottles, water filter or iodine, sunscreen, snacks, sun hat, sunglasses, raingear, camera, warm layers for breaks, lunch
   b. Balanced- The weight should be equal from left side to right side. Heavy objects should be packed close to the back and in the middle of the pack (i.e. not too high nor too low).
   c. Compact- Pack the pack like laying bricks and mortar. Tightly pack each layer, filling all the gaps around larger objects with smaller ones before moving up to the next layer. Then tightly packing that layer and filling all the gaps.

II. Carrying weight: an ideal carrying weight for a pack is between 1/3 and ½ of one’s body weight. So for someone who is 110 lbs they should ideally be carrying 33lbs. This would feel the same to them as someone who is 180lbs carrying a 60lb pack. If someone is carrying more than this have the group consider ways to redistribute their gear and food.

III. Adjusting a Pack: A correctly adjusted pack should ride so that 70% of the weight is carried on the hips by the waist belt and 30% should be on the shoulders. The hip belt should be sized so that it protects the forward points of the hip bones. The shoulder straps should be adjusted so the lower adjustment buckle is at least one hand width below the armpit. Both the hip belt and the shoulder straps should run smoothly around your body with no gaps

IV. Putting on a Pack: Any pack over 25 lbs should be lifted carefully using your legs for lift, not your back, and put on the back by using the thigh as a table. Another method is to encourage participants to help one another put it on and take it off every time!

### Self-care (1 hr):

I. Hydration: Everyone should be drinking 4 to 6 liters (quarts) of water per day! Don’t forget they need calories as well!!

II. Water Treatment: (see Instructor Manual for details). Students should be taught what method of purifying water will be used on the trek: iodine, filter, kitchen staff boiling water, etc. They should always know who has the treatment equipment and how to use it at all times. Don’t let inaccessibility or misunderstandings lead to dehydration! (Note: Vitamin C removes the taste of iodine- use it after the purification process is complete! You can buy strips of Vit C at any pharmacy. A ¼ tab should be enough for a liter.)

III. Calories: Everyone should have access to snacks to keep their calories up during morning and afternoon lulls. Only sugary snacks are not ideal. Mix in some nuts and dried fruits, crackers and other salty snacks.

IV. Going to the Bathroom: try teaching the 3P’s and the 3D’s. Be aware of any variations to this based on your environment. (Ex: in Ladakh, a high desert, deep burial of feces may not
effectively dispose of it. The deep soil is devoid of nutrients which are needed to decompose pathogens. A shallow burial, or even a smear (!!) on some flat rocks which will allow the sun to decompose the waste may be preferable.)

a. The 3 P’s- How to select an appropriate poop site:
   • Privacy! Find a nice quiet place where you are not rushed so you can properly prepare your toilet and your toilet paper-type items
   • Proximity! Are you at least 150 feet from water, water sources, trails and campsites?
   • Panorama! Find a nice spot to enjoy the view! It’s one of the great benefits of pooping outdoors!

b. The 3 D’s – What kind of toilet to use
   • Discovery/Disguise- How to best avoid discovery by critters and by other people? Bury it? Part of this is also Disguising your poop site after you are done. Make it look like you were never there…fill the hole, spread leaves or rocks over it….LNT!
   • Decomposition- What is going to decompose the pathogens best? Deep burial (6-8 inches)? Shallow Burial? Sun/UV exposure? How much use does this area get? Carry it out?
   • Disposables- If you use toilet paper then carry it out or burn it! It does not decompose well in soils. Other options are to use rocks (smooth ones!), sticks, snow, etc. Avoid picking green plants for use. Although they resemble toilet paper they don’t work as well and denudes an area of important foliage.

V. Foot care: Show students the contents of the First Aid Kit for blister prevention and care. Teach them how to recognize Hot Spots and prevent blisters, and how to treat blisters. Pay attention to who has new or unbroken in boots and do multiple foot check-ins every day early on.

Hygiene (30 min’s):
I. Wash your hands! In the wilderness environment we have to be extra careful to wash hands after going to the bathroom and before eating meals. Avoid sticking dirty hands (your backcountry multi-tool kit) in other people’s snack bags (pour snacks out carefully) or sharing water bottles unless you teach the “Lipless” method of water bottle sharing. Any sickness among a group member can and will travel quickly throughout the group ruining your trip. Make sure plenty of water is available for washing when at camp and before meals together. Individuals can use antibacterial hand sanitizing gel if water is unavailable (in the med kit or buy some).

II. Check on kitchen staff. Make sure that they are also practicing good hygienic practices. Let them know your expectations clearly. Poor kitchen hygiene will result in a poor trekking experience.

III. Cracks and crevices: on treks longer than 2 or 3 days it is important to wash your feet and private areas to prevent fungus and other infections. Teach students how to use a water bottle to take a little wash break away from the group periodically, or have some structured wash sessions. Make sure not to let any soap or shampoo anywhere near a water source…LNT!

Group Travel (20 min’s):
I. The three rules of group travel are; “stay together”, “stay together” and….”don’t get separated”. The group should always be able to see and communicate with one another by signals or verbally. The front should always be able to see the back of the line and vice versa. Exceptions to this may occur after the group members have some experience in the terrain.
II. What to do if separated? In general, if someone becomes “lost” (i.e. doesn’t know where
they are, where the group is, doesn’t know how they got there, and doesn’t know how to find
their way back) they should:
   a. stay put
   b. with their gear and backpack
   c. make themselves visible by staying on a nearby high point, and/or displaying bright
colored clothing around their area
   d. Protect themselves from heat, cold, rain, dehydration and exhaustion
   e. Periodically call for others
   f. Stay Put! The group will be looking for you!

III. Pacing & Breaks:
   a. A large group can generally travel at 1 mile an hour, plus an hour for every 1000ft of
elevation gain. So a trekking day with 6 miles and 2500 ft of elevation gain can expect to
take 8.5 hours of trekking not including breaks. Groups will almost always cover more
ground in the morning than in the afternoon for the same time traveling.
   b. An ideal travel scenario is a 15 minute break for every 45 minutes to 1 hour of wal
   c. It is a good idea to have a pace setter I the front. Someone who walks at a pace which
everyone can keep up with. If there are one or two people who are straggling behind or
constantly struggling to keep up try to get them to set the pace for the others. In addition,
it is a good idea to designate a Sweep. Someone who will always in the back, and knows
if anyone for any reason is behind them. This same person can do a visual sweep for
water bottles, sunscreen, and miscellaneous left items then the group leaves from a break.
   d. Communication: Institute a system of communication for when the group is splitting.
Most often this is by having the sweep (or any other who sees the group is spreading out)
yell “GAP!!
   e. Break for routine foot care to prevent painful blisters.

Keeping Warm and Dry (15 min’s):

I. Dress in Layers: dressing in layers of increasing bulk and warmth as you go out from the skin
allows trekkers to better adjust to variable temperature conditions and exertion levels. This
system starts with a light thin layer of wool or synthetic underwear next to the skin and leaves
bulky down or synthetic puffy jackets for the last layer. Help them figure out how to dress for the
days activities.

II. Cotton Kills: though we can’t always expect this to be the case encourage students to wear
synthetics and wool clothing during trekking. Cotton absorbs moisture and water, and thus saps
heat and warmth from your body. It stays wet and doesn’t dry easily or quickly.

III. Hats, Socks and Gloves: Keep them handy! A hat is a quick way to regulate your heat. Always
keep a pair of dry socks for sleeping. Wet socks 9and underwear) can sap your heat during the
night and you can wake up cold!! Cold hands also make you unhappy. Use your gloves.

IV. Keeping Dry: Keep your raingear handy at the top of your pack. Pull it out when it starts to rain,
of course. And conversely take it off when it isn’t raining as it will make you wet from sweat.
Especially avoid wearing waterproof pants around for daily trekking and activities. They get
destroyed easily and make the legs very wet!

V. Sleeping Warm:
   a. Make sure everyone has an appropriately rated sleeping bag for the conditions expected.
   b. Zip up the bag completely and cover the head. Close the drawstring at the top to allow a
small breathing hole
c. Use and stay on your sleeping pad. Cold ground will rapidly steal your warmth. Insulate yourself well from the ground
d. Wear a hat and dry clothes to bed. Not too much more though. If you wear all your clothes you are not allowing the sleeping bag to do its job as an insulator. The only exception is when your bag is SEVERLY underrated for the conditions.
e. Eat dinner. Make sure you have calories for your body to burn and keep you warm during the night. You can keep snacks and chocolate handy at night if you get cold easily.
f. Don’t hold your pee! If you need to go, get out and go. Otherwise your body expends calories keeping your pee warm which could be keeping you warm

Logistics and Hard Skills (1 – 2hr):

I. Can the students take responsibility for daily chores? What are they? How to divide them up.
   Potential Roles/Chores:
   a. Leader of the Day
   b. Navigator
   c. Journalist
   d. Tent set up
   e. Sweep
   f. LNT guru
   g. Water Walla- gets water and sets up wash stations
II. Tent Set-Up and Stove Use: They should learn these skills early to be as empowered and self reliant as possible. Make sure to emphasize tent and stove care and maintenance. Always supervise the lighting and use of stoves until each student has demonstrated appropriate knowledge of safe practices.
III. Map (and Compass) Use: get them using the map and making a plan for the day early on. Help them figure out what to expect from the day.

Activity 6.B: Solo

Solo has a very necessary and important place on any course, and multiple opportunities should be created throughout. During a solo, students are alone - for two hours, half the day, or whatever is appropriate – in the wilderness or in a more urban setting. There are many ways to structure a solo, depending on your trip location, the level of the group, and your goals for solo time. On some trips, students are asked to find a place in a park or carve out their private place at a restaurant or café. Variations can include having students give up their watches, cameras, and /or reading material, suggesting a writing assignment, or having students bring an object back from their solo space to share with the group. The objective is to give students the silence to think – for themselves. Activities can take the form of journaling exercises, art projects, meditations, walking solos, market solos, etc. or any combination thereof.

Solos are most often thought of as a trekking or wilderness activity, however urban solos where students walk around town on their own can be incredibly impactful and educational. Solo can be an overnight, one-day or afternoon activity. Different solo activities meet different outcomes and thought should be put toward a directed activity appropriate for the participants. For example, if a group is having trouble with
cliques or lack of compassion, an afternoon solo in which they sit in a spot and make a gift or write a poem for one of their peers can be a very productive activity.

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Safety note: Participant safety remains top priority, so this is not a time to send students off on the Tibetan Plateau overnight with nothing but a tarp and a water bottle! In the past, instructors have placed students in a valley or along a bank where they cannot see one another. Instructors should always be aware of a student’s location during a solo and should have the guesthouse phone number and/or guesthouse name written in the local language in case of emergency. In wilderness settings, students must have appropriate rain and sun protection, and water.

SOLO TOOLBOX

Market solo
Have students walk through a market and find the name of a new fruit, a unique craft, find out where three people live, how many brothers and sisters they have, etc.

Reading and Writing
Pick an inspiring quotation or reading. The idea here is to read the piece, provide one or two guiding questions and then give students time to journal. The guiding questions should be pointed at reflection and introspection.

Observation solo
Have students sit in one spot for anywhere from one hour to a full day. Have them journal either a picture or a written description of their site. Have them observe one thing that changed, one thing that stayed the same.

Needs vs. Wants
Great toward the end of the program, in thinking of going home, have them journal a list of things they need to live and those things they want. After living more simply for a number of weeks they will be able to sit and reflect on those important parts of their lifestyle choices.

Sound map
During solo, have students take out their journals. On a blank piece of paper, have them put an "x" in the middle, representing themselves. Then they can take time in silence, to draw a "sound map" on the page. They need to record any noise they hear in any way they want on the page, but it needs to be drawn in relation to where they are sitting (if they hear a bird to the right of them, they draw a physical representation of that noise to the right of the "x"). Get together and share afterwards - it's amazing the noises folks hear that others might have missed, and the art can be inspiring.

The Spell of the Sensuous
Inspired by the book by David Abram, have the students draw a history of the place, giving characters and stories to the valleys around them, the trees, the animals, etc. This is founded in the Australian Aboriginal “Dreamtime” or Aljjerina, where, in their tradition a walkabout is performed while telling elaborate stories about the places they are walking through. It helps them connect to the land, know where they are and also contains moral lessons. These stories have occurred in past time, ancestral time, the “dreamtime”
or Altjerina. Their stories can include local mythology that has been presented to students during the course or their own. Attempt to frame it in a local context. For example, in Bolivia you could introduce the activity by telling a myth of the famous Battle of the Gods, in which the Mountains waged battle against one another. Bolivian mythology is intertwined with the divinity of each mountain, and students’ reflections during their solo can be in this vein. Or it can be totally free-form, depending whether you want the activity to be more creative or more academic.

**Walking Solo**
On a hike, have one instructor go first and then pace students 10 minutes apart for a given section of trail. The first instructor will be there to identify any places students could get lost or other risk management concerns.

**Found Art Solo**
Have students create a piece of artwork found in nature. This could be framed by, for example, and explanation of Andy Goldsworthy’s artwork. If artwork is rock piles or large objects, the group could take a tour of the sites and students can present their piece. Or it could be a practice in ephemeral art where the piece is ritually dispersed back to the earth.

**Gift Solo**
This is especially great for a group struggling through storming or not practicing compassion. Have students pull a random student’s name from a hat before heading off to solo and they are responsible for writing a poem, making art, or some creative gift for that person. When the group comes back together they share that with the person with praise and an explanation.

**Letter to Self**
Have students write letters to themselves that will be delivered at some time in the future. Could be 6 months, could be a year. This could be an expression of who they want to be in the future, reminding themselves of their current emotions, identifying goals or aspirations, etc.

**Debriefing**
This may be the first time in many of these student’s life that they have been alone for an extended time — especially for a full-day solo. If it is a sitting solo, they probably have never sat in the same place for that long before. Things may come up they have never felt and they may be opened to a very deep level of reflection. Upon completion this must be respected and students should have the space to share these things if appropriate. Other times they may chose to keep them to themselves.

The key to an impactful debrief is proper framing. As with any activity, if it is not presented in the right light, opportunities are missed for real growth. Plan ahead and decide what you want students to get out of their time alone. It could be reflection, it could be compassionate behavior, or it could even be more academic like walking around the market and identifying foods! Once you decide what your desired outcomes are, set to make sure the framing, type of solo activity and debrief meet that outcome. It can also be nice for instructors to prepare a special meal, or other ‘celebration’ to welcome students back from solo time.

**Integration**
Letters to Self are an amazing integration tool. Solo in general can be an excellent time for things that have happened during the course to sink in, as well as reflections on their lives back home and what they’re going back to, how they’ve changed, etc. Establishing solo journaling time at the end of the course can really help move students into a healthy space to end.
7. Integration

“The world is round and the place which may seem like the end may also be the beginning.”

-Ivy Baker Priest

You get a strange feeling when you leave a place, I told him, like you’ll not only miss the people you love but you’ll miss the person you are now at this time and place, because you’ll never be this way ever again.


Just as essential as setting the tone at your program start is steering your students to reflect and assess upon their experiences in country during the final week. For many students, the program end is really the beginning of an extensive journey of personal transformation. As an instructor, it is essential to be available to students during this stage. Students may be experiencing intense feelings of anxiety and/or excitement as they look forward to their journeys home and as they ponder their new roles in that environment. This last week in country is a great time to slow down, find a beautiful spot and allow students the time and space to really reflect upon their experiences.

Remember to facilitate a one on one meeting with each student, giving full program feedback and discussing ways for transference to occur within his/her home life.

On one of your final program days, gather your students together for a closing ceremony. You may like to include your students in the planning for this activity. Students often contribute in poignant ways that would have been deemed “cheesy” if prepared by an instructor.

During this wrapping-up stage, keep in mind the concept of transference, the act of integrating what students have learned in the field to their lives at home. Facilitate discussions on how new perspectives will be adapted in home-life, what forms of activism students can adapt in their daily routines, and any ideas for continued growth and awareness.

Activity 7.A: Integration Skits

Learning Objectives: Students begin to consider what they may encounter when they go home. It helps bring awareness to what they may be feeling, whether it be anxiety, excitement, stress, etc. It also gives them tools of how to deal with certain scenarios or attitudes that they may encounter in response to sharing their trip with others.

Material:
1. Funny costumes if available
2. A nice, private space

Time Needed: One to two hours

Procedure:
- Divide students into groups of 3 or 4
• Give each group a scenario that they may encounter when they go home. They have 20 minutes to prepare. All scenarios are focused on being asked about their trip with varying levels of enthusiasm. You can get really elaborate in your scenario descriptions. Some basic examples include:
  o Meeting mom, dad and siblings at the airport
  o Walking into a keg party with friends from school and being filled in on what’s been happening in your absence
  o Being at a gathering of your parent’s friends and being approached about your trip.
  o Being set-up to speak with strangers about their travel plans to the area the student has just done a program in. These strangers are not culturally sensitive travelers.

• Give each group 5-7 minutes to act out the scenario.

• Open it up to the group for a discussion after each one about how these scenarios may play out in their own lives and what feelings it brings up

• Create space to debrief the entire activity and the main points/emotions that were brought up by students. Encourage students to think about how they want to share their experience abroad and with whom.

• Wrap up by congratulating students on the choice they made to embark on such a courageous adventure. Let them know that they are the only ones capable of measuring the true value of their experience and that it will be important to create time and space when back home to continue reflecting on their time in country and the lessons they learned.

Resource 7.B: Toolbox of Integration Activities

For the end of a day or end of a program
Remember that students also come up with great ideas for closing ceremonies. Invite them to create a few activities and give them the resources to implement them.

Passing Notes
Give each student a piece of paper and have them write their names on top. Explain to the students that you will be passing the papers around among the group and each student will anonymously write something positive about the person whose name is on top. Encourage students to write in-depth observances that transcend the more surface, “You are nice” comments. After each person writes, fold the paper so as not to be able to see what was written and pass it along to the next person. After everyone has written remarks for each student in the group, collect the papers and hand them out on the plane ride home (or mail it a few months after the program’s end).

Wearable Objects of Integration
As you are gathered for a closing ceremony, give students something they can wear to remind them of their Dragon’s experience. In Senegal, we gave each student a small white shell and some string and allowed them to make bracelets or necklaces. We encouraged the students to use this object in the future as a reminder that there are 9 other people in the world who have shared this experience with them and who are walking this earth wearing the same shell. Seven months later and I’m still wearing my shell!
We’re looking for the perfect _______ team...
This idea is a great compliment to a closing ceremony. When students are gathered, tell them you’re looking for the perfect _______ (name of your organization) team. Go through a list of traits of each student without saying his/her name, especially noting things they accomplished during the program. It works well if you balance between sincere positive traits and humorous events that the crew can all relate to and laugh at. (“We’re looking for someone who can paint an incredible thangka, is cheerful even after 10 hours of hiking in wet boots and who has an incredible knack at attracting troops of biting ants in the night...”)

Back Strokes
Tape a piece of paper to everyone’s backs. Mingle around the room writing compliments on each other’s backs. This is an anonymous way of sharing...put parameters on what is written (keep it positive) or guide students in a specific direction (for example, each shift asks a specific question like: name one thing you love about this person, what one suggestion would you give to this person, etc).

Note to Self
In this activity, students write a letter to themselves in the future (6 months, 1 year, end of trip) to spell out their feelings in the moment or wishes for their future. Ideas for letter topics include: specific things in-country people have taught them, write ways in which they’ve grown, include poignant memories, explore future goals and expectations, etc. This can be very effective if combined with a solo. You might ask the students to try to articulate, to the best of their ability, the ways in which they feel empowered and what it is that has led to that empowerment. In the past, these have been very powerful reminders for students.

Head tap
Best if done in open area with space. Everyone puts head down except instructor (or you could rotate person talking). The person taps 3 people (or any appropriate number) and says “This person taught me something on this trip” Those people who were tapped each tap one person that taught them something and return to his/her seat and put head down. The new folks tapped stand, and a new comment is made (made me smile, I will miss him/her, inspired me, cannot imagine not keeping in touch with, etc) it continues until comments run out...exhaustion sets in. Can be very powerful!

Fondest Memories
Have students in a circle and have some object for each student (bead, stone, talisman, little ceramic anything) and take a moment for each student to share their fondest memory of every other student. Anyone can pick up the object and chose the student to praise. Then they say their fondest memory and pass it to the person at their side. Each person puts their energy into the object and shares their memory in turn. Once everyone has had their turn to share, they pass it to the student receiving it. Then the next student (or instructor) can receive praise until everyone has had everyone else share their fondest memory of them.

How to use your journal
Have students brainstorm future uses for their journals and invite them to set a concrete date for re-reading journal once they are stateside. It may even be fun to have each student pick a short passage from his/her journal to read to the group.

Anonymous
Give each person a small budget to buy a gift for another member of the group whose name they drew out of a hat (instructors included). Give the two days to buy a gift for their secret person that reminds them of their secret person at some point in the trip, or some character of the person that shined at some point of the trip. Come together after dinner (so people can take some time to do this). Sit down in a circle. One-
by-one, have the students put the object in the center of the group. Have the rest of the group guess for which person the object was meant. This is a fun way for the group to connect at the time of departure and also laugh and recall different parts of the trip!

**Thank you circle**
The night before departure, have the group sit down together. It is nice to set a limit on the ceremony by buying candles, one for each student. Set up the candles in a circle in front of each student. The ceremony will end when the candles are burnt out. Give the students a chance to thank each other, for a particular moment, a string of moments, a certain presence, or anything. This is a good way to have the student recognize each other’s gifts along their journey and rehash some meaningful moments.

**Thank You Letters**
Encourage students to write thank you notes to the people who helped you along your way in country as well as the person/people responsible for them participating on the program. Give students the time to do this thoughtfully, really honoring these people. Students may have the pleasure of picking an enjoyable spot to write and purchase some pretty cards or writing paper.

**Remember to...**
Give students tools to go home and share. Discuss the responsibilities of sharing even though it may be difficult or complicated.

Explore the concept of what they thought about the place before they arrived (romantic concepts) and what romantic concepts were clarified or destroyed all together. Is that a bad thing? Was the experience good anyway? Why do we create romantic concepts of places?