

Facilitating Reflection on Year Abroad Learning

Digital Media and Year Abroad Module



BComm International III YA 2018-2019

Background

- ▶ Superficial reflection on return
- ▶ Gather information and make it available to outgoing second year students

Choice of Media

Minimum four different types of media over 5 assignments

- ▶ Website/blog
- ▶ Audio file
- ▶ Film+audio
- ▶ Commentated slideshow
- ▶ Animation+audio
- ▶ Online book or magazine
- ▶ Or other suggestions

Module Structure - four tasks

Predeparture - Fears and Goals

Task A

Showing us around your University or town/city

Task B

Location Choices and Getting Established

Task C

Reflecting on your current Year Abroad experiences

Task D

Reflecting on Fears and Goals

Task E

Tying together personal learning from year abroad and how it relates to your future.

Fears

- ▶ Homesickness - FOMO - missing friends/family - not settling in - not making friends - money worries, and not able to make the most of the YA - having to grow up and take care of ourselves in unfamiliar surroundings.
- ▶ My biggest fear is going to Germany and not settling in. I'm afraid that cultural differences will stop me from making new friends with people from different countries and to go from having close friends at UCC to having to make new friends in Germany is daunting. I'm afraid of not finding my feet over there and not finding people who I click with...I fear that it will make me reluctant to become involved in social activities and reluctant to grasp new opportunities. The aim of this year abroad is to become more open to new things and shutting myself off from that is something that I would deeply regret in time to come.

Goals

- ▶ Become comfortable with different cultures through travel, meeting new people, doing lots of social activities
- ▶ Improve language skills & fluency for employment

“My main aim is that I will come home from my year abroad more fluent in German and feel confident talking to the natives. I hope to pass all of my exams taken in the University I attend and I would also like to try new topics and subjects while given the chance. I also wish to broaden my horizon, as previously mentioned. I hope to become familiar with the German culture and traditions and to gain a knowledge of German history. I would also like to travel during my year abroad and visit famous attractions and also to undergo adventures and explore as much of the country and surrounding countries as possible. Finally, I wish to interact with German students as well as other Erasmus students and share my journey with them.”

Task A

Showing us around. Comparing the university/the town/student life in Ireland and Germany/Austria. Include a personal aspect e.g. “my favourite place to spend an hour between classes”

- A day in the Life
- T-shirt & Monument
- Website introducing the city/town
- Website introducing the university & campus

T-shirt + cultural monument - Diarmuid & Eddie

Historical

In the early 19th century, the shores of the Wörthersee were home to peasants and the less well-off. However, after the southern Austrian railway line was built, which borders the northern shore of the lake, the Wörthersee turned into a tourist destination for Vienna's nobility. The villages of Velden and Pörschah became very popular tourist towns. There are many attractions around the lake which carry **historical significance**. ... After permission was given by Bishop Waldo, the relics of Saints Primus and Felician, who both suffered martyrdom under the rule of the pagan emperors Diocletian and Maximilian in the years 286 and 287 respectively, were brought to Maria Wörth from Rome and buried.



A day in the life of a student



CREATED USING
POWTOON

A Day in The Life - Laura

<https://vimeo.com/253662745>



mit Studierenden aus über 100 Ländern,
ein Ort an dem Vorurteile zwischen Menschen abgebaut werden

Website - Uni Passau - Anne

<https://115398626.wixsite.com/mysite>

Task B

Location Choices and Getting Established

- Pros and Cons of host University - include academic and practical aspects as well as any others you feel are relevant.
- Year Abroad Tips - getting established & making friends, making the most of your learning experience, overcoming fears & stepping outside your comfort zone. What do you wish someone had told you before you went? What advice would you give the second year group going abroad? This should not be location-specific, but pertain more generally to the Year Abroad experience as a whole.

Year Abroad Tips - Magazine - David

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1zoEkw1ngLOJKloe2S2X5UgfFDs9uSUzm>

Take every opportunity you can get. Looking back, I wish I had made more of an effort in the first month or so to speak German and not take the easy route. From asking for directions to ordering a coffee, every little, seemingly insignificant interaction adds up. At my time of writing this, I am close to the halfway point of my year abroad and while my language skills have developed and my linguistic confidence grown, I know I could have done more.



Pros & Cons of Host University

- ▶ Cons: In [this university]there is **very little school spirit**. **Campus life is non-existent** [...]There is nothing on campus that would keep me there beyond my classes and group work. This is alien to me. I quite enjoy the fact that in UCC we have a student bars, the quad and green areas while here there is only the essentials. Especially in the winter it can be difficult to work on campus as its very dull dreary. ... **it just feels like something is missing**. Campus culture or spirit is essential to any university.
- ▶ The classes are structured before the module even starts. This is useful when you want to prepare for them. This is extremely helpful when you consider the language barrier.

YA tips - Saoirse



Siobhan Mortell, UCC

20/05/2019

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Task C

Reflecting on your current Year Abroad experiences

- “My Best day/My Worst Day” - what made this your best or worst day? What were the causes for this? What would you change if you had your time again?
- “Triumphs, satisfactions, challenges.” Talk about one personal triumph and how you achieved it, one thing that gave you great satisfaction and why, and one challenge you had and how you overcame it. These could be concrete and definable (e.g. a good grade in a tough exam), or more personal (e.g. I opened a bank account on my own through German).

Worst Day - Yuqing





How the Day Began

My Worst Day - Grace

<https://www.flipsnack.com/irishstudentabroad/my-worst-day.html>

Best Day - Intense emotion - Caitriona

- ▶ A day in an Italian village, tour of family vineyard, traditional Italian sporting practice.
- ▶ “...All in all, it wasn’t the most outstanding or life altering day at all but the next day on my way home, on a seven-hour Flixbus I was writing a letter to my parents about what we had been doing in Trento and I just started crying - hysterically. I was just suddenly and completely overwhelmed with joy. I think I just realised all of a sudden how lucky I was and just saw the beauty in the ordinary things that Chiara had been showing us. It was horrendously embarrassing and I’m sure it will never happen again but in that moment, I was just so grateful, I could easily be the only Irish person that’s ever set foot in that little village and I’ll probably never see the place again. It’s a moment I’ll never forget”

TRIUMPHS/SATISFACTIONS/CHALLENGES FROM THE YEAR ABROAD

Denise Harrington

Triumphs, Satisfactions, Challenges - Denise

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1ot4X-RXvY1bSwOQfrFPE6QFGXCFtcfGSnKRTpuAeTTk/edit#slide=id.p>



ERASMUS
"TRIUMPHS, SATISFACTIONS
& CHALLENGES"

Triumphs, Satisfactions, Challenges - Laura S

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1hPRGcrhZmfyuU7MbXGqGS3XHTw1HKKjr>

Reflecting on Pre-Erasmus Goals...



Siobhan I think it is safe to say that, as we grow in life our goals are continuously changing. Our

Task D Reflecting on Fears and Goals

- ▶ “Looking back on my goals has made me realize that these goals are not the most important to me anymore. These are very practical goals and while they are still important to me, they are not the most pressing ones in my life. I think it’s just really important to make friends and to enjoy your time abroad. You shouldn’t have to focus and stress yourself out about reaching certain goals that can sometimes be unattainable. You should just try your best and after that you can do no more. That is what has become important to me on my time abroad.”

Task E

Written Report 1500 Words or 20 min online presentation - Tying together personal learning from year abroad and how it relates to your future. Give one example each of a situation (can be 'successful' or 'unsuccessful') when you:

- ▶ A story about a time you saved the day
- ▶ A story about a time you had to work with a difficult person.
- ▶ A story about a time you learned from a mistake.
- ▶ A story about a time you stepped outside your comfort zone/pushed your boundaries
- ▶ A story about a time you demonstrated intercultural competence

Task E - A story about Adaptability - Rachel

- ▶ Adaptability - Something that was pretty hard to adapt to was nothing being open on a Sunday. There was so many times where I just forgot that I wouldn't be able to pop into Aldi on a Sunday. And it sounds so silly for that to be something you have to adapt to, but it's not until you're in the situation and you realise you forgot to buy eggs for breakfast, or meat for dinner. All these things I have adapted to have shown me that for future scenarios if I do not stay in Ireland, that it is so easy to adapt. It's not a big deal and within weeks it's almost like the norm. Even when I have visited home over Christmas etc. I was just so confused that the shops were actually open on a Sunday!



A story about cultural competence - Rachel

- ▶ **To me cultural competence is all about valuing diversity.** I think this is something that everyone does on Erasmus. You're out of your comfort zone of being around the same type of people at home, you have the same interests, you talk the same as each other. And then when you come here you realise just how diverse other cultures are. I met one girl who was very Christian, personally I wouldn't be as holy as she was but it was interesting to see her beliefs and how one of the things at the top of her agenda to do here was find a local church she could go to every Sunday [...] I think in the future when meeting people of different cultural backgrounds I will be more tolerant of other people's different beliefs, and to also remember that not everyone I meet is from Cork and speaks the same as me!

Criteria for 5 ECTS

- ▶ Pass/Fail only
- In good faith
- Appropriate length and shows some reflection
- Students can rework on my recommendation

Benefits & Risks

- ▶ Enables deeper reflection
 - ▶ Media competence
 - ▶ Awareness / conscious experiencing & processing
 - ▶ Of benefit in job applications?
- ▶ Could be more variation on media used - tendency to take the easy option?
 - ▶ Tendency to type it in a Google Doc or copy and paste it into a Blog and make little effort with images etc
 - ▶ Compatibility of file format
 - ▶ Audio is pre-written and read aloud
 - ▶ No structured feedback yet

Problems / Risks

- ▶ Availability to future students - will they copy the ideas of previous students?
- ▶ Too many ECTS for work done outside of the commerce and language area and outside of the classroom

Required to pass 45 ECTS. A student could for example do the following:

- 5 Portfolio module
- 3 Tandem WS
- 3 Tandem SS
- 5-6 Hobby language

= 14-15 ECTS non-classroom based out of min 45 ECTS - one third of credits for the year

Suggestions from 2018...

- ▶ Rework the assignment instructions
 - ▶ Make available to outgoing students (for a limited time?)
 - ▶ Integrate into YA preparation
 - ▶ Integrate into a final year unit on job applications or soft skills?
 - ▶ Integrate into final year oral practice e.g. roleplays, discussions/debates, soft skills etc.
- ▶ Done: 4 tasks 3ECTS → 5 tasks 5ECTS
 - ▶ Done
 - ▶ Informally
 - ▶ No feedback yet from 2017-18 group
 - ▶ No feedback yet from 2017-18 group

and more suggestions for 2019?

- ▶ Students must use 5 different media?
- ▶ Students research media options themselves?

Over to you...

