

The Psychology of Short-Term Study Abroad

Making it work for Annie Anxious, Henry Homebody, Andrew Adrenaline, Nancy Know it All, Danny Downer and other members of the “Perfect Team”

Jim Bensley, MLS Northwestern Michigan College



The Perfect Team?

A Foundation for Success

RISK MANAGEMENT



HEALTH SERVICES

**COUNSELING
SERVICES**

EXCELLENT PROVIDERS



**INTERNATIONAL
SERVICES**

YOU!

**PREVIOUS
STUDY ABROAD
FACULTY**

DEAN, VP, CHAIR

Top Leadership Traits

Communication

Listening Skills

Passion and Commitment

Positivity

Flexibility

Diplomacy

Collaboration

Empathy

Honesty

Courage



Poll #1



Poll #1

Danny Downer (Neurotisiium)

You're in Morocco about to ride camels into the Sahara for an evening at a Bedouin camp. It is 100 degrees. Danny begins complaining about the heat, telling others he's also heard the bathrooms at the camp are just pit toilets and that the staff will probably be rude because your group is just another bunch of tourists being shuffled through the experience. Danny is already putting a damper on the event and you aren't even on the camels. What do you do?

- A. Counter everything Danny says with a positive description
- B. Give Danny a job that focuses his attention on something else (e.g., ask him to be the official photographer).
- C. Ignore him, make sure he is on the last camel in the caravan and focus on positive comments from other students
- D. Remind Danny this is a once in a lifetime experience and that he should "live it in the moment"

Simple Psychology



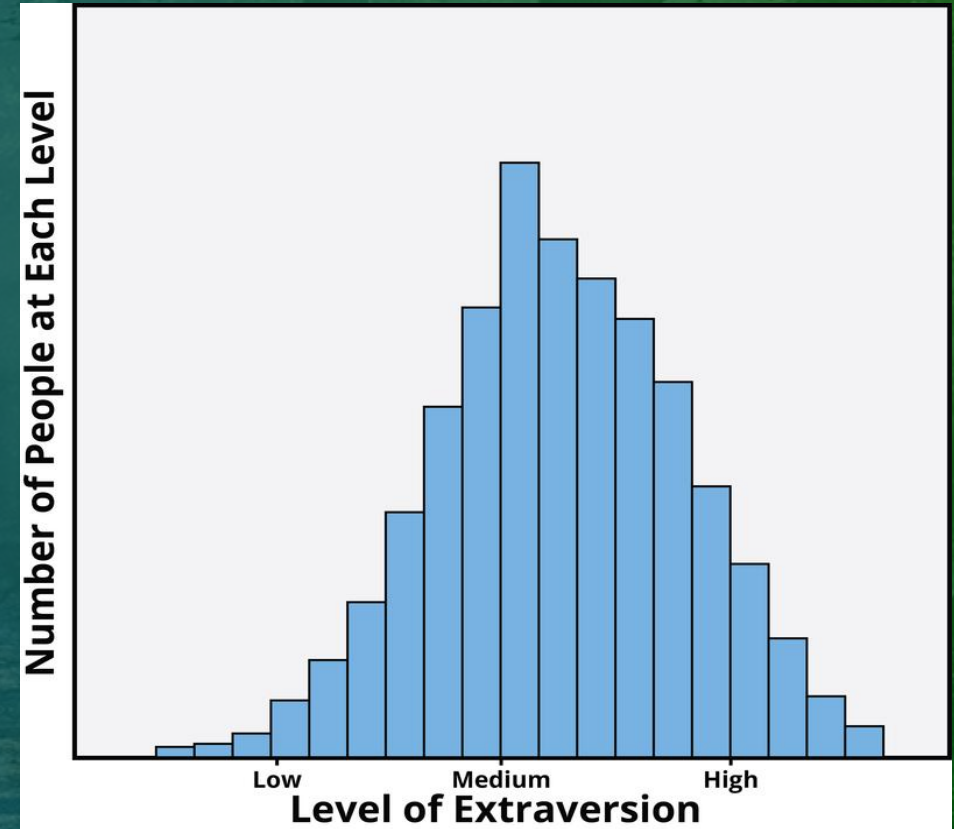
“Experiential Learning”



Personality Traits

Personality traits reflect basic dimensions on which people differ (Matthews, Deary, & Whiteman, 2003). According to trait psychologists, there are a limited number of these dimensions (dimensions like Extraversion, Conscientiousness, or Agreeableness), and each individual falls somewhere on each dimension, meaning that they could be low, medium, or high on any specific trait.

An important feature of personality traits is that they reflect **continuous distributions** rather than distinct personality types. This means that when personality psychologists talk about Introverts and Extraverts, they are not really talking about two distinct types of people who are completely and qualitatively different from one another. Instead, they are talking about people who score relatively low or relatively high along a continuous distribution. In fact, when personality psychologists measure traits like **Extraversion**, they typically find that most people score somewhere in the middle, with smaller numbers showing more extreme levels.



O.C.E.A.N

Five Factor Model (Goldberg, 1990; McCrae & John, 1992; McCrae & Costa, 1987)

Big 5 Trait	Definition
<i>Openness</i>	The tendency to appreciate new art, ideas, values, feelings, and behaviors.
<i>Conscientiousness</i>	The tendency to be careful, on-time for appointments, to follow rules, and to be hardworking.
<i>Extraversion</i>	The tendency to be talkative, sociable, and to enjoy others; the tendency to have a dominant style.
<i>Agreeableness</i>	The tendency to agree and go along with others rather than to assert one's own opinions and choices.
<i>Neuroticism</i>	The tendency to frequently experience negative emotions such as anger, worry, and sadness, as well as being interpersonally sensitive.

O.C.E.A.N

On-line Personality Inventory

<https://drj.virtualave.net/IPIP/ipipneo120.htm>

Dr. John A Johnson, Penn State University

The False Personality of Binary (Science Friday) 3:17 - 0:55

<https://www.sciencefriday.com/segments/in-trovert-personality-science-diction/>

Ocean Song – Gabriela Cintron

<https://nobaproject.com/student-video-award/winners>

<https://openpress.usask.ca/introductiontopsychology/chapter/personality-traits/>

*EDWARD DIENER; RICHARD E. LUCAS; AND
JORDEN A. CUMMINGS, University of Saskatchewan*

Person - Situation Debate

The power of personality against the power of situational factors as determinants of the behavior that people exhibit.

Walter Mischel, *Personality and Assessment*

“Mischel thought that specific behaviors were driven by the interaction between very specific, psychologically meaningful features of the situation in which people found themselves, the person’s unique way of perceiving that situation, and his or her abilities for dealing with it.”

“To best capture broad traits, one must assess *aggregate* behaviors, averaged over time and across many different types of situations. Most modern personality researchers agree that there is a place for broad personality traits and for the narrower units such as those studied by Walter Mischel.”



Pre Departure

Assembling the team

- Purpose of experience - academic or sightseeing?
- Student selection & student interviews
- Students from a specific course, or a shotgun approach
- Minority populations
- Faculty leaders
- Site visit

Preparing the team

- Preparing yourself
- Scheduled pre-departure meetings
- Team building exercises
- Research – pre-readings
- Non-competitive emphasis
- Health and safety
- Balanced itinerary
- Peer support
- Mindfulness training
- International student interaction

Getting There

The Airport

- An important time for group cohesion
- Activities (not too much control)
- Buddy system 2-4
- Games (scavenger hunt, cards,)
- Watch for positive and negative leadership
- Seating on the plane – you have control
- Faculty confidence and problem solving skills
- Money changing, food
- Leaving the airport



Poll #2



Poll #2

Annie Anxious (Conscientiousness)

You're in Costa Rica and spending two nights with host families in the mountains (2 students per house). The homes are spread out, but still in-sight of each other. There is limited understanding of English in the households and only you and two students from your group understand Spanish. Annie is getting pretty nervous and is fearing she will have a panic attack if she has to stay with strangers. What do you do?

- A. Tell her you did this trip last year with students and there should be nothing to worry about
- B. Pair her with a student buddy who understands Spanish
- C. Have her stay in a home with one of the faculty members
- D. Call and have her speak with your stateside counselor contact prior to arriving at the village
- E. Remind her of the mindfulness exercises and have her practice what she learned prior to departure

Arrival

<https://vimeo.com/221542236>

On the Ground

- Exhaustion
- Weather
- Traffic
- Getting Familiar
- Accommodations
- Schedule
- Check in



The Itinerary

Keeping the team engaged

- Balance
- Road time
- Expectations
- Academics
- Positive Challenges
- Service
- Cultural Interaction
- Unexpected surprises
- Alternatives

(surfing, horseback riding, local crafting)



On the Ground

Keeping it together!

- **REFLECTION** – “Thorns and Roses”
- Bus games
- Sleeping arrangements
- Rules
- Nicknames
- Down Time
- Cultural interaction
- Shopping



Poll #3



Poll #3

Andy Adrenaline (Extraversion)

You're in Peru and some students have rented surfboards. Andy is already out in the water and has had success on small waves but is paddling out further because "that's where the big ones are!" There is also a very strong current in that area. You yell for him to turn around and come in, but he can't, or won't, hear you. What do you do?

- A. Jump on a board and go get him
- B. Tell a student already in the water to bring him in
- C. Ask, or pay, the owner of the Surfboard Rental Shack to get him
- D. Call the local emergency number and get the rescue team in action

Alcohol Policy

International Services and Service Learning
NMC Study Abroad Alcohol and Drug Policy
Special Cultural Events Exception Request

Special Cultural Events

NMC recognizes that some countries have cultural events that may enhance the understanding of and build unity with those in other cultures. As part of this learning experience, Trip leaders may request preapproval to attend and participate in these cultural events of which alcohol is a part. Trip leaders will request preapproval through the Director of International Services and Service Learning prior to departure. The decision on whether or not participation is appropriate will be made by the Vice President of Educational Service in collaboration with the Director of International Services and Service Learning.

Study abroad Experience_Humanities Faculty Lead__Jim Bensley

Country:_Brazil Date(s)_March 22 – April 1, 2019

Description of Cultural Events:

Tuesday, March 26 students will participate in a traditional Brazilian cooking class where they will have a chance to have a glass of the traditional Brazilian drink, Caipirinha.

Thursday, March 28 students will be trekking for 5 hours through the beautiful Serra de Sao Jose Mountains with members of their host families. As a celebration at the end of the trek, all will be dining together and may have the chance to try a glass of local beer called Itaipaba.

Saturday, March 30 students will have a farewell dinner with their Brazilian experience hosts and former USBC students taught by NMC students in 2014. We will all be at a restaurant together and there may be a farewell toast with a traditional Brazilian drink.

Events approved by number:

Director, International Services and Service Learning Vice President of Educational Service

Today's date-----

Comments:

Phobias!

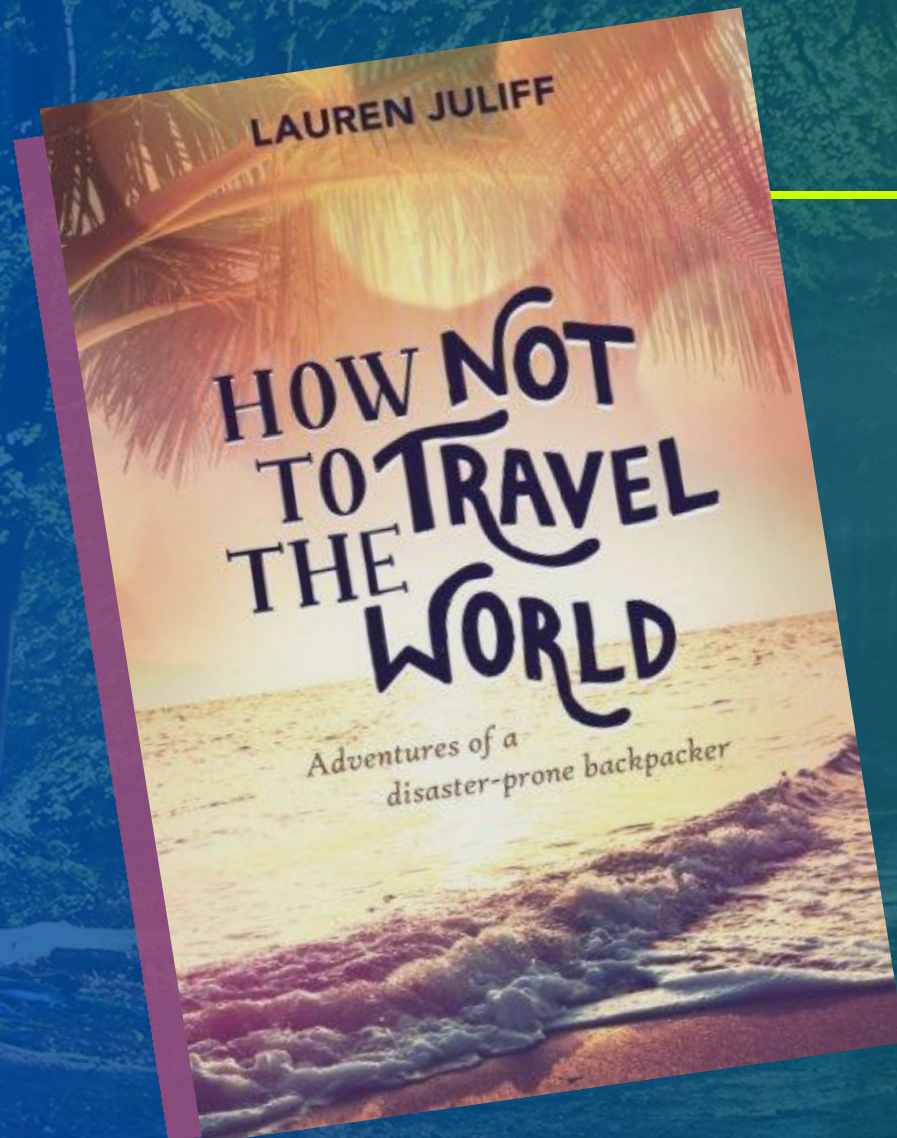


The Big 3 for Travelers

- **Heights (Acrophobia)** *5% of world population*
- **Confined Spaces (Claustrophobia)**
- **Spiders (Arachnophobia)**

Systematic Desensitization (relaxation/mindfulness)

“Systematic desensitization usually starts with imagining yourself in a progression of fearful situations and using relaxation strategies that compete with anxiety. Once you can successfully manage your anxiety while imagining fearful events, you can use the technique in real-life situations.”



Check out: [How Not to Travel the World: Adventures of a Disaster-Prone Backpacker](#) by Lauren Juliff

How Not to Travel The World is about following your dreams, no matter how many curveballs life throws at you. It's about learning to get out of your comfort zone, finding the humour in messed up situations, and falling in love with life on the road.

Poll #4



Poll #4

Henry Homebody (Agreeableness)

Henry 's girlfriend was both nervous and jealous for him to visit Greece. Your team will be meeting a class from a local university in the morning , swimming in the Mediterranean and later on going to a dance club with the locals. Henry has spent at least three hours per day texting with his girlfriend and she knows he will participate in the activities and is mad! During the last hour, he has been trying to smooth things over and is now beginning to check out of the group. What do you do?

- A. Tell Henry to forget such a jealous girl and concentrate more on getting to know the females in the group and the Greek students he will soon meet
- B. Tell the whole group to turn in their phones for the afternoon so they can all enjoy the experience without distractions
- C. Have a student leader explain to Henry he should tell his girlfriend there won't be any phone reception so he can turn his phone off and enjoy the day
- D. Have a provider, or experienced faculty lead, meet with Henry, empathize and remind him this is a chance he is sure to regret should he continue focusing on his girlfriend back home

Service Learning



Accomplishment
Cultural Interaction
Understanding
Active
Experiential
Long lasting
Sense of Meaning



Varuca Salt

“I Want it Now!”

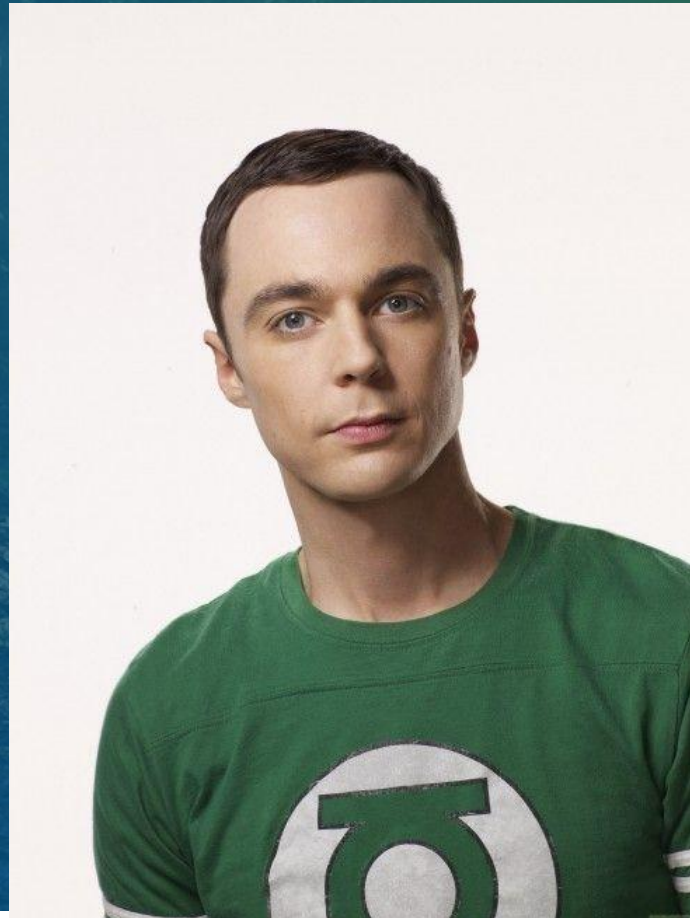
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5wAIQf4WdiE>

What should you do?



Sheldon

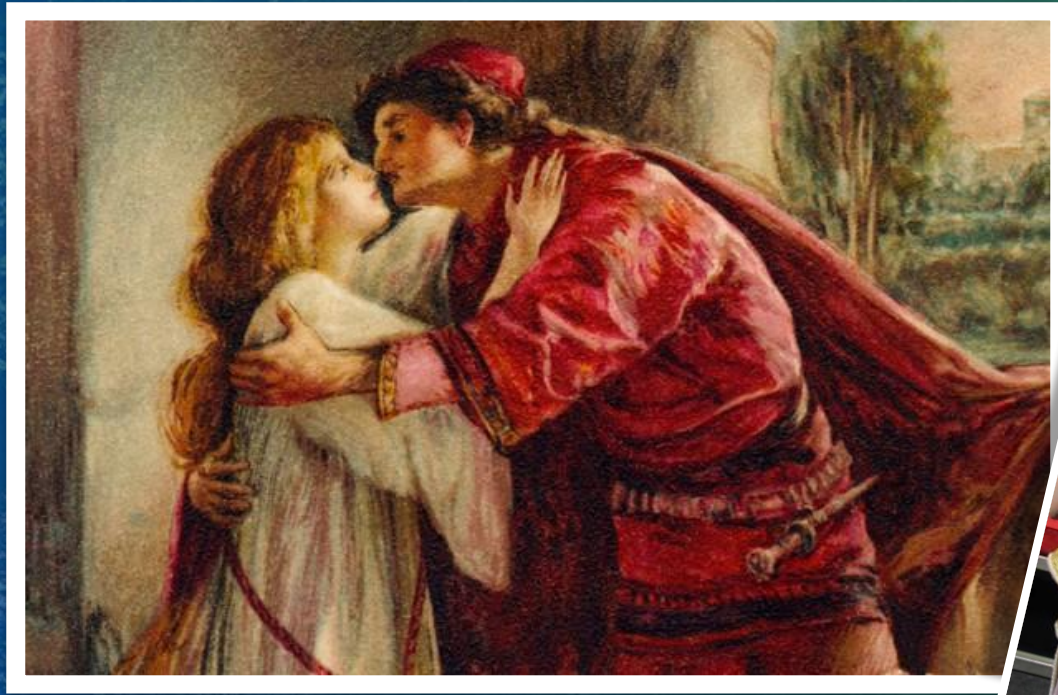
What should you do?



Romeo & Juliet

(Openness)

What should you do?

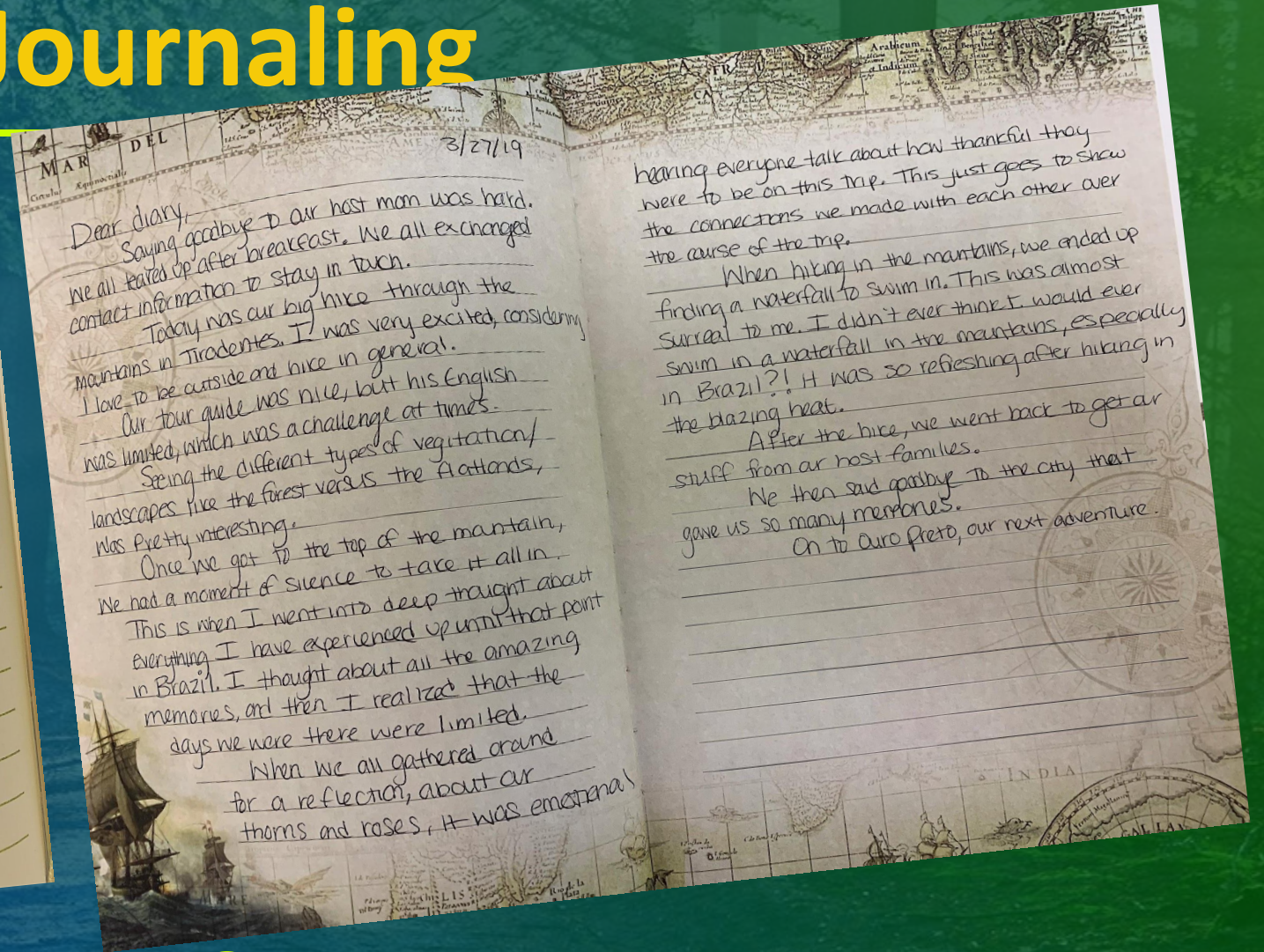




a lot for granted. Then you walk into a place like Cuba who has been so isolated from the rest of the world and see a "big happy family". Everyone works together, they live, laugh, and share w/ one another. I'm glad I got to go when I did, for I fear that Cuba will never be the same 10 years from now. I can't quite wrap my head around it. Will it be a good change or bad change for the Cuban people. Only time will tell I suppose. Well that wraps it up for me!

YAY FOR CUBA

Journaling



Coming Home

Reflection

Journaling

- What did you learn about yourself?
- How can you apply it?
- Where will you travel next?
- Remember, only you and your group experienced it at that place, at that time
- Video journal
- Reverse culture shock

What's next?

- Meeting with the team within 2-weeks
- Presentations let everyone have a voice or a part to play
- International Club
- Another experience?
- Semester-long study abroad

Happy Trails!

