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Halfway around the world in 33 days: The creation of short videos

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Halfway around the world in 33 days:

The creation of short videos.

(TITLE)

BY

Tasha Brown

THESIS

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Running Head: HALFWAY AROUND THE WORLD IN 33 DAYS

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Abstract

This project reports on the development and execution of a series of webisodes to promote study abroad through the discussion of pre-production, production, and post-production phases of video production. The target countries were New Zealand and Australia. The pre-production phase includes a review of previous research on study abroad with an emphasis on the issues and tactics used to encourage students to venture overseas. It also includes a summary report of qualitative and quantitative research conducted to identify specific Eastern Illinois University student's concerns about study abroad. The production section summarizes the actual fieldwork for this project. The post-production section outlines what was done after returning. The final section summarizes what was learned from this effort and identifies future actions to encourage study abroad. The primary vehicle to communicate this message was a series of eight webisodes.

Keywords: Study Abroad, Barriers, Motivation, Webisodes, Eastern Illinois University

This is for EIU students who want to study abroad but continually find reasons not to. It is also for EIU students who have been bitten by the travel bug, and those who have been but don't know it yet.

I have a large list of family and friends to thank for helping me through graduate school and of course this monstrous project. I want to thank my father, Curt Brown, for listening to my every thought about graduate school, helping me through it, and most of all supporting me no matter how late I kept him up. I would also like to thank the rest of my family who supported me throughout my time in graduate school and while traveling abroad.

I want to thank someone who has not only supported me from the states, but also while traveling abroad. Adam Katz, thank you for giving me the courage to try new things, all the support you have shown me, and the travel bug.

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Thank You! Thank You! Thank You!

Halfway around the world in 33 days: The creation of short videos.

Traveling halfway around the world was only a dream, even as I started this project. I never thought I would get the chance to come across an experience like that; an experience only a few people get to do. I never considered myself one of those people. It was not until I discovered that I could study abroad as a masters student that I realized I could be one of those people. As a result I completed two research projects, one quantitative and the other qualitative, and traveled to New Zealand and Australia.

What follows is my story. I use the traditional phases of video production to organize my experience. Thus, I will talk about pre-production (before I left), production (while I was there), and post-production (when I came home) phases of the project. Since most of this paper is a report of my experiences and what I have learned from this journey, I present most of this narrative in the first person.

Preproduction

During preproduction, the first of three production phases, I examined previous research concerning studying abroad. I also completed two research projects in order to understand what Eastern Illinois University (EIU) students' opinions were about studying abroad. Both of these studies were useful because they allowed me to better understand how to structure my videos. The quantitative research identified the barriers for studying abroad, while the qualitative study investigated student's motivations for studying abroad. Knowing this information is crucial to the video making process. It is important to have research driven information because it allows one to understand and meet the needs of those within the market. For this specific project, it allowed me to develop persuasive strategies to address specific issues EIU students have with the study abroad program.

After both of these investigations I began the other functions of preproduction, allowing the production to go smoothly. This was when I set up interviews, acquired a crew, created a shooting schedule, acquired permissions and permits to shoot in specific locations. This is also when I wrote the rough drafts of the scripts.

Preproduction: Research

Before beginning the creation of the videos, I needed to understand why students were not taking advantage of studying abroad. I conducted a quantitative research project that aimed to discover the barriers concerning studying abroad. After researching and conducting 184 surveys, the quantitative study found and examined three major barriers. The biggest barrier was the cost of studying abroad. This concern was followed by the need to graduate on time and not knowing a foreign language.

After identifying the barriers to studying abroad, one must also understand why people actually study abroad. Thus I completed a qualitative investigation in order to better understand EIU student's motivations to study abroad. I interviewed 11 Eastern Illinois University students who have all studied abroad. A loosely structured interview protocol and a grounded theory approach were used to understand the motivations these students had. Though every student's experience was different, themes emerged from the data. Major themes included: cost, a desire for a cross-cultural experience, an increase in language skills, wanderlust, and various personal motivations.

Cost.

Both the quantitative and qualitative studies found that cost was a major factor when students consider studying abroad. The cost of study abroad and constantly increasing cost are important factors when studying abroad. Costs were also the main reason for students not

studying abroad. Financial aid can come in many forms, for example scholarship, grants, loans, and the students' typical financial assistance.

For semester long study abroad, EIU charges \$300 a semester and requires the student to pay the foreign school's tuition and fees. A student pays \$35 per credit hour plus tuition and trip expenses for faculty-led programs. The total cost for studying abroad can range from \$5,300 to \$25,000 per program. Host country visas and passports are additional costs. The wide variance in comes as a result of location, accommodation, and the range of included costs. Some programs are all inclusive, meaning they have accounted for school costs, room and board, and transportation. Any planned expenses that a student would encounter can be found on the EIU Study Abroad Web site.

At EIU there are over 11 grants and scholarships offered to students who are going to participate in a study abroad program. EIU also directs students to national scholarships that can assist them. Many of these scholarships are destination based. Students planning to study at less common destinations such as Central or South America are likely to qualify for scholarships. There are also many scholarships for students who are already familiar with a foreign language.

Because studying abroad is an important activity in becoming a globally aware citizen, many schools are coming up with creative ways to fundraise for scholarships. Birchard (2006) reveals one example at the University of Guelph, located in Ontario Canada, where they asked alumni for their unused frequent flyer miles. This assists students in paying for airline tickets to their chosen destinations. Many times students receive monies that go toward tuition or housing, not airfare, which is what makes this fundraiser so unusual.

Lien (2007) conducted an investigation into the type of scholarships students desired in order to participate in a study abroad program. They found that the most encouraging scholarship

is a fixed amount that does not depend on the student's ability level. The article also found that if students are hesitant to study abroad they are more likely to go through with it if they obtain financial assistance. Steeves (2008) agrees but encourages institutions to assist students who may not normally get the chance to study abroad due to financial or family concerns.

All of the students that I interviewed took advantage of financial assistance. This was useful because each student faced different situations, but all had to account for the exchange rate for each location, the length of time they stayed, and the activities in which they took part. Cooper and Hall (2008) say that foreign exchange rates influence the number of tourists for certain destinations (p. 13). The more favorable the exchange rate the more people will go to that particular destination. All of these factors contribute to a program's cost. Program cost can be rather expensive so students tend to search for programs that are favorable to their budgets. There is an increasing demand for programs that have more favorable exchange rates such as South and Central America or Africa. There is also a demand for short-term programs (Steeves, 2006). Andrews and Henze (2009) say that short-term programs are beneficial to students because the cost is lower. One of my interviewees, Zach Nugent, chose a nine-day spring break program to Ecuador because, "Financially, that was the best route for me to take."

Gabrielle Gee searched for a school that cost the same or less than EIU does per semester as well as searching for scholarships.

The reason I chose Spain was because it was the same price as coming to EIU. It was actually cheaper because airfare and room and board are included, although it is only a trimester ... cost wise I had scholarships that paid for about half.

The EIU study abroad website promotes five different schools that cost the same or less than EIU does per semester: Universidad Veritas of Costa Rica, Universidad San Francisco in

Ecuador, Universidad of Salamanca in Spain, Universidad of Guanajuato in Mexico, or Ajou University in South Korea (EIU, 2008c).

There are over 1,200 awards given through the Pell Grant for study abroad each year (Norton, 2008). Kristin Schaibly, like Norton (2008), encourages students to apply for those grants if they plan on studying abroad.

You can like change the FAFSA (free application for federal student aid) so you can get more money from the state, and scholarships. There are tons and tons and tons of scholarships if you just apply for them ... I paid for a third of everything, then I also paid for all the extra expenses through Costa Rica and I didn't have to pay any for tuition or housing because I got so many scholarships.

All of my participants chose their study abroad program based on their financial needs, and received some form of financial assistance.

Taking into consideration the information from both studies and previous research concerning cost, I determined that most students do not understand how many scholarships are available or how much assistance they could receive. One of my goals within my general study abroad webisode was to make it clear how many grants and scholarships are available and how to obtain them.

Graduating on time.

Cost may be the largest barrier for studying abroad, but the desire to graduate on time was also a major concern. Through an analysis of EIU's study abroad programs, one realizes that there are many different programs that will allow students to study abroad while fulfilling

their course requirements. Students can go to the EIU study abroad website and use the program and course finder tools to find a program or course that will fit their academic needs.

If the program and course finders are not finding what the EIU student needs, Klein and Marquardt (1995) recommend a relatively easy way around the problem: transferring schools for the duration of the study abroad program. Schools offer different programs and if a student's home school does not offer a program they want or need, transferring schools for a semester may be a good idea. Students would then transfer the credits back to their home university.

The program and course finder tools are most likely not known to the general EIU population. Neither is the manipulation of credits by transferring schools. So during the webisodes it is crucial to discuss how students can graduate on time and study abroad. The students need to understand the useful tools that are available to them. This will also assist in alleviating students concerns about gaining credits that will fulfill specific requirements for their majors or minors.

Lack of foreign language skills.

Another barrier is that many students do not know a foreign language. What many students do not seem to realize is that they can go to an English-speaking country and still have a cross-cultural experience. Great examples of countries that students can still speak English in are England, Ireland, Canada, Australia, or New Zealand. If a student who does not know a foreign language chooses a destination where knowing a foreign language is essential, they might have the option of taking courses in English. If the student wants to learn the language they may take a course in that native tongue because it could greatly speed up the process of learning the language (Klein & Marquardt, 1995).

For those students that do not know a foreign language, they may find the difference in language as a barrier. But for students who want to learn more about a foreign language, it can be a great learning experience. Kim and Goldstein (2005) found that students increased their language skills as well as language competency.

Angela Norris studied abroad in Angers, France, and wanted to be able to speak French fluently when she was finished with her study abroad program. Though most students took courses to improve their language skills, Angela was the only interviewee that intentionally took free time to improve her language skills.

Besides staying with a host family, which greatly helped me learn French, I made the commitment to myself to learn 10 new words a day, even the weekends, even my breaks. I learned on average 10 words a day. I told myself they could be silly words. Like when I got my hair cut I learned a bunch of words.

Other students may not have tried as hard to learn the language, but by being immersed within that culture, they had no choice. Foreign language teachers characteristically say the best way to learn a foreign language is to immerse oneself in it. Kim and Goldstein (2005) say students may have found requiring additional language skills a necessity. During Zach Nugent's nine-day study abroad trip in Quito, Ecuador, he noticed both:

I thought maybe I would be able to pick up some Spanish...Well when I went down there I felt like I learned more Spanish in that one week then I have in any classes, in any semester that I have taken classes here at Eastern because you are submerged in it. I mean, everywhere you go they are speaking Spanish so you have to pick it up just to survive.

If a student wants to go to a place where English is not the main language, they can look into courses that are taught in English. However, students will still need to know the basics of the language to get around. EIU student Amber Longtin studied in Seoul, South Korea, and said she took courses in English because she did not know enough Korean to get by in the classroom environment. Another EIU student, Claire Badke, studied in Rome, Italy, without knowing Italian so she took courses in English and spoke as much Italian outside the classroom as she could in order to learn.

We like had an open-air market that I shopped at every week for like my fresh vegetables and fruits...there was this one lady sometimes I would understand her numbers and sometimes I wouldn't and she would like thank me and say "grazie mille" when I did it right and smile at me.

Students need to understand that they can study abroad in a place where they do not know the language and still get by. They also need to understand that they can study in a place where they speak English and still have a unique cultural experience. This is one of the many messages communicated in the webisodes. I demonstrated this through all of my webisodes, because both New Zealand and Australia are countries that speak English, and a place where one will get an intercultural experience.

Cross cultural experience.

Students also noted that they wanted to have a cross-cultural experience, which works well with studying abroad because many programs are designed to increase multicultural and global competence (Fairchild, Pillai, & Noble, 2006) or to expand students' worldview (Dolby, 2007). Angela Norris stated she sought "to meet people ... and really experience a culture for what it is, not just what we always perceive it to be" and that she wanted the "opportunity to see

and experience a culture from within.” Every student had a cross-cultural experience, even if they went on a short-term trip. Zach Nugent took part in a program that went to Ecuador for nine days. While in Ecuador he lived with a host family and took part in many cultural experiences. He describes a normal day of walking to school and attending classes until noon after which:

We would usually go back to our host family and they would make us lunch. Then we get back together (with those who also took part in this program) and we go on some excursion. We went to the waterfalls, we went to little villages, to little shops where they specialize in wood crafting, or art, leather making all the different things just trying to soak up the culture.

Andrews and Henze (2009) say in order to gain intercultural knowledge students should stay in one city, live like the locals, and grow roots. Doing these activities will foster more intercultural skills because students need to feel a cultural dislocation in order to understand the experience interculturally (Andrews & Henze, 2009).

Acquiring intercultural skills is important and almost all of the students I interviewed were interested in gaining these skills, and all did. Each student went in thinking they were going to get a certain sort of experience, yet they were not sure what that was.

Every webisode that was created demonstrated the need some students have to get an intercultural experience. All the webisodes visually depicted a cultural experience. At times these were showcased by an indigenous song or dance. At other times, it was simply because the interviewee's had an accent.

Interpersonal.

Students have many other reasons to study abroad and I have group them into the theme of “interpersonal.” This includes the desire to get out of the Midwest, to have a unique experience, and to learn about oneself.

Most students in other countries such as Australia and New Zealand participate in overseas experiences (OE). This typically occurs before they head off to their chosen university or after they have completed their degree at the university. Many students in the United States do not participate in an OE but they still have the desire to go abroad, so wanderlust is produced. Wanderlust includes a love for travel and a desire to escape from the Midwest or United States.

Shank (1961) explains that many students want to travel and see other countries. Like many other students Zach Nugent loves to travel. “All my life I have always been a big fan of traveling, so when the opportunity to study abroad came about I took it.” Shank (1961) describes that any other foreign city is going to be more interesting than one’s hometown. Kayla Blue confesses that was one of her motivating factors:

I was interested in getting some cultural and learning experiences outside of central Illinois, because that is what I am familiar with. I am from North of Bloomington-Normal, a really small town, Gridley, Illinois. It’s about 1400 people. So it’s small. Small high school class, it was nice to get out and try something new.

Joseph Astrouski stated he too had this longing, “I had this sort of wanderlust, a desire to get out. Um, not because I dislike Illinois or dislike the part of it I live in, but because I wanted to see something new.”

What entices many students is the chance to have a one of a kind experience. Nate Rawley, who taught in South Africa said, “I was just expecting to have a really unique

experience...I was just looking for a (n) opportunity to put what I learned into practice in a really special environment.” He did get the chance to do that and more:

I would tutor three guys from townships around Port Elizabeth...the difference there though is that, um, the township schools really are a world away from anything you see in the city. Um, they have issues with not having textbooks, not having desks, not having paper, um, teachers will come in drunk or not at all. They can have class sizes up to 45-90. So you get these guys who really didn't even have a shot and have to be really good at rugby... so we were tutoring them to just trying to make sure they got there chance to stay out of the townships and bring their families with them. So that was probably my favorite part of it.

Most students do not tutor students from terribly poor areas in South Africa, but all had their own unique experiences. Kristin Schaibly got the chance to go on many excursions, which would be a rare occurrence in the United States.

We got to ride horses down to a waterfall that was right next to Volcano Arenal and there were, um, hot springs and that was amazing...then we got to go zip lining through the canopies, so that was amazing and that's actually where I ... decided to go bungee jumping.

Physical activities, such as zip lining or riding horses down to a waterfall were not specifically mentioned as being a major motivating factor, but after hearing many people's stories it has become a motivating factor for me. I was hoping to demonstrate some excursions that would motivate or attract students to study abroad.

For others, having the chance to learn more about themselves while studying abroad was intriguing. Mansson (2008) investigated short-term programs and found that many students felt

they learned more about themselves and had an increase in self-confidence because they were faced with challenges daily. Claire Badke studied abroad in Rome and said she expected to learn a lot about herself and notes, “Mom even said ‘I can see your confidence level (increased) when you came home.’ I would whip the map out saying, ‘no let’s go, like we don’t need a specific place to do or go, let’s just go.’”

Joseph Astrouski, studied in Dublin, Ireland, and said he learned a tremendous amount about himself as well:

I didn’t really expect a huge academic type of experience.... I expected more to just have a bigger view of the world, and maybe a better view of myself. And that’s one thing I have to say, that I learned a lot about myself. You know when you get yourself in trouble in a country where you don’t speak the language, or in a country where you are simply a foreigner, even if you do speak the language, getting out of those sticky situations and knowing simply you can live in another country where you don’t know anybody. Those types of experiences really teach you that you can make it.

Besides gaining self-confidence many students found that they suddenly had a better chance when searching for jobs. Gullahorn and Gullahorn (1966) found older students took their future careers into consideration when choosing to study abroad, whereas their younger counterparts wanted to mature. Bolen (2001) explains employers look more highly upon students who have studied abroad because they are more globally aware. Surprisingly none of my participants stated that they thought studying abroad would assist them in getting a job. Nate Rawley did however find it to be a great advantage:

Everyone I talked to was like, ‘ohh you’re going to be really marketable and you’re going to stick out if you put you student taught in South Africa on your resume.’ They were

actually right, I just went to a job fair and that came up on every interview that I went on, which was nice. You really don't have to sell yourself as much as, um, you'd expect so it got to be a little bit more informal when they knew that you took your career seriously.

Understanding oneself better seems to be more of a result than a major motivating factor, but it was still an important characteristic of study abroad. A stronger motivational force is the desire to escape the Midwest and to have a unique experience. The webisodes obviously demonstrated the unique experience one feels in visiting Australia and New Zealand. The unique experiences were especially visible on the excursions video. This webisodes demonstrated: snorkeling on the Great Barrier Reef, zip lining through the Daintree Rainforest, a canyon swing, skiing, different flora and fauna, and lugging.

Expert Testimony.

In an interview Farhan Aziz, the study abroad coordinator at EIU, stated that he thinks that students are motivated to study abroad when they hear their peers talking about their experiences. In my qualitative study, seven of my eleven participants believed that hearing stories from those who have studied abroad influenced their decision to study abroad. This is one of the major reasons I incorporated my voice in the webisodes. If students know that I am in a foreign country shooting video and doing this project then they may listen more intently to the stories that I have which are my webisodes. Each of the webisodes are told from a student's perspective.

I studied previous research regarding studying abroad and completed a quantitative and qualitative research project. Both were beneficial in understanding what hinders and motivates EIU students to study abroad. Based on the information from those sources, I identified content to be emphasized in the tone and tenor to use in the webisode.

I also identified strategies to account for the issues and attitudes of EIU students. The strategies are based on the information I discovered throughout the project. The main strategy I used illustrates that the benefit of studying abroad is more important than cost. This strategy is used in every webisode. The second strategy I used demonstrated specific information for EIU students who may want to study abroad. This is a crucial element because many of the tools available for EIU students were not being utilized. The general EIU population is not aware of how much or where to get monies to assist them in studying abroad. The final strategy introduces a new variable, the experience. This capitalizes on the enjoyment one can have while abroad. One of my goals was to include this new variable within every video, in hopes that it would replace students concerns. This goes back to my first strategy where the benefits of studying abroad outweigh the costs.

Preproduction: Video

According to Mollison (2003), preproduction is the “stretch of time between your commitment to do a video project and the beginning of the shoot itself” (p. 343). In preproduction one must get permissions and permits for the places that they plan on shooting.

A large amount of research was done before going abroad, specifically for the destinations we were going to visit. This includes printing maps that we found online and addresses of potential places to visit. We copied pertinent information from guidebooks, and printed important materials from governmental websites. If I still needed more information, I would then email people within those local governments for more information. All of this helped us navigate the city and surrounding areas. It saved us a large amount of time since we were new to the area. Thus we became immersed in the locations and activities that were available in specific areas. After learning as much as possible about each of the locations we began searching

for activities for students to take part in while in those certain locations. If any of the crewmembers wanted to proceed with any of the activities, we would then email those companies. After discussing what I could shoot video of within their area we were able to make a reservation.

Another important role, in addition to traditional research, was analyzing the Kiwi, Maori, and the Aussie peoples. It was important to understand if they would be as comfortable on camera as many Americans are. The crew also needed to know if the Maori would be comfortable with people shooting video of them. Even more research was done to ensure we knew this. Some of this research included emailing well-known Maori in New Zealand. Working with people you are not intimately familiar with means the crew could insult them easily. The Maori are the indigenous peoples of New Zealand and thus the crew had to shoot video of them for various webisodes. The crew needed to learn as much about the Maori as possible before leaving so that they could be sensitive when dealing with the Maori's.

After the research was completed the writing began. Each webisode was written in order to give me an idea of what I wanted to shoot. What the voiceover says needed to match the video, so writing before gave me an idea of what I needed to shoot. For example, many of the webisodes described taking part in adventure tourism such as: canyon swinging, zip lining, and snorkeling.

From that information, a schedule for shooting was created, which Hampe (1997) states will make the most of the time available (p. 97). Knowing what is needed to shoot meant I could also create a shot log, which stated what was needed to shoot each day at specific locations. If any additional footage was shot, then I would write that into the shot log as well. Having a specific list with what was to be shot allowed my production assistant, Brendan Hensley, to mark

off things that had already been shot. This was important because it saves time in postproduction so that the editor is aware of what was shot and what was not.

After this, one must secure reasonable rates for their media crew to come in and shoot. The timeline for this production was rather tight. Spending just one or two days in each town meant that shooting must occur in multiple locations in one day. A great example of this was in Wellington, NZ. We were supposed to be there for two days, so the shooting schedule was based on shooting both days. However, the forecast said it was going to rain on the second day, which meant our timeline had to change to incorporate the rain. The result was shooting two days worth of video in one day. This day included a trip to Massey University, the botanical gardens, the Karori wildlife sanctuary, the parliament, and the harbor.

Another important factor when shooting video is to ensure that you have all of the equipment you may possibly need. To do this production personnel met with other various highly experienced production personnel and discussed what was needed and what we could leave behind. Originally, I had a long list of equipment to bring, but because of weight requirements and baggage restrictions it was decided to minimize the amount of equipment. This was a smart move, because we had a difficult time carrying the small amount of equipment that was taken. Originally, I thought a light kit would be needed, because I wanted to ensure good lighting in all shots. However, lighting kits are very heavy and easily breakable so they did not bring it.

Talking with the more experienced production personnel was a good idea because not only did they give great ideas, they also informed me of the importance of tools for repair purposes. This was not something many people thought about because, for the most part, the equipment was new. I sat down a few times a week to go over crucial aspects of the production.

There was one main person performing almost all the roles. I would ensure that the locations were arranged and that interviews were booked. To book interviews and shooting locations I spent a lot of time on email, sending and receiving a tremendous amount of information.

When emailing companies and permission granting facilities, I would attach my proposal as well as a reference to my minimal budget. Fortunately, the EIU Communication Studies Department and the EIU Graduate School funded this project. Completing a project of this size and magnitude on only \$6,000 was a challenge, but it was ultimately successful. This money allowed me to travel to various locations and purchase any permits that were needed. It also allowed me to participate in activities that could later be relayed to students interested in participating in canyon swinging, zip lining, or snorkeling on the Great Barrier Reef. All permission-granting facilities were told about the minimal budget and were helpful by waiving fees. Others charged a minimal amount, or a goods trade took place. Pure Adventure Queenstown was one company that traded goods. We received a discounted rate in exchange for the video that was shot throughout the day. One of the facilities, Whakarewarewa (the thermal village), did charge for the rights to shoot video at their location, but most understood this as a student project and therefore did not charge.

Many productions have the chance to do a site check, which is when a person goes to the location they plan on shooting “to figure out what problems it could pose to the production” (Mollison, 2003, p. 348). This project did not have that luxury because the site locations were on the other side of the world. Because of this, extra research was done via the web in order to understand the environment that would be shot. Since shooting would occur halfway around the world, an equipment checklist was made. The checklist was created so that no equipment would

be left behind. The list was checked before leaving each location to ensure that all the equipment was still in our possession and that it was working properly.

In preproduction, one of the many jobs is assembling a crew. Choosing the crew was easy because I was filling many positions: producer, director, camera operator, editor, and writer. There were two roles that needed to be filled, that of a production assistant and that of an executive producer. Brandon Hensley filled the production assistant position. He carried equipment to various locations and marked what was shot on the shot log. This may sound like a small job, but lugging gear is a big part of producing videos (Mollison, p. 379). The crew who transports the equipment has to be sure not to hit, bump, or scratch any of the equipment so it doesn't break. Dr. Mark Borzi filled the role of the executive producer. This role is crucial because this individual must approve various portions of the project. Thus before going abroad Dr. Borzi approved shot logs, schedules, media releases, even the equipment that was brought. Our small crew size was suitable because we had a small amount of equipment and our production was not complex (Mollison 2003, p. 354).

One of the other requirements of preproduction is to ensure that all equipment is acquired and is working properly. Before any equipment left the United States two different broadcast engineers checked it. If something can go wrong on a video shoot, it will, and anyone who has worked in the broadcast industry for any time will tell you that is true (Mollison, 2003, p.367). Richard Fitzpatrick comments "always prepare for the worst case scenario" (Mollison, 2003, p.367). We even took extra microphone cables, an extra microphone, a toolset, and even an extra camera in case anything happened. We even brought trash bags so that the camera would be protected from the rain. The reason this is so important is that "water wrecks video equipment" (Mollison, 2003, p. 309).

In order for this project to hit its target audience, EIU students, I took many things into consideration. Cooper and Hall (2008) say that young travelers are more mobile than any other age groups (p.73). This is the age group that I am focusing on. The younger generation is more interconnected with the Internet and global technology than ever before, thus they need to constantly be in contact with others. One way to stay connected with this group is to create videos that can be seen online. Cooper and Hall (2008) also state there are 5 main ways to utilize the 21st century. The first is to have research driven tourism information, the second is to make use of “relationship marketing” (p. 88), the third is to use technology, the fourth is to create a new tourism product, and the fifth is to use “CSR and marketing ethics” (p. 88). I mainly utilized two of the five methods by using research driven information and by using technology. Research driven information was useful so that I can tailor my videos to the students needs. The use of technology is so important because the “Internet influences every aspect of the contemporary tourism business and has changed the culture and behavior of how people purchase, search and communicate” (Cooper & Hall, p. 93). The use of the Internet also assists me with being able to show my videos because the Internet allows for great depth and visual quality.

Originally, the idea was that students watch videos that are fast-paced and action-oriented, so the result would be a fast-paced video that could grab student’s attention. However, the video was supposed to be 30-minutes in length. After a bit of researching, I realized that students do not want to watch a video for 30 minutes unless it is one of their favorite television shows. This led me to the idea of breaking down the videos down into shorter, more specific videos.

The proposal became creating eight short videos that focused on specific issues that students faced while also using some of the strategies that students themselves said motivated

them to study abroad. These webisodes are intended to give students a sneak peek into the studying abroad experience. The proposal took two major countries into account, New Zealand and Australia. This was done because the Communication Studies department at EIU is strongly affiliated with both countries. There are two universities in New Zealand and two universities in Australia that are partner universities for the Communication Studies department. The Communication Studies department is also affiliated with these two countries because they were in the process of creating a faculty-led study abroad trip, which goes to both countries. We focused on the following partner universities: Massey University, University of Otago, Central Queensland University, and Griffith University. The proposal also included various other videos. One of the videos was for the New Zealand and Australia faculty-led trip, and a highlight reel for this trip as well. I completed two other videos; the first was for excursions that students could take part in during their time in New Zealand and Australia. The last video is for students and parents of potential study abroad students. This video touches on many of the barriers students face while attempting to study abroad. The videos for specific universities abroad demonstrate the schools and the general area around the school, so that the EIU student gets a good feel for it and it is no longer this abstract, perhaps scary, thing. I hope to make studying abroad seem like a real and plausible activity.

At the beginning of each webisode the script specifically mentions the focus of each webisode. Mollison (2003) mentions that if the audience feels that you're talking directly to them they will pay more attention and continue to watch. Mollison (2003) also mentions that the information needs to be presented in a way that the people will understand it. Using common terminology throughout all the webisodes helped accomplish this goal.

Graduate school helped

The first phase of production, pre-production, was completed over nine months. My graduate school career helped me to get through this process because I needed to learn about the barriers and the motivations for studying abroad before I could even start thinking about creating webisodes. I learned a great deal of information about how to research and what is important when researching. Both the quantitative and qualitative data that was collected during this time assisted me in creating the webisodes. My graduate degree work helped me to understand how to delve in deeper, and how to get rich information about a people.

Pre-production is a very important phase. If certain steps are ignored then the production and postproduction phases are much more complicated than they have to be. Organizing a production overseas is more complex than organizing a production within the United States. Since I was shooting for the first time overseas I was not sure what to expect. Hampe (1997) says when you don't know what is going to happen in production, the preproduction phase becomes even more important (p. 6). Fortunately I was able to do a large amount of research during the preproduction phase, giving me a much better idea of what I wanted to do during the production phase.

Production

The production phase occurs after pre-production. Production is “the actual activities in which an event is recorded or televised” (Zetl, 2009, p. 3). The main roles throughout the production process are producer, camera operator, and audio operator. This is an extremely important part of the process; as such many precautions were taken to ensure the best possible product. This phase began when we got on the plane for New Zealand and it was fully underway when the record button was first hit. But, many factors went into the thought process before first hitting the record button.

Activities that I did in the preproduction phase tremendously helped with the production phase. For example, the maps that were printed allowed us to find the places we were going to shoot video. The permits allowed me to legally shoot in particular areas. At times, before shooting, the crew was required to show the correct permits and authorizations to shoot in that particular area. The crew was not lucky enough to travel in our own vehicles, so instead we opted for public transportation. This meant during the production phase, we had to get directions to the particular place we were shooting for the day. This required one of the crew members to talk with locals and get a good feel for the particular activities or places where we were about to shoot video. This helped to further immerse the crew within that culture, making it easier to depict it at a later date. Experienced video producers believe asking locals for assistance is a good idea (Mollison, 2003, p. 351).

It is also a good idea to consider how the crew can be sensitive to those of whom they shoot video. This is particularly important in a foreign country. One challenge occurred at an indigenous village in New Zealand. There had been many emails exchanged between the media coordinator of the facility and I, but they still had some trouble accommodating us. Nevertheless, we were sensitive to their needs and at the end of the day things turned out quite well. The crew and I were also sensitive to companies that needed us to work around their schedule. The Te Papa Museum in Wellington, NZ, did not want us to disturb patrons, so we went to shoot before the facilities opened for the public. In general we tried to leave the shooting site as untouched as possible. This was good because the crew did not want to disturb natural occurrences. It was also important because both New Zealand and Australia are extremely conscientious of their natural environment. We also took students into consideration when shooting video. If a student was

interviewed or was shot in a close-up, the crew made sure to get a media release signed. This was to ensure that students understood their rights in regards to my project.

Our schedule for shooting was tight so the team made sure to shoot everything that one could possibly need from all the locations we went to. We made sure to check off all the video that was shot on the shot log. When ensuring that you get all the shots you need, this means shooting a wide, medium, and tight shot from one location then moving the camera to get something else, or to get a different angle of the same thing.

During production, basic videography rules were followed. Keeping it basic means having good video that doesn't make the viewer say "what is that?" or "I think I'm getting sick." This helps the viewer pay close attention to the message and not the poor video. Before recording, the team always made sure the camera was white balanced to provide optimum color, balanced on the tripod to ensure the horizons were correct, and that we were getting quality audio. These are all basic shooting guidelines so that one can get an excellent product.

It is obvious that the video was extremely important to get right the first time, particularly because one cannot go back to Australia or New Zealand on a whim. When shooting video the team attempted to record each shot for around 30 seconds. This was done because it would be helpful during the postproduction phase. It is also important because when editing so one could use certain effects without any problems. Philip Elms suggests that people "shoot with handles on the start and end of each shot." He states that it helps for pre-roll, batch capturing, or transitional effects. (Mollison, 2003, p. 386).

Since there was such a time crunch the crew was unable to sit down with interviewees to create a rapport. Rapports are essential when interviewing. Since that was not a possibility, producers made sure to research the person and their organizations fully before interviewing. A

list of questions was made before interviewing, though I did not send them to the potential participants. I did this because I used an emergent interviewing approach. I used the answers to preliminary questions to direct the follow-up questions. I also wanted authentic answers rather than scripted ones. On a more practical level, I was not sure how much time I would have to interview people. Sending a long list of questions ahead of time might have intimidated the interviewee. Since I found New Zealand and Australia culture more relaxed than ours the interview participants did not mind this approach.

During the interview I wanted to ensure quality audio at all points, so I gave head nods and other nonverbal cues to the interviewee during the interview to let them know I was listening intently. In Mollison (2003) Doona Kenny suggests during interviews to be quiet and to “omit all um-humms and other verbal supports.” Kenny states that body language can be used to encourage interviewee’s responses (p. 388).

During the interview the camera operator made sure the camera was at eye level with the interviewee. This ensures a neutral angle which does not look down or up at the interviewee. The neutral angle “puts the viewer’s perspective on an equal par with the subject, so there’s no subliminal commentary going on in the visual language of the program” (Mollison, 2003, p.70). This is important because it demonstrates general media aesthetics. It also demonstrates that those we interviewed may not be conceived as a better or more important person than anyone else.

Because what was shot is the eyes and ears of what people see, I wanted to be sure to give them interesting angles without using shaky shots. Tripods can minimize the shakiness of shots and I used the tripod as much as possible, though one of my favorite sayings is “the world is my tripod.” When I was in a situation where using a tripod was out of the question, I would

use anything that I could to steady my shots, for example: roadblocks, sand, or the ground.

Marsha Della-Giustina approves of this style of camera work, she states “if it’s a situation where you can’t use a tripod, use the ground, a wall, a car hood, stand up against a pole, put the camera under your arm.” (Mollison, 2003, p. 380). Another way I found to prevent shaking is by holding my breath while shooting. Chris Fraser states, “When there are people in the shot, the shot can support a bit of shake. Shots with nobody in them should be dead steady” (Mollison, 2003, p. 57). The last way that I reduced the amount of shakiness when not using a tripod is by enabling the image stabilizer. This tool gets “rid of shaky camerawork by adjusting away your own personal shakiness as you record” (Mollison, 2003, p. 59). This tool was useful while on boats, particularly the underwater boat we were in to see the Great Barrier Reef.

I had to mentally prepare myself for some of the situations that I was put into while shooting. I had to think about how to shoot video underwater without an underwater camera and with no experience shooting underwater. I had to think about how I was going to keep the shots steady while on a moving boat. I even had to learn about zip lining because that was an activity we wanted to shoot while participating in it. In addition to thinking about these particular situations, I had to learn how to handle extreme conditions because I had never been faced with such adversity before.

Many elements go into creating a shot such as composition, shot size, and framing. When shooting video, one must understand that each shot is trying to convey a story. The difference in shot sizes tells a story as well and helps to describe the meaning of the shot. This project’s goal was to shoot as naturally as possible. This meant no one would stage anything besides interviews, thus composition became challenging. The shots were composed of what naturally exists in various locations, for example, mountains, electrical poles, and buildings. No distortion

effects were used on the camera lens, such as a fisheye, because the goal was to document the environments naturally.

When composing shots I attempted to make it appealing to the viewer, so they would compose it with certain elements in the shot and other elements out. A great example of this is when we were shooting in the rainforest. We were at an outlook and behind me were cars, and in front of me a railing, and the most beautiful shot of the rainforest. I chose not to show the cars and the railing because it would distract from what the viewer wants to see: the rainforest. The framing for the rainforest shot was wide, so that one could see all the splendor of the rainforest. Medium shots and close-ups were also shot to ensure I got all the shots I needed. Shot size is important because it can show emotion or lack thereof. The closer the shot the more emotion it can show. When shooting close-ups of inanimate objects such as a rainforest, it demonstrates how close one can get to an environment.

When taking composition into consideration one usually wants “a balanced and visually pleasing image ... (but) there’s nothing which is absolutely right or always wrong” (Mollison, 2003, p. 45). To get balance, one needs to take into consideration the size of objects and the positions of the objects. Going back to the rainforest example, one would naturally look out onto the rainforest and further out to the ocean. The shots that were composed here were of the seemingly flat rainforest, then the ocean. I did not frame the shot with half a mountain in my shot and the other half being the flat rainforest because I wanted the shot to be balanced. I did however get shots of the mountain and the ocean because they could accomplish the goal of balance within the shot.

When framing shots one must follow standard guidelines like giving enough headroom, meaning the subject has a comfortable amount of room above their heads. Too much or too little

headroom creates an awkward shot. Mollison (2003) suggests that camera people arrange their shots so that the viewer feels comfortable. I strayed away from getting shots with too much headroom. If the person or object is moving or looking in a certain direction they made sure to give them plenty of lead room. Lead room is space that allows a subject to talk to or move in a certain direction. According to Zettl (1990), camera people need to leave some headroom so that it decreases the magnetic pull of the upper edge of the screen. I made sure to follow these basic rules because my project needs to reflect what students typically see on television.

When getting camera shots one must also think about how the viewer fills in what he or she is not seeing; this is called closure. This is an extremely important feature in the television field. It also becomes important within this project because there are many scenes in the webisodes that were shot in a manner that would require one to use their imagination. One example of this is when people were jumping from a platform into a canyon. The viewer doesn't see the entire canyon, but can fill in the holes as to what is below. What one does not want is illogical closure. Zettl (1990) describes that this "occurs when non-related visual elements provide enough cues for psychological closure regardless of whether the resulting gestalt is logical in content" (p. 389). A good example of illogical closure is a person standing in front of a large light pole. It makes it seem as if the light pole is coming out of the person's head.

I made choices about what to show and what not to show. These aesthetic choices are made daily even without my conscious knowledge of it (Zettl, 1990, p. 1). Zettl (1990) describes applied aesthetics as a "valid and reliable criteria for the analysis of existing television shows and film" (p. 2).

Light is an essential feature in television production. I used natural light when out in the field because we did not bring along a light kit. This was done because it is heavy and the parts

are easily broken and expensive to repair. Though we did not get the chance to create the best possible lighting, it is still an important factor to consider. When examining how lighting affects viewers, one must take many things into consideration: how the light makes us feel or how lighting reveals what things look like, among others. The lighting in a particular area may be very dark making us feel timid or scared, whereas if the lighting in another area were bright we may feel happy and excited. The lighting in a shot can also tell us what time of day it is or it can allow us to predict an event. With the way that I shot, using only sunlight, I did not intentionally create a feeling, instead my shots reflected the time of day.

Since the crew was not controlling lighting, we also could not control color within the shots. However, we could control the color of the graphics that were created. A dark gray or black background was used with a white font. This was used because the colors contrast nicely and it looks crisp and clear. Color influences many different things for the audience. Colors “influence our perceptions and emotions in fairly specific ways. Certain colors seem warmer than others; some appear closer or more distant.” (Zettl, 1990, p. 66). Particular colors stimulate us while others give us a passive feeling. Rather than just being concerned with color Zettl describes that one should focus on color energy. Zettl (1990) describes color energy as “hue, saturation, and brightness attributes of a color” (p. 67). It is the influence color has on the audience.

“Be aware of your surroundings,” a comment my father always told me growing up. This surely paid off while shooting in extreme conditions. A great example of this was when we were on a crocodile tour and the crocodile dipped under the water. We were all a little confused and frightened, but since I was at the edge of the boat I moved in slowly. Then I was told to move to the center by the guide and did so without hesitation or allowing any obstacles to get in my way.

Being aware of one's surroundings can help with audio as well as safety concerns. If by chance you want to shoot an interview near the library you should look around for the nearest loud auditory distraction.

Graduate school helped

My masters degree program has trained me to strive for excellence. Of course getting the best video and audio for this project is important. My experience in this program helped me to understand what I am shooting and why I think it is important. It allowed me to understand that no matter what I will be describing my preconceived notions of a particular place or event would eventually be in the webisodes. It also allowed me to realize that I shot video of what I find important, which of course demonstrates my preconceived notions of media aesthetics. If I were a student with a different background and from a different country then perhaps I would have different media aesthetics. I also learned how to manage time and schedule my colleagues and myself so that we could maximize our time while abroad. I wanted to ensure that we got everything that we needed for the video, while at the same time experience the culture. I have also learned to be more flexible and adapt to changing situations. By this I mean that when we encountered a problem while abroad I was able to adjust and deal with the issue. I learned both of these skills the first semester of grad school when first learning how to enter information into SPSS and learning how to run the correct tests.

Post-Production

Post-production is the final phase of production. This is when writing is completed, the voice-over is tracked, and the video is edited. This is also where graphics and music are added into the editing process. The final part of post-production is distribution, which includes getting all of the videos closed captioned, posted online, and DVDs made.

When writing one must “look at an event, search for its essential qualities, and then select, emphasize, and order its most important elements in such a way that they will fuse to become a significant new event-of-quality worth communicating” (Zettl, 1990, p. 5). This is essentially what was done while re-writing the webisodes. I thought about the particular cities, schools, and events that related to the webisode being written. While in each city, I took notes about the activities they occurred in each one. Those notes were examined before re-writing. This helped to emphasize things that we did not realize were important originally. The writer also asked what video was shot because the visuals need to match the script. Mollison (2003) explains, “A scriptwriter is a special kind of writer, a person who’s a visualiser, who can tell a story or teach a concept through a series of images” (p. 319). Throughout the project, I used the see and say method, meaning when you see a particular image, like a crocodile, you should be saying something about crocodiles.

While writing, I also took into account selective seeing. Selective seeing is when one only expresses parts of the experience that fits their “prejudicial image of what an event should be and ignore that ones that interfere with this image” (Zettl, 1990, p. 7). Having an outside party approve the script before voicing it prevented selective seeing. Selective seeing was also taken into consideration when writing the scripts by being self-reflective. If I noticed myself getting really excited about some minuscule part of the trip and putting that into the webisode we would realize that I was most likely making the event fit their prejudicial image of the place or activity.

I also recorded all the voiceovers for the webisodes. This means I read and recorded the script with the exception of interviews. The voiceover is a separate piece of audio that is brought in during the editing process. The voiceover can do one of two things; tell the entire story or link

parts of a story together. I used the voiceover to do both. Primarily it told the story, but the voiceover also linked the interviews to the story. Mollison (2003) states that there are six main functions of narration or voiceovers. The first is “to give the audience an overview of the topic” (Mollison, 2003, p.330). The second is to “explain a procedure which is being illustrated on the screen” (Mollison, 2003, p.330). The third is to “provide links from one section of a tape to the next” (Mollison, 2003, p.330). The fourth is to “draw attention to something the viewer might otherwise miss” (Mollison, 2003, p.330). The fifth is to “explain the meaning or significance or a picture and the final function is to summarize key points” (Mollison, 2003, p.330).

I shot as much as I could while abroad. I estimate I had a total of 20 or more hours of footage. This video was all copied on to 30 dual layer DVD's. Though the digital video and audio files were on a DVD it didn't necessarily mean it was an easy format to work with. The camera I used created MTS files. The only program that easily used and converted the .MXF files was Final Cut Pro (7). After importing the footage into the program I learned I had over 2,000 clips. After importing and converting the footage to QuickTime's I was able to edit.

While editing I tried to stick with the basics just as I had throughout the rest of the project. This means that I did not use any jarring visual effects or transitions. According to Hodgdon and Kiminsky (1981) I was using an invisible editing technique, meaning that I attempted to hide the edits, so that the film would flow. Jumpcuts are two similar shots, back to back; it makes it seem as if the people jumped in the frame. To avoid a jumpcut I made sure to shoot many cutaways at each location. Shooting and using cutaways allows me to avoid jumpcuts within my videos. I also avoided jumpcuts by shooting wide, medium, tight then moving the camera. This helped because instead of creating a jumpcut within the video I created

sequences. Sequences are shots of the same thing, just at a different focal lengths. This is a standard shot change within a video project.

I avoided non-traditional video moves and transitions because I wanted the people to focus on the message, not the editing. Marc Tewksbury states “editing should be invisible, so the viewer can concentrate on the story” (Mollison, 2003, p. 185). The majority of my videos used straight cuts, with only a few dissolves for lower thirds. Zettl (1990) describes a “cut is an instantaneous change from one image to another.” When a cut is used properly it is one of the least obtrusive edits (Zettl, 1990, p. 289). The highlight reel and the communication studies faculty-led trip used mainly cross dissolves between shots. A dissolve is “a gradual transition from shot to shot in which two images temporarily overlap” (Zettl, 1990, p.291). The reason I used dissolves in these two webisodes was that there was a tremendous amount of action occurring in both and it looked odd to have someone jumping into a canyon then cutting to a person in a jet boat going down the river then cutting to the underwater shots of the great barrier reef. Cuts and dissolves are standard transitions and neither of them are jarring to the viewer. This was my intention because I wanted them to pay attention to the message, not the editing. Tom Kingdon says “the cut is still the strongest and most versatile transition...you should use it 99% of the time” (Mollison, 2003, p.186).

I wanted to stay away from using digital effects that would change the appearance of the videos. I tried to show the places that I went to in the most natural way. The main effect I used was chroma key within the general webisode. According to Gross, Foust, Burrows (2005) chroma key is “a process in which a specific color – rather than a graphic design or pattern - is used as the electronic key to cut out part of the picture” (p. 212). I did this because I wanted to use pictures of the study abroad locations where students actually studied to entice them. My

research found that helping students visualize where they would study increased participation. It is also what Farhan Aziz believes to be one of the most effective forms of advertisement. The chroma keying effect looked fine overall, but keying someone properly in postproduction was not an easy task.

Another reason I stayed away from using visual effects or crazy transitions is that they don't come across the same online. When watching videos on the web one must understand that bandwidth and various other factors can hinder or help how one sees the video.

Using the invisible editing technique is useful when putting video online. This is not the case when the only result is a DVD. Since I was using both the Internet and a DVD as my final projects I wanted to ensure that both looked good, thus I used the invisible editing technique.

Originally, I wanted my videos to be fast-paced and action packed in order to keep the viewers' attention, but when I started the edit for the videos concerning the partner schools, that idea was dismissed because it didn't flow. When editing you get this certain flow or rhythm and let it guide you. My original idea did not flow because the track (or voiceover) was informative. When tracks are more informative in nature, the people at home need a bit more time to think about what they just saw and heard, thus the rhythm that was developed was based on the voiceover track. For the videos with a bit of a faster pace, the excursion webisode and the highlight reel, I picked up the speed of the edit. I did this by having shots on for a shorter amount of time. The voiceovers and music for both of these webisodes was less informative than the others, making it possible to increase the pace of the webisode (Zettl, 1990, p. 281).

When creating graphics, such as a slate with the school's information, or a lower third that shows a person's name, I stuck to the basics again. I intentionally used a dark background color with a light text so that the words would stand out. Though this project has been shot and

edited it high definition (16x9), I made the lower thirds 4x3 (SD) title safe meaning that the graphic could be seen on any monitors, no matter what (Gross, Foust, & Burrows, 2005, p. 194). “Regardless of whether people onscreen appear in a studio or field setting, the foreground graphic letters inevitably relegate them to background picture space” (Zettl, 1990, p. 180).

One must find a way to get what they require when following the “see and say” rule while also wanting to include things you were unable to do or see themselves. For us, time and budget restrictions did not allow us to spend a lot of time in a few locations, so we used pictures to demonstrate our point while editing. I imported the pictures into the editing program and made them look like they were moving, this is called motion control. It is a useful tool when you have pictures of an event but do not have the budget to actually shoot video of the event. This is a standard practice in many shows, particularly if the story occurred before video cameras were easily accessible.

Audio is a very important tool when producing television. It is seen as a reflection of reality (Zettl, 1990 p. 335). The sound of waves crashing down on the sand is an essential part of any beach related video. If one is shooting video of an animal who is obviously growling, the viewer wants to hear that growl. This sound is called literal sound (Zettl, 1990, p. 338) or natural sound. Hampe (1997) suggests that when shooting one should always shoot natural sound as well, even if being covered with a voice over and or music. I made sure to have the natural sound in my videos while also mixing it with the voiceover and music.

I attempted to choose music for each webisode that fit the tone of the piece. For example, the excursion webisode and the highlight reel have fast-paced music because they are fairly fast-paced videos, whereas the webisodes concerning the schools are slower paced so they require something smooth sounding. The music I chose for each webisode depended upon the amount of

information given by the voice over. It also depends upon the edits themselves. I always chose music without words so that it would be less distracting for the viewer. There is also a legal responsibility when choosing music. One must choose music without a copyright so that it is free for anyone to use. (Hodgdon & Kaminsky, 1981, p. 129). The music chosen for each webisode matched quite well.

We were legally required to get the videos closed captioned, because we were going to post links on EIU's website. The Center for Academic Technology services (CATS) does closed captioning for projects such as these, so I contacted the proper personnel at CATS and I gave them a copy of my video and a copy of the script. From there I had to wait until they emailed the closed captioning file. When I got the closed captioning file all I had to do was upload it to YouTube like I eventually did with the video.

Before I could post anything on YouTube, I had to compress the HD file into a smaller form that worked for YouTube, but still in the HD format. This was completed with ease because I used Compressor. This program compresses large files into whatever file format you ask of it. It may have taken hours but it is a successful program. YouTube allows videos to be posted with relative ease, but it also takes a tremendous amount of time, sometimes upwards of two hours.

After compressing the files into a format that could be easily used on YouTube I also posted them to Eastern Illinois University's iTunes site. This was accomplished by taking the videos to the CATS department and they uploaded the videos to the iTunes U website.

I also put the webisodes on DVDs for distribution purposes. This was also done with relative ease because all I did was create the DVD menu within the DVD creation program, iDVD. I used a menu that fit the overall theme of my videos. The menu is black with light

colored letters. After choosing the menu, I added the videos to the main menu. From there I hit burn and the DVD creation started.

Mollison (2003) suggests that information that is shown on screen has an “aura of authority” so people are more likely to believe in it. This is why it is so important to research in depth so that the information given is true. If a viewer knows the information is incorrect the program will lose credibility, thus those who produce it will as well. The production team has a clear goal of documenting the events as they occur, without imposing their presence. They also perceive, clarify, and interpret “certain aspect(s) of the human condition for themselves and later an audience” (Zettl, 1990, p. 3). The audience gets to hear how I felt about each place through the words I use. My videos were geared towards consumers that are still in school, perhaps someone who is looking for an adventure. This person looks for “high quality visual and experiential products from entertainment and the media and also looks for authenticity” (Cooper & Hall, 2008). I believe I have demonstrated an interesting experience while still being authentic.

Hampe (1997) states that what is shot only bears a slight resemblance to what is shown, because only fragments of what the documentarian sees, while in the field, can be shown in the finished documentary (p. 23, 31 & 87). Hampe (1997) also suggests that the documentarian discards preconceptions before going into the field, so that one does not unknowingly fool the audience.

When examining the applied media aesthetics, one must understand that the influence of the medium is an important part of the entire process of communication. The medium in this case distributes and forms the message. Since this is a powerful force, one must understand that the tone that I give my message will influence those that watch it (Zettl, 2003, p. 11). When creating

commercials “you are essentially manipulating feelings, emotions, and ultimately the behavior of your recipients” (Zettl, 1990, p.13). At times, those recipients do not realize they are being manipulated.

In creating the webisodes I wanted to provide the viewer with my perspective on the trip while providing what would be perceived as factual content. To do this I utilized the different channels to communicate different messages. The video reflects my perspective. I was showing the trip through the lens of the camera and emphasized what I found to be unique or different from American culture. The voice-over was structured to be factual but representing the two countries in a positive way.

Media can be extremely influential and those who work within the field must understand that how we tell a story effects how the viewers think and feel, therefore we must examine the different perspectives for each webisode. In a typical documentary they do not say things like “one of my favorite restaurants was Strawberry Fare.” Instead the track would say “there are over 300 restaurants and cafes in Wellington.” My intention was to put myself in the videos so that the students who watch them would know that I went through this experience. Farhan Aziz, the study abroad coordinator at EIU, believes that one of the strongest forms of motivation for an EIU student is to hear others’ stories. I did not just take an objective view, I took what is known as a subjective view. The subjective view brings the “viewer into the scene” and lets the audience feel as if they are more involved (Mollison, 2003, p. 74). At times I incorporated point of view shooting, meaning the shot is taken directly from my actions. An example of this was when I was zip lining over the Daintree Rainforest. I placed myself in the scene and I was the talent for the voiceovers. If you combine those two things with my subjective writing this video becomes autobiographical in nature. Cooper and Hall (2008) say that the influence media has

plays a crucial role in the tourist's understanding of certain locations. This is done through formal travel programs, documentaries, news coverage, as well as film and television entertainment. They say that it is "important to understand that there are often significant differences between reality and how potential tourists understand a destination or attraction." (Cooper & Hall, 2008, p. 121). Cooper and Hall (2008) state that media sources are autonomous agents because they can change the tourists' impression of a destination quickly (p. 225).

Graduate school helped

Teaching an introduction to television course while editing these videos reinforced the notion that student's attention spans are not very long. Thus it was a smart idea to keep the videos between two and five minutes. Graduate school, in particular the rhetoric course, helped me to understand that no matter what I will be describing my preconceived notions of a particular place or event, which would eventually be in one of my webisodes. The qualitative class helped me become a meticulous note taker. This helped when I was rewriting the webisodes. That class also trained me to be self reflexive. This helped me to understand the perspective that I was taking throughout my webisodes. It also helped me to understand that yes, I should or could put myself into the videos by writing in my thoughts on certain events or places, but also that I needed to be fully aware of those effects. It also helped me to understand that I could put my voice into the webisodes, not only my literal voice but more importantly a voice who is a student and has went abroad. All of my graduate courses have helped me in learning how to understand and analyze data. They also helped me to make sense of that data and to use that data in a useful manner. Again, Farhan Aziz believes that this is one of the best forms of advertisement, one student telling another about their experience. Graduate school helped me get though this project because it is where I learned to research more thoroughly, where I learned

that shots are not just composed because they look good but because of preconceived notions of what looks good. I took an independent study before beginning this project. It focused on how to edit in Final Cut Pro, as well as making moving graphics in Motion and After Effects. Before this time I had never used Final Cut Pro, or Motion, and I had a little familiarity with After Effects. Learning these programs was not only beneficial to my learning, but it also made my videos more professional.

In CMN 5000, Quantitative Research Methods, I completed one of two research projects that became preliminary groundwork for this task. During this course I researched current articles on studying abroad and conducted over 180 surveys. The quantitative inquiry yielded results that indicated that cost was the main reason students were not participating in a study abroad program. Not knowing a foreign language and not being able to graduate on time were the other crucial reasons that students did not take part in a study abroad program. The other preliminary research for this task occurred while in CMN 5005, Qualitative Research Methods. For this course I examined the motivations for studying abroad by conducting 11 in-depth interviews with students who have studied abroad. The themes that emerged from that data indicated that cost was a major motivating factor. It also indicated such things as a desire for a cross-cultural experience, an increase in language skills, wanderlust, and various personal motivations were also the reason the students studied abroad.

Many of the activities included within the postproduction phase could not have occurred if the preproduction and production processes did not go smoothly. For example if Brandon did not write down what we shot video of, in the production phase, on the shot log, made in the preproduction phase, it would have made the postproduction process much harder because I

could have spent valuable time figuring out what was shot and what was not. Postproduction includes such things as finalizing the script, voicing it, editing, and distributing the final product.

Limitations

I faced a tremendous number of limitations in both the research as well as the video project. The quantitative study faced financial limitations, and a varied sample. This occurred because the United States had just entered into a recession, thus our stock market was changing constantly, and the dollar was at an all time low. This financial situation could have affected many of the students' decisions concerning whether they could afford study abroad. The most significant issue that was faced was an overpopulation of female students. At EIU there are more female students than male students. Also, reliability was low because a Likert scale should have been used to investigate beliefs rather than using a yes or no, or nominal, scale.

The qualitative study faced limitations such as nervousness, a lack of rapport with me, and the fact that the study abroad office suggested the people interviewed. Participants were told in advance of the interview that they were going to be videotaped, but most seemed a bit intimidated by the setup I had created. There were two cameras and extra lights. This was done so that the material could be used in the creation of webisodes. The equipment and the atmosphere, a television studio, may have led to a few participants being nervous despite me trying to get them to relax. Another limitation may have been a lack of rapport between the researcher and participants because of time constraints on the project. Another limitation for the qualitative inquiry is that the Study Abroad office at EIU specifically suggested students for the interview. They most likely chose students that would depict a positive attitude about going abroad. I also interviewed only students who have studied abroad, not those that chose not to partake in the activity.

The video portion of this project also faced various limitations. One of the largest limitations is that the production phase occurred in New Zealand and Australia, which made the preproduction processes more difficult. This meant that I was not able to do simple things such as a site check. During the production phase I had one chance to shoot everything correctly because I had no ability to ensure what I shot turned out perfectly. Since there was no room for error I had to shoot as much as I possibly could everyday. This may have taken away from some of the creativity that I have while shooting. I faced equipment limitations as well, for example the camera did not have rain gear to protect it from harsh weather, thus I could only shoot on days that were for the most part clear. Spending a day or two in each location meant that we faced considerable time constraints. Because of the weather and time constraints we were forced to rush the production process, which could have led to incomplete videos.

Future Research

There are various ways to go about continuing this line of inquiry via research and video. Future research regarding a qualitative study could include interviewing students who seriously considered studying abroad but did not. This would give specific information to the EIU study abroad program, which could increase the number of students studying abroad. Another route one could take would closely scrutinize cost. This is very important because cost is a major factor in both hindering and assisting students in studying abroad. The researcher could examine how much scholarship money it would take for EIU students to participate in a study abroad program. After this is calculated EIU could make the required scholarship money available. Further investigation of study abroad would be beneficial for students as well as instructors at EIU.

I think there is more work to be done in regards to videos. For students who are going to study abroad at one of the specific locations that I did a webisode on, one could inquire about how they decided to choose that location. If the decision was based on one of my videos, then, they should continue making them. I also think that in order to promote the New Zealand/Australia faculty led trip a new video needs to be made each year. This video would show EIU students taking part in activities while abroad and talking about their trip while still there.

Conclusion

The three production phases are not completely separate; they blend together or overlap. That is one reason why completing each to my best ability is so important. If one step is forgotten in the preproduction phases it is revealed in postproduction. If one makes a mistake during the production phase, whether it is an audio issue or not getting enough video, it is hard to hide those problems. I made every attempt to get everything right the first time. Doing this made it easier to stick with the basics throughout my production process and should lead to the most influential videos.

This project challenged me in ways that I did not realize were possible. I never would have dreamed of completing preproduction on this side of the world, then, traveling halfway around the world to shoot video for 33 days. I also was not aware of the challenges I would face during the postproduction phases. Though I have successfully made it through this project, it has been challenging, but a good challenge, one that has helped me as a producer, director, videographer, writer, and mostly a better person.

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