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Chapter 14

Covering the Anniversary of D-Day in France: A Journalism Study Abroad Experience

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Note: Section II includes Chapters 4-14. These chapters use a standardized template to discuss the details of their respective study abroad programs and reference Deardorff's (2012) framework for intercultural competencies. The use of this template and the intercultural competencies framework are described in the Section II introduction. All courses in this section (except for Chapter 6) were taught through Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU), a mid-sized state school located in Murfreesboro, Tennessee (USA).

Journalism Special Topics: Covering the 75th Anniversary of D-Day was a course that took place in May and June of 2019. There was an in-country, study abroad component of the course occurring from May 21-29, 2019. This was the first course of its kind specific to the School of Journalism and Strategic Media (SOJSM) at MTSU. It was created specifically with the idea to allow student journalists to cover this historic event from England and France. The unique aspect of the course was to take journalism students from our university to England and France to cover the 75th anniversary of D-Day. The program was designed to retrace the steps of Allied troops who fought for freedom on June 6, 1944. The in-country portion of the class began in London (England), proceeded with a stop in Normandy (France), and concluded in Paris (France). Seven undergraduate students from MTSU took part in the course. The demographics

of the students were five females and two males: four white students, two African American students, and one Asian student. One student identified as nontraditional.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

Inspired by Strange and Gibson (2017), a combination of two learning theories informed the framework for this course: Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory and Mezirow's Transformative Learning Theory. Strange and Gibson (2017) explain that Kolb's Experiential Learning Theory "provides direction as to how we can develop the type of action-oriented experience that is likely to induce transformation" (p. 88). Kolb and Kolb (2017) write that experiential learning creates a unique relationship between the teacher and the student, as both get to experience the subject matter. In the case of this study abroad program, I was actively learning in-country along with my students while also coaching and modeling. Experiential learning is the foundation of study abroad courses because, "using the cycle of learning, all participants receive information through concrete experience of the subject matter and transform it through reflection and conceptualization and then transform it again by acting to change the world" (Kolb & Kolb, 2017, p. 16). Kolb's cycle of learning consists of concrete experience, reflection, abstract thinking, and acting on what has been learned.

In Transformative Learning Theory, Mezirow (1978) suggested that reflecting on one's experiences can lead to a perspective transformation. These theories informed the desired learning outcomes for the course, and it was planned using a backward design. Harvey (2017) explains that backward design, "simply means beginning with the end in mind...it is fundamental to designing significant, transformative intercultural learning" (p. 111).

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The theme of the course was a unique opportunity for student journalists to cover the 75th Anniversary of D-Day, the invasion of the beaches at Normandy in France by Allied troops during World War II. At the time, France was occupied by Nazi Germany. The D-Day invasion was an Allied victory and began the campaign to liberate France from Nazi Germany's occupation. Covering the event and learning more about it was achieved through visiting London, Normandy, and Paris. The objectives of the course were to provide journalism students an opportunity to experience newsgathering and life skills in other countries, create original media content for a news special, and follow industry standards for ethics and professionalism. Specific competencies included opportunities to learn, practice, explore, and apply journalism techniques. Students created original journalistic work about the anniversary of France's liberation from Nazi Germany in 1944 as well as general travel reporting on England and France. The students' original work became part of the special coverage of the anniversary by MTSU Student Media which was published and broadcast by the student media property "Middle Tennessee News" (Middle Tennessee News, 2019).

No textbooks were required as all the students enrolled had previously completed the required prerequisites in other courses. Students were encouraged to read and view materials about the D-Day invasion's history and basic French conversational language and etiquette abroad. Some of the films suggested included the award-winning film *Saving Private Ryan* (1998) directed by Steven Spielberg (Spielberg, 1998) and the television mini-series *Band of Brothers* (2001), with an emphasis on season one, episode two (Orloff & Loncraine, 2001). The Library of Congress has an expansive website with multimedia archival content (Library of Congress, n.d.),

as does the Imperial War Museum (Imperial War Museums, n.d.). Travel author Rick Steves has excellent websites with information on England and France (Rick Steves' Europe, n.d.). The countries also have informative websites for foreign travelers (Explore France, n.d.; Visit Britain, n.d.). Language apps such as Babbel and Google Translate were suggested for those with limited French language skills.

While in-country, students used smartphones, cameras, and audio recorders to take photos, shoot videos, record audio, and conduct interviews relating to the D-Day anniversary. Upon return to the MTSU campus, the remainder of the summer session focused on writing and editing the stories. All the content created in-country was put together for a special multimedia website and television program that aired on the actual anniversary date of June 6, 2019.

Course Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes for this course were similar to other journalism courses but additionally included outcomes related to the intercultural competency goals of the course. The learning outcomes for this course were:

- a. Create and present original, professional quality media content for multiple platforms.
- b. Demonstrate critical and creative thinking as well as problem-solving skills through work in the field and production of original media content.
- c. Cultivate writing and storytelling craftsmanship.
- d. Demonstrate knowledge of journalism in practice while following industry standards for ethics and professionalism.

- e. Develop cultural self-awareness as well as an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures in a global society.
- f. Students will step outside of their comfort zone in order to discover new cultures and worldviews.
- g. Demonstrate general knowledge of World War II and the D-Day Invasion through story pitches, writing, and final original media content.

COURSE HISTORY

As a journalism instructor and former professional broadcast journalist, the idea for this study abroad experience was inspired in 2018. I was aware that the following year, 2019, would be the upcoming 75th anniversary of the World War II D-Day invasion. D-Day refers to June 6, 1944, when Allied forces consisting primarily of the United States, British, and Canadian troops launched the largest amphibious invasion in history. The Allied landings on the beaches of Normandy began the campaign to liberate Paris from Nazi occupation.

As I had covered many United States veterans' stories as a professional journalist, I believed this could be a rewarding and once-in-a-lifetime experience for a group of advanced and engaged journalism students. It would give students a unique opportunity to use the skills they had acquired in classes to date to collect stories in the field from an unfamiliar location. I also wanted to provide more study abroad opportunities for my journalism students at MTSU as none were currently being offered in the school. Further, I have personally traveled internationally many times and am aware of the transformative learning that travel provides.

The itinerary I drafted for student coverage of the D-Day anniversary was very detailed, so I thought it would be best to work with a third-party provider instead of doing all the planning and bookings myself, as it would require travel to multiple countries and locations. I contacted a third-party study abroad provider that had an existing itinerary for a World War II and Liberation of Paris tour. The company was one of the existing approved providers for MTSU education abroad programs.

The pre-designed itinerary the company offered was very much like the trip I had in mind. My correspondence with the company began in July 2018. I agreed to the terms for the trip with the third-party provider and submitted the study abroad class for approval in August 2018. It was approved by the MTSU School of Journalism and Strategic Media (SOJSM), and the College of Media and Entertainment that August and received final approval from the Office of International Education in September 2018. Upon approval, I began contacting journalism students about the class. The method of contact was within my own classes, other journalism classes, emails, university-wide study abroad fairs, and the MTSU Office of International Affairs. Seven students had successfully registered for the course by the February 2019 deadline. This deadline was set by the third-party provider to finalize airline, hotel, and other reservations.

While this study abroad course covered the one-time event of the 75th anniversary of D-Day, the class has since been continued but with changes to content and destinations. It is incumbent upon the journalism instructor to think proactively and consider or anticipate world events and travel opportunities well in advance of the next study abroad course. For example, I planned a study abroad trip to Paris in 2022 with the topic of “Paris Off the Beaten Path” as a travel reporting special for those traveling again after the COVID-19 pandemic. A study abroad

trip which will run in the summer of 2023 will take place in England and Scotland as changes are anticipated following the death of Queen Elizabeth II and the beginning of the era of King Charles III.

COURSE LOGISTICS

Students in the class earned three credit hours. As a 4000-level course, primarily junior- or senior-level, all students enrolled were journalism majors who had already taken the pre-requisite classes. These prerequisites included foundational courses that developed skills in media writing, interviewing and reporting techniques, photography, audio recording, videography, and editing for video and audio. It was necessary to have at least a basic acquisition of these skills as they would be necessary in the field. When broadcast journalists are in the field, they must often work very quickly and under various environmental conditions including challenges with light, ambient sound, and lack of power outlets or internet connection. They are also usually under a strict time deadline. Broadcast journalists are tasked with shooting video at a location or collecting audio and finding people to interview on camera or via an audio recording. Many will also take photos to accompany their stories and post them to social media before, during, and/or after their story collection. Thus, there is not much time in a scenario like our coverage of the D-Day anniversary to do much teaching of basics in the field. As the instructor I did, of course, supervise, make suggestions, and provide guidance and assistance throughout the trip, but basic knowledge of equipment function and journalism methods was essential.

PRE-PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

Several pre-departure orientations took place on the MTSU campus, each lasting approximately one to three hours. During those sessions, we discussed the requirements of the class, rules for conduct, and emergency procedures. As this was a journalism class, students were required to gather journalistic content in various forms including photos, audio, and video. They were required to create content specifically for social media and post to social media frequently from England and France. Students were also required to edit their work for publication in student media outlets upon their return to the United States. In addition, students needed to conduct background research on World War II, the D-Day invasion, and other historic events and people surrounding the anniversary. As this special report was targeted at viewers in the Tennessee area, students were also required to locate veterans or others with special connections to D-Day to localize coverage.

A few days before departure, the class met on the MTSU campus for approximately two hours during which I disseminated equipment for student use in-country. The MTSU College of Media and Entertainment and the SOJSM offer free rentals of professional quality gear for student use. This gear is purchased primarily with student course fees. Journalism students enrolled in classes requiring the use of cameras, microphones, and other newsgathering equipment for completion of projects have access to this gear during fall, spring, and summer semesters through an online checkout system.

For this study abroad trip, my students used several types of gear including the Canon 80D, which is a digital single-lens reflex camera or DSLR camera. This camera shoots still photos and video and is quite user-friendly, dependable, and easy to carry in the field. A few

students were given Sony 100 video cameras to use in-country. These are professional-quality video cameras. Students using the Sony 100 cameras were issued tripods to use with the camera. Professional-quality lavalier microphones, which are small clip-on microphones, were distributed along with headphones to monitor audio. The MTSU SOJSM also purchased several additional items, especially for use in study abroad classes including travel adapters. I answered any questions students had about gear and reminded them of proper care and use of the equipment. I also made sure they all had or planned to purchase SD cards on which to record media. We went over final packing suggestions and the plans to meet at the Nashville International Airport.

Most of the camera gear can be safely packed in checked or carry-on baggage provided it is wrapped carefully in some protective material or padding. Lithium-ion batteries must be packed in carry-on luggage as noted by the Federal Aviation Administration. The gear does take up some additional space in luggage which students and faculty should be aware of ahead of time. Faculty could elect to transport video cameras and tripods in professional hard-sided camera cases such as Pelican brand cases. This would require extra checked baggage and the resulting extra baggage fees. Some faculty may choose to incorporate mobile journalism methods in-country requiring smaller gear such as smartphones, small tablets, and smaller tripods for these devices as well as the complementary microphones. On a subsequent study abroad trip to Paris in 2022, we utilized camera-friendly padded backpacks for the transport of camera gear. The backpacks were used as carry-ons during flights and in the field while in-country.

CLASS ACTIVITIES & INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCIES

We departed Nashville, Tennessee on May 21, 2019, and arrived in London on May 22, 2019. For some students, this was their first experience with international travel, which in itself was transformative. The process, from getting the passport to deplaning in a foreign country and finally returning home, gives students confidence that their world has no boundaries. It creates a sense of agency and self-confidence.

We met our trip guide at the London Heathrow Airport who introduced us to another group of students that would be accompanying us on our adventure. The third-party provider paired our MTSU group with a study abroad group from a different university. These students were not journalism students, which offered an opportunity for multidisciplinary interaction. My students ended up engaging the others in some reporting and photography lessons which were very rewarding to watch as an instructor. The students from the other school and their faculty leaders shared transportation with us, accompanied us on all the tours, and stayed in the same hotels. While the class was in-country, I supervised, coached, and mentored my students in the field as they took still photos, shot video, conducted interviews, and did on-camera work to be used later for the television special, which aired on the MTSU student media property Middle Tennessee News (Middle Tennessee News, 2019).

While in London, the group took a walking tour of the city, including a visit to the Imperial War Museum. The students told me that the exhibits at the museum made an impression on them and sparked further curiosity and story ideas. These exhibits told the story of World War II primarily from the United Kingdom's perspective. Getting a chance to view events from a global perspective was a transformative moment. We were also given a crash

course on how to navigate the London Underground, or “the Tube” from a London native. This provided an excellent opportunity to get my students out of their comfort zone, creating both a robust transformative and experiential learning opportunity. It was transformative in that public transportation in unfamiliar cities can be a bit disorienting, but students rose to the challenge. It was also experiential in nature as they had the concrete experience of navigating London’s public transportation, and the resulting reflective observation occurred when students completed their social media posts about the experience. This is a transformative experience because MTSU’s student population primarily consists of commuters who drive their own vehicles to and from campus and are not accustomed to public transportation (U.S. News & World Report, 2023).

That evening, all the students on the trip attended a fish and chips dinner in London. This also created transformative and experiential learning moments. Not only was it an opportunity for the MTSU students to get to know the student group from the other university, but it also helped them become more comfortable with their own peers from MTSU. Shared meals can often help groups bond. Dining together encourages conversation and allows for the shared cultural experience of new foods and environments (Deardorff, 2012). They also had the experience of tasting an authentic British meal and reflecting on it on social media. Not being from the generation of digital natives, I am always interested in how so many young people take photos of their food and share those photos on social media. This is one of the reasons I have come to require the use of social media in my study abroad class because it provides a quick and easy way to reflect on culture and act on concrete experiences which can be shared easily and is a skill most students have already obtained.

As students shared hotel rooms, it was important to provide moments early in the trip for them to become better acquainted, thus more comfortable in their temporary living arrangements. On this trip, the third-party company arranged for all the students to be assigned to shared rooms based on biological gender, with MTSU students rooming with students of the same gender from the other university. Faculty and older students were given single rooms. The next day, the group took a WWII-themed guided tour of London which included a visit to the Cabinet War Rooms where Prime Minister Churchill and the Allied Commanders planned the Allied war effort. Students were engaged with the locations and took many photos and videos. I observed a growing sense of self-awareness among the students. Perhaps they were quite keen to take in as much of London as possible as this was our last night in the city. They had already overcome some of the challenges of being in foreign surroundings, but we were still in a country that speaks English as the primary language.

On Friday, May 24, the group departed London for Caen. We traveled by ferry across the English Channel to the Normandy region of France, the same route used by Allied naval forces. Students said the ferry ride was quite enjoyable as many of them had never used this form of transportation. It was amusing as there was also a group of very rambunctious French secondary school students aboard the ferry. This provided a unique opportunity to observe a different aspect of French culture. The time aboard the ferry also provided yet another chance for students to form bonds over lunch and shared experiences.

On Saturday, May 25, 2019, the group toured the D-Day beaches of Normandy with an expert local guide. We boarded a tour bus, and the guide provided a history lesson on the D-Day invasion and the significance of the sights we were about to see. The timing of the trip, just days

before the actual 75th anniversary, was beneficial. Many tourists had come to the area for the anniversary, providing ample opportunities for interviews and b-roll, which is video used when creating television news-style stories. Students gathered many photos, videos, and interviews at Pointe du Hoc. This is a promontory with 110-foot cliffs located between the Utah and Omaha Beaches and is the location of the World War II Pointe du Hoc American Ranger Monument.

The stops at Omaha Beach and the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial had a profound effect on everyone. My students took many photos and videos on Omaha Beach. This was also the location where many of them recorded themselves on the beach for use in their video stories and social media. They were very respectful of the solemnity of this location, however, and handled themselves accordingly. Knowing we would be visiting this site, several students brought small glass bottles in which they collected a bit of sand.

At the Normandy American Cemetery, the sight of so many white crosses in lines along the green grass gave everyone pause. Again, all were respectful of the somberness of this location. In just a few days, the United States President would be here at the cemetery to attend the anniversary ceremony along with thousands of other visitors. During our tour, students were able to see workers busy erecting stages and setting up seating for the ceremony. The tour that day also included a visit to the Caen Memorial and Arromanches. The post-experience reflections and creation of journalistic content with media collected this day demonstrated the transformative effect of this part of the itinerary. Students wrote with much candor and emotion about how moved they became while touring the sites and talking with people at various locations. They also took great care in selecting the best photos, video, and audio for their stories which showed the respect they had for the content.

On Sunday, May 26, 2019, the group boarded a bus and traveled via Rouen to Paris, with a brief tour of the Rouen. Students had the opportunity to attend a Catholic Mass at the stunning gothic Rouen Cathedral and walk along the historic streets. About two hours later, the scenery changed dramatically. We had arrived at the final stop of our adventure, Paris. There was quite a bit of excitement when the students woke from a short nap to see the Parisian skyline. After checking in to the hotel, we embarked on a walking tour of the Latin Quarter. Unfortunately, just weeks before our arrival, the Notre Dame Cathedral was engulfed by a massive fire. We were only able to view the 12th-century Gothic landmark from afar, but seeing the beautiful cathedral was a memorable moment. Later that day, we boarded a boat for a breathtaking tour of the Seine River where we once again were treated to a view of Notre Dame and many other Parisian landmarks including the Louvre. Students took many photos and videos from the boat.

The following day was dedicated to a tour of Paris with sites including Place de la Concorde, the Champs-Élysées, Arc de Triomphe, and a glimpse of the exterior of the Eiffel Tower and Hôtel des Invalides. We were aboard a tour bus with a guide who provided details about each location. We were able to get off the bus for the Arc de Triomphe and walk for just a few minutes on arguably the most famous street in the world, Champs-Élysées. While there, the group announced to me and the tour guide that they needed to use the bathrooms. Our French guide told us that the only way to accomplish this considering our location next to the Arc de Triomphe with our bus driver waiting was to pop into a nearby café and order a coffee at the standing counter. Upon drinking our coffee, the establishment would allow us to use the

bathrooms, so that is exactly what we did. It was a wonderful way to experience the culture and adapt to an unfamiliar situation.

Our day took a much more somber note as we toured the Shoah Holocaust Memorial and Museum in Paris. I do not recall the group taking many photos at this location. We were all so full of emotion and empathy. The exhibitions that tell the stories and describe the horrors of the extermination of nearly six million Jews gave us all a chance to reflect on the past and the atrocities of war.

As we returned to the streets of Paris, we shifted our focus once again to gaining some intercultural competency skills, such as developing confidence and independence via the public transportation system (Deardorff, 2012). With Paris Metro tickets in hand, the group was forced to navigate the trains back to our hotel. While we would encounter a few Metro mishaps during our stay in Paris, I believe those encounters are among the most salient learning experiences. Students were also becoming somewhat more confident in their basic conversational French language skills. The language apps came in quite handy. I noticed the students were all venturing out on their own to do some shopping and tasting of new foods. They were acting on the new information and skills acquired in the last few days. It was rewarding as a teacher to see their courage and excitement.

The following day, Tuesday, May 28, 2019, was our last full day in Paris. It was a free day for the group. Some chose to tour Versailles, attend a tennis match at the French Open, do some shopping, or visit some museums. That evening, we all gathered in the Latin Quarter for a farewell dinner at a quaint French bistro. The following morning, we checked out of our hotel

and the bus took us to Charles de Gaulle airport for our flight home (See Appendix 14.1 for a tabular program itinerary).

Task: Public Transportation

While not related to developing journalism skills, using public transportation in both England and France was one of the most important lessons in developing intercultural competency, which has been defined as "a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts" (Bennett, 2008, p. 97). One of the most important benefits of study abroad is gaining an understanding of the world and different cultures.

As Deardorff (2012) notes, "attitude is a fundamental starting point" (p. 255). Attitudes change when students are curious, as well as when they must step out of their comfort zones and learn to adapt in a foreign place. Most of my students do not use public transportation on a regular basis. MTSU is in a suburban area without a robust public transportation system. This made it a bit more difficult for them to navigate the London Underground and Paris Metro, but they were quite successful, save for a few mistakes here and there. I often allowed the students to take the lead on navigation. It became a wonderful display of teamwork and a rewarding challenge when we arrived at the right stop.

It was also a chance for the students to watch people on board the trains. When they became curious and started to observe the other passengers they noticed the manner, dress, and actions of the British and French commuters. It became apparent that the French were much quieter and more reserved than our effervescent American group. British and French passengers

also appeared very well-dressed. At times, our group stood before a map at a station apparently looking quite lost. Several times, locals in London and Paris offered us assistance. This was welcomed by the students who remarked on what was an unexpected kindness shown by strangers. See Appendix 14.2 for the guidelines on this task. As noted in Table 14.1, specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes were acquired or developed by students using public transportation while abroad. On the surface, public transportation may appear to be useful only for budgetary reasons or quicker travel around a busy city such as London or Paris, but there are numerous benefits for students.

Table 14.1: Intercultural Competencies for Public Transportation Task

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture-specific knowledge (navigating public transportation) • Cultural self-awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Problem-solving • Teamwork • Technology skills • Analyze • Observe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confidence • Flexibility • Discovery • Patience • Willingness to go out of comfort zone • Resilience • Risk-taking

Task: Experiencing Local Cuisine

Attitudes again played a role in developing intercultural competencies when the students enthusiastically sampled unfamiliar foods with an open mind. Eating out in England and France was a different experience, especially in France when the language was harder to navigate. Food is entwined with culture. Smells and tastes elicit memories and remind us of home or meaningful experiences. The difference in food domestically can vary, but once in another country, new tastes can be exciting and a bonding experience. Many travel memories revolve around food and dining, and this trip was no different. It is no coincidence that the third-party provider included

intentional dining experiences, a welcome dinner, lunches during day trips, and a lovely farewell meal. Breakfast was included at all the hotels where we stayed during the trip: one hotel in London, one in Normandy, and one in Paris. The food offerings at breakfast were very different in all three locations.

As a faculty member, each morning was a rewarding experience as I observed and interacted with the students over breakfast. Many of them had questions about my soft-boiled egg in Normandy as they had not seen an egg prepared in that manner. In London, we were treated to several types of sausage. It was something of an adventure to figure out what type of sausages they were and how they tasted. My students were also of the generation which enjoys photographing their food and posting pictures to social media. As a result, I saw many trip photos that featured delicious, or otherwise remarkable, dishes as the subject.

If I did not dine with the students for a particular meal, I often asked them about their adventures in gastronomy that day. I was delighted that they all seemed to take risks and order something unfamiliar. In France, those with limited language skills sometimes ended up with a dish they had not intended to order but savored the experience if not so much the taste. We joked about avoiding the American fast food chain McDonald's while in England and France, but I will admit that the taste of home was enjoyed a few times by my students and their teacher. We even compared the taste of a French cheeseburger to its American counterpart. Many of the students remarked that "everything tastes better in Paris." See Appendix 14.2 for the guidelines on this task. Table 14.2 identifies some of the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that can be learned or developed by experiencing local cuisine. Unfamiliar foods and dining experiences have many potential learning opportunities for students abroad.

Table 14.2: Intercultural Competencies for Experiencing Local Cuisine Task

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cultural understanding• Cultural self-awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluate• Observe• Communication• Relate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stepping outside of comfort zone• Respect• Flexibility• Open-minded• Risk-taking

Assignment: Pre-Production Research

The first assignment for this course involved a good amount of pre-departure research. The topics for research included general cultural knowledge about England and France but emphasized knowledge of World War II and D-Day, as coverage of the 75th Anniversary of D-Day was the purpose and focus of our trip. This knowledge was essential. Journalists must always conduct research for the stories they are covering. In the case of the anniversary of D-Day, the journalism students could not ask informed questions without this general knowledge. Further, they also needed information on local ties to the D-Day anniversary in order to tell stories relevant to our local angle of the event.

Deardorff (2012) points out that among the four developmental stages created by the American Council on International Intercultural Education is general knowledge of history and world events. This assignment facilitated at least some acquisition of that general knowledge, which was enough information in order to carry out journalism practices. However, I observed that this newly acquired knowledge also led to empathy and respect in their understanding of the differences in the way United States citizens experienced World War II compared with the citizens of England and France. Deardorff (2012) notes that the first stage of development is openness to other cultures, values, and attitudes and “that the first stage was most important to

all global learners” (p. 256). I found that the research assignment aided in the students’ openness to aspects of the cultures they were about to experience. See Appendix 14.3 for the guidelines on this task.

Research into locations and culture before traveling to a different country can make travel much more rewarding as it helps the traveler better understand and appreciate context. For journalism students, this was an essential task; journalists research stories beforehand in order to get information and context. Table 14.3 identifies the knowledge, skills, and attitudes developed by students by doing pre-production research for this study abroad course.

Table 14.3: Intercultural Competencies for Pre-Production Research Assignment

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• General knowledge of England and France and World War II• Understanding others’ worldviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Technology• Analyze• Interpret• Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curiosity• Empathy• Discovery

Activity: Story Gathering in the Field

All students in the course were required to gather and create original media content from the field while in-country for the television and online special. This required them to carry out tasks such as taking photographs, conducting interviews, and collecting audio while in England and France. Through their journalistic work, they were interacting with locals and communicating with people who often did not speak the same language. I found that the students naturally divided themselves into teams and tended to work in those teams throughout the trip. There was an odd number of students in the group. One of my students teamed up with a student from the other university group. This worked out very well as they shared similar personalities and

interests. My journalism student even taught the other student a bit about photography and social media. The teams that self-selected their own team members seemed to develop from prior familiarity on campus.

As I observed the teams in the field, I was pleased with their enthusiasm for the topics we were covering and their interaction with people in various locations. One example took place at the Caen Memorial. One of the student teams noticed a young French boy dressed in an American military uniform. They were naturally curious and approached his parents. The family spoke French and not much English. One of our travel companions who was fluent in French was able to interpret and my students conducted a touching interview about the young boy who was dressed in the uniform to honor the role of the American soldiers who helped liberate France. My students demonstrated curiosity, observational skills, flexibility, and adaptability and left that interview with a new sense of understanding others' worldviews. See Appendix 14.4 for the guidelines on this task. Competencies gained by students during the story gathering activities are outlined below in Table 14.4.

Table 14.4: Intercultural Competencies for Story Gathering Activity

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journalistic field methods • Multimedia story gathering • Cultural understanding • Understanding others' worldviews 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observation • Teamwork • Technology • Listen • Relate • Communication • Creative thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibility • Adaptability • Patience • Respect • Curiosity • Discovery

Activity: Travel Journals

Students in the class were required to complete several social media posts and travel journal posts during and after the trip. Many of the travel journals were done as video or photo slide show posts. Some students submitted these individually, but one self-appointed team of young women enjoyed doing their video posts together. I was impressed with the professional quality of all the students' work but also with the detail and candor of the content. The most salient intercultural competencies revealed in these travel journals included the level of cultural self-awareness, open-mindedness, and discovery.

The prompt for these social media posts and travel journals was quite simple. Take us along with you on an adventure or reflect on something you experienced, observed, or felt. The submissions varied from euphoria at the top of the Eiffel Tower to reverence while standing on the sands of Omaha Beach. Each student allowed themselves to be open and vulnerable and truly feel the weight or joy of the moment. I believe this freedom of expression and openness to the surroundings came in part from the freedom of the activity; there was no time pressure or tedious rubric. Some students are not comfortable with ambiguity, so I was delighted at how cheerfully this group embraced this activity. I think this is yet another activity that demonstrates this group's level of intercultural competency. It goes back to attitude as a fundamental aspect of and for success. See Appendix 14.5 for the guidelines on this task. Specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes cultivated through the travel journal activity are detailed in Table 14.5. These competencies also align with course objectives.

Table 14.5: Intercultural Competencies for Travel Journal Activity

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cultural Self-awareness• Cultural understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creative thinking• Articulation• Evaluate• Technology• Interpret	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curiosity• Open-minded• Discovery• Risk-taking• Flexibility

Assignment: Media Content and Post-Production

This essential assignment required students to edit together the media they collected in-country upon their return to the U.S. These included photo slideshows, audio pieces, and television news packages as well as recording on-camera presentations for the television special. There was a great deal of reflection in this assignment. In the excitement of being in the moment, we may not fully appreciate the profound composition of a photo we have taken or the beauty of the play of light in another. During an interview we recorded, we may have heard the words spoken by the subject but not noticed the subtleties in their body language or facial expressions. Upon reviewing our photos and other media, I noticed the students almost reliving the moments and discovering things in their work they had not noticed or fully appreciated at the time. Their sincere appreciation and affection for the people and places we encountered was evident as well as their journalism and technology skills. They had all made wonderful discoveries, even though at times it was challenging to work under a deadline in unfamiliar surroundings. The television special and website they were working on also gave them a chance to share their adventures with the world, which was very motivating. See Appendix 14.4 for the guidelines on this task. Post-production tasks offer opportunities for the development of specific knowledge as well as numerous skills and attitudes as noted in Table 14.6.

Table 14.6: Intercultural Competencies for Post-production Assignments

Knowledge	Skills	Attitudes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Academic content knowledge• Cultural understanding• Cultural self-awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creative thinking• Teamwork• Leadership• Technology• Interpret• Analyze• Evaluate• Listen• Communication skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curiosity• Discovery• Risk-taking• Tolerance for ambiguity• Patience• Resilience• Flexibility

POST-PROGRAM AND FUTURE CLASS ACTIVITIES

Upon return to the U.S., we gathered again on campus to write and edit stories. The time spent on post-production varied among the students depending on the medium (video, audio, etc.), but was approximately 15 to 20 hours. Once all the media was completed, a colleague and I worked with students to create the website and television special. Two students from the class served as presenters for the television special. Those two students recorded introductions to various stories on the MTSU campus at the Veteran's Memorial. One of the other students also recorded an on-camera introduction to a story he completed for the special. These on-camera recordings took about three to four hours. Once everything had been completed, the website and tv special went live.

Before we resumed work on campus, I gave myself and my students a couple of days to rest and unpack. A few days later, we gathered again on campus to review all the media we collected, then to write and edit stories and other content. There was much laughter and reminiscing. Students also returned the equipment they borrowed for the trip.

Future Class Activity Ideas

This course was conducted in 2019 and was so successful that I had already launched another study abroad class for the summer of 2020, but the COVID-19 pandemic created challenges that did not allow for this to take place. I incorporated lessons learned from the 2019 trip into future trips, including a study abroad trip I led to Paris in 2022. I again used a third-party provider, but I asked for more free time for students to explore on their own or just enjoy some downtime as well as more time for student journalists to gather media at various locations. I also dedicated myself to spending more leisure time with the students. This allows me to make more observations and enjoy more interactions with them over meals and other diversions. I find these casual moments are when I observe the students stepping out of their comfort zone and showing their resilience and cultural self-awareness.

EVALUATIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS

The grading criteria for the course was as follows:

Original Content and Stories	65%
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Social Media and Travel Journals	35%
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When evaluating all submissions, I looked for indicators of intercultural competencies but did not specifically measure those competencies for evaluation. I did, however, include evidence of competencies in my feedback to students. Much of my evaluation related to the quality of journalistic skills and practice. Original content and stories were summative in nature

as they were heavily weighted and demonstrated student proficiency in storytelling and production skills. Sample rubrics were provided to students based on the format of their media content. The rubric for the Newswriting was evaluated on organization, lead and writing, objectivity and accuracy, AP Style conventions, and headline writing. Scores ranged from a 1 for inadequate work to a 6 for excellent work with specific benchmarks and indicators for each numeric score. The Broadcast Story assignment rubric was also scored on a range of points, from 1 for inadequate work and up to 4 for excellent work. Specific benchmarks and indicators were also described in each point range. Broadcast story criteria included organization, story topic, video, videography, editing, lighting, audio, writing, and performance. The social media and travel journals were formative as they helped students take ownership of the experience and reflect on the process.

STUDENT FEEDBACK

Students offered positive verbal feedback on the trip. No written feedback was submitted. One of the students on this 2019 trip had already registered for a similar trip I was planning to lead in 2020; however, that trip was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. That same student used materials from the study abroad trip for their undergraduate honors thesis which was outstanding and very well-received. Students were also delighted with the results of our website and television special. They swept state and regional awards, including the Tennessee Associated Press student awards, with judges for one contest calling the website “a multimedia masterpiece.” This was a great source of pride and accomplishment for the students.

CAVEATS AND REFLECTIONS

This course was an outstanding experience for both myself as the instructor and I believe for the students as well. The strengths include the unique opportunity to help students develop intercultural competencies through careful planning of the activities, assignments, tasks, and itinerary. Utilizing a backward course design that begins with the desired outcomes yields a course that offers robust intercultural engagement. Another strength specific to my discipline is giving journalism students first-hand experience working in the field under often challenging circumstances. This strength can also be a challenge as it relates to the use of the third-party provider. The itinerary used in this trip had been created by the provider and as such was not customized for either journalism students or my specific requests as faculty. While much of the itinerary was ideal, the time allotted for stops in various locations often did not allow my students much time to conduct interviews or gather photos and videos.

Further, our MTSU group was paired with a study abroad group from a different university. These students were not journalism students. They accompanied us on the tour bus and on all the tours. Fortunately, the faculty and students from the other university were very accommodating and even assisted us with some of the story gathering and photography. However, my group often caused a delay in the schedule because we requested a few extra minutes at various locations to gather media.

This course plays an important role in the overall mission of my school, college, and university as we seek to provide the most robust experiential and engaged learning opportunities possible. Students come to us seeking theory and practice. Classes such as this and other study abroad classes campus-wide offer students that chance. However, a significant challenge in

offering study abroad classes at MTSU is the ability of some students to afford the cost of these courses. The MTSU Office of International Affairs does offer generous scholarships but some students still remark to me that they would love to go on a study abroad class but do not have the means. Another challenge related to cost is duration. Of course, a longer in-country experience means a higher cost. Strange and Gibson (2017) found that a short-term study abroad trip can be as transformative as a semester or year-long experience if the duration is longer than 18 days. I increased the length of my subsequent 2022 Paris study abroad trip to two weeks, but the result was a higher cost and lower enrollment. It is my goal to plan future trips of two-to-three-weeks in length which will require great attention to the budget to keep the program as affordable as possible.

Some of the benefits of offering this course with the inclusion of intercultural competencies are that it allows students to be actively engaged in and be aware of their growth as citizens of the world. As they are aware of the markers of intercultural competency, students will be more cognizant as these skills develop.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 14.1: Program Itinerary

Date	Activity
May 13-20, 2019	Pre-departure activities on campus
May 21, 2019	Depart Nashville airport
May 22, 2019	Arrive London airport (Heathrow): Take a walking tour of London including Strand, Trafalgar Square, Leicester Square, and Covent Garden. Visit the Imperial War Museum, enjoy a fish and chips dinner in London, and check in at hotel
May 23, 2019	Take a WWII-themed guided tour of London including the Cabinet War Rooms in which Prime Minister Churchill and the Allied Commanders planned the Allied war effort
May 24, 2019	Caen, Normandy Region: Check out of London hotel then travel by ferry from Portsmouth to the Normandy region of France along the same route used by Allied naval forces
May 25, 2019	Normandy Region: Tour the D-Day beaches of Normandy with an expert local guide. Visit the Caen Memorial, Pointe du Hoc, Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial, and Arromanches
May 26, 2019	Caen, Rouen, Paris: Travel via Rouen to Paris, tour Rouen with Tour Director and visit the Rouen Cathedral; ride on bus to Paris with walking tour stops in the Latin Quarter and Notre Dame; cruise on the Seine River and check into hotel
May 27, 2019	Paris: bus tour with sights including Place de la Concorde, Champs-Élysées, Arc de Triomphe, Eiffel Tower, visit the Shoah Holocaust memorial and museum
May 28, 2019	Open day for storytelling in Paris; farewell dinner in Paris
May 29-30, 2019	Depart for Nashville from Paris (De Gaulle)/Arrive in Nashville
June 3-5, 2019	Finalize writing, editing, recording special

Appendix 14.2: Public Transportation and Experiencing Local Cuisine Task Guidelines

Some tickets and passes for public transportation were provided in the program cost. Students were given a brief introduction on how to navigate the Underground and Metro and were encouraged to use public transportation as often as possible in order to achieve some measure of intercultural competency. Eating in restaurants with local cuisine was encouraged by faculty and the tour guides. There were no specific guidelines noted in the syllabus for these two tasks, as these were meant to be organic experiences, but these skills were clearly communicated in the syllabus as a course outcome.

Appendix 14.3: Pre-Production Research Assignment

Guidelines

To understand the historical and cultural impact of the locations on this trip itinerary, it was essential to conduct pre-departure research on World War II, D-Day, local ties to D-Day and World War II, and cultural information on England and France. Using suggested sources of materials for research, students were instructed to prepare a general body of knowledge as an aid in-country. Students were directed to sample materials provided in the course description. There were no additional articulated guidelines in the syllabus. I did have discussions with the students to gauge their amount of preparation. Tour guides also provided background information in-country.

Appendix 14.4: Story Gathering in the Field Activity and Completion of Media Content and Post-Production

Assignment Guidelines

This activity and assignment are connected as is the case in journalistic practice. As the class consisted of journalism students, they already were aware of how to conduct themselves in the field to gather media content.

Students will complete original media content primarily in-country, which will be published and/or broadcast on student media properties as part of this course. Content may be created for several platforms including video, audio, and photojournalism. Students will identify several topics and angles of interest before departure and during the in-country experience. After considering several topics and angles, students will decide on the focus of their stories. Some stories may present themselves in the field, so students should be observant and prepared to cover stories on the spot. In many cases, you will research your topic, collecting sources for your background research. If at all possible, try to make a local connection in order to localize your topic through local individuals and organizations within the local area that can address the issue in Middle Tennessee (such as local World War II veterans). Do not be afraid to approach people in-country, even if there is a language barrier.

Students will capture original photos, audio, and video as well as interviews and natural sound. The visuals and interviews should be original work. When capturing video, use a tripod to make the images as steady and clear as possible. Photos with audio and natural sound are very engaging. Students may also create graphics to help visually tell portions of the story such as maps, data charts, photos with text, quotes, or compelling statistics.

Audio stories must include visuals so there isn't just a black screen visible while the audio is playing. Photo essays must have captions or student-created slideshows with audio narration. Television broadcast packages must have professional quality video, natural sound, interviews with excellent audio, and preferably a reporter stand-up. These will also need to be written, tracked, and edited. Running time for audio and television stories will vary, but most will run approximately 1:30-3:30 minutes. Please see the rubrics for the specific standards.

Appendix 14.5: Travel Journals Activity Guidelines

Students will complete several social media posts and multimedia travel journals during the in-country portion of the class. For these assignments, students will reflect on in-country experiences utilizing various media platforms. Students will be tasked with showcasing how they have internalized and experienced the world around them. Print-focused submissions are approximately 700 words, double-spaced, in Times New Roman 12-point font with one-inch margins. Indent the paragraphs. You will be judged on the clarity of your writing, the coherence of your thoughts, and how well you communicate your personal reflections. All submissions, including social media posts, must include professional-quality photos or videos. Please present yourself in a professional manner. Refrain from profanity. Prompts include showing us a location, event, or other cultural experience and telling us your reactions. How did it make you feel? How did it taste? What emotions were you feeling? How did those around you appear or act? What surprised you? What were you not expecting? How can you describe what this is like to those who have never experienced it? What are the smells? What are the sounds? How has this changed your thinking?