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Parents as Partners: A New Paradigm for Working with Parents of Education Abroad Students

Susan M. Atkins, M.Ed.,
International Education Consultant
U.S. Liaison, Siena School for Liberal Arts, Italy
NAFSA National Education Abroad Team Member
Email: suzieatkins@hotmail.com

Kay Kimball Gruder, M.Ed.
Parent Coaching Institute™ Certified Parent Coach®
Founder of SuccessfulCollegeParenting.com
College Parenting Expert for College Parenting Magazine
Email: Kay@SuccessfulCollegeParenting.com
Goals of Workshop

- Overview of the landscape of study abroad & parent relations
- Share perceptions and strategies regarding parent interactions throughout the study abroad experience
- Gather resources from peer institutions on working with parents
- Explore a new model for informing and educating parents
I. Introduction

II. What informs our work

III. Current Parenting Culture – Impact on how we work

IV. Small and Large Group Activity: What are you noticing about parents and what tools are you using to inform and educate them?

V. Use of technology to inform and educate parents

VI. Feature parent as coach format for our webinar series Before They Go/Once They’re There/And Then They Return

VII. Concluding thoughts

VIII. Questions & Answers
Parents/guardians are told early and often that good parents are involved parents.

With so much at stake (financially and competitively), parents/guardians have become used to managing their student’s success.

The high cost of education results in parents/guardians feeling anxious about the value of their child’s educational experience.
Current Parenting Culture – Part II

- Technology facilitates ongoing parent/guardian involvement in many areas of a student’s life – often denying the student opportunities to experience normal and necessary developmental events and situations to build life skills during college.

- Students are used to having their parents/guardians involved – and often seek their involvement.

- Colleges and universities struggle with defining the role that they would like parents to play in student success.

- Parents/guardians seek to be informed and involved and often wonder how best to guide their student.
Parents & Study Abroad

- Advising
- Academics
- Financial Planning
- Travel Planning
- Visa & Passport Procurement
- Forms – completion of parts of some forms
- Accommodations & Roommate Issues
- Health Issues
- Safety Issues
- Communication Channels
- Other issues that may arise on-site (academic, health, etc.)

Top Concerns

1. Country Choice (71.5%)
2. Financial Matters (69.8%)
3. Application Paperwork (63.7%)
4. Safety & Risk Management (56.6%)
5. Reentry (50.9%)
This activity is called Challenges and Opportunities

1. In your small group – please list the challenges first – list at least 5 between everyone at your table.

2. Then identify an opportunity for each challenge—thinking about your institutional culture with regard to parents and what desired outcomes exist.

3. Please select a table representative to report back at least 1 of the 5 examples to the larger group.
Current Strategies for Working with Parents

General Information Presentations:
- Weekend Sessions on Study Abroad
- Visiting Days to campus

Orientation:
- Attendance at pre-departure orientations & meeting
- Parent Handbooks & Information Sheets
- NAFSA Publication for Parents in parent packets
- Letter sent to parents post acceptance with overview of policies

Technology:
- Website: Parents Page on institution and provider sites
- Social Networking for parents of study abroad students
Harnessing Technology to Inform & Educate

Moodle or Black Board Modules

- Can be relational
- Can offer self-guided modules or timed and facilitated modules
- Can create community of parents or multiple communities of parents
- Can create and stage content in advance

**Cost:** most academic institutions have one or the other course management systems/virtual learning environments – Moodle is free and open-source
Harnessing Technology to Inform & Educate

Video email
- Highly relational
- More interesting than only text
- Can effectively reinforce print content through visual and audio
- Can stage video e-mails in advance and send on pre-selected dates  **Cost:** about $40.00/month

Teleconference
- Allows for reasonably large group communication by phone
- Can choose whether or not to have audience communicate
- Can be live or pre-recorded
- Can be accessed after session
- Can effectively reinforce print content through audio  **Cost:** free services available

Where is Social Media?
Webinars

- Allow for small or large group communication with visuals and web cam in virtual classroom setting
- Access to virtual break out rooms that facilitator can then travel through
- Can easily co-train with others
- Lots of communication tools for engaging audience – polls, hand raise icon, chat, etc.
- Can be live or pre-recorded
- Can be accessed after session
- Can effectively present content using a strong training model
Our Understanding

Parents are used to being involved – this is a given.

We can not will them away.

They are doing what they know how to do – and what they feel has worked for them and their student.
What Is Our Responsibility?

If we desire parents to have a different role, to be involved in more effective ways – that don’t deny their student developmental opportunities -- then we have a responsibility to guide and teach them.

They are not going to wake up one day and simply know what we want or don’t want them to do!
Our Webinar Model

Three co-led, live and interactive parenting webinars, 60 minutes each

Before They Go
Once They’re There
And Then They Return

Goals For Each Webinar:

• Inform parents about what is being asked of their student and what their student is most likely experiencing

• Identify the developmental opportunities that exist and the benefits of having the student work through problems and situations

• Provide parents with strategies to coach the student toward success and maximum learning
Common Questions & Concerns

APPLICATION RELATED
- Deadlines
- Range of documentation needed
- Scholarship applications
- Approval forms
- Fees

FINANCIAL RELATED
- Costs associated with program
- Portability of any current financial aid
- Other financial aid resources
Parent As Coach
Involvement in Application Process

• Listen to your student as he or she shares interest in various programs

• Identify information you seek to feel comfortable with your student’s options – ask your student to provide the information

• Educate yourself to learn about the programs or regions in which your student has interests

• Ask your questions through your student – as ultimately that makes you both more informed

• Reinforce your student’s ability to plan and manage this process
Parent As Coach
Involvement in Financial

- Have your student provide you with the specificity of financial information that you seek – program costs, additional fees, etc.

- Encourage your student to explore scholarships – many go unclaimed

- Guide your student and agree on a budget that is inclusive of personal needs and out-of-program expenses

- Identify with your student any financial-related actions that may need to take place in advance of his/her departure

- If something is really not possible share this information early-on in the process

- Understand the study abroad financial model that is present at your student’s institution
Common Questions & Concerns

PROGRAM RELATED

• What type of program – does it include an internship or service-learning experience

• Credit – does it contribute to major or minor areas of study

• Travel arrangements to & from – who handles logistics

• Housing – apt./dorm/host family

HEALTH & SAFETY RELATED

• Travel documents and other requirements

• Health and safety – medications, regional security, personal travel
Parent As Coach
Involvement in Program & Health/Safety

- Understand the full scope of the program(s) your student has selected
- Know the contact info. both on-campus and overseas
- Learn what support will be available to your student while abroad
- Confirm insurance provided and/or needed
- Gain understanding of emergency and security protocols
- Discuss action steps for any health concerns or needs with your student
- Have your student schedule any necessary medical/dental visits
Common Developmental Opportunities

Common Issues & Events

- Encountering difference
- Homesickness
- Fear and failure
- Loss or change in identity
- Exploration of values
- Adjustment problems
- Money management challenges

Opportunities for Growth

- Expanding perspectives and cross-cultural skills
- Greater sense of independence
- Increased sense of confidence
- New or stronger sense of self
- Individuation from family
- Ability to adapt
- Satisfaction of managing personal finances
## Common Developmental Opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Common Issues &amp; Events</th>
<th>Opportunities for Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Relationship conflicts</td>
<td>Healthy bonds with others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of focus</td>
<td>Academic &amp; Career-Life Clarity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time management problems</td>
<td>Ability to balance social &amp; academic commitments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress and Anxiety</td>
<td>Lifestyle changes to manage stress &amp; anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unfamiliar situations</td>
<td>Ability to solve problems, navigate and adapt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict</td>
<td>Ability to negotiate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor decisions</td>
<td>Enhanced decision making</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other Considerations

- Institutional culture
- Institutional Resources – funding & staffing
- Campus expectations of students
- Deciding how/where/when parents can be of greatest value to their student
- Return on the Investment (ROI)
- Technology
Resources

NAFSA Publications:
- Study Abroad: Making it Happen by David Wick
- What Parents Need to Know! Before, During, and After Education Abroad by Janet Hulstrand
- Easy Planning Guide for Good Health Abroad by Joan Elias Gore
- By Example: Resources for Education Abroad Offices and Advisers by Joe Finkhouse & Susan Atkins

The Forum on Education Abroad Toolkit
(must be a member to access)

Websites:
- SAFETI Clearinghouse: www.globaled.us
Technology Tools

I am not endorsing any, but I want to give you a sense of what’s out there

**Video E-mail:**

**My Video Talk**
http://www.myvideotalkusa.com/index.asp

**Talk Fusion** THIS ONE HAS A GOOD DEMO
http://www.talkfusion.com/for/pricing/

**Open My Video** THIS ONE HAS PRETTY GOOD INFO. (Left side of window -- click on Open My Video)
http://openmyvideo.com/about

**Benchmarkrichmedia** - THIS ONE SENDS YOU A TEST VIDEO E-MAIL TO SEE WHAT IT IS LIKE TO RECEIVE ONE (click top right)
http://www.benchmarkrichmedia.com/

**ComF5**
http://www.comf5.com/products/pricing
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Teleconferencing:

http://www.freeconferencecall.com
http://www.TotallyFreeConference.com

Webinar Hosting:

www.WebEx.com/Webinars
www.GoToMeeting.com/Webinar
http://www.intellacast.net/php/redirect.php
References

- Gonzalo Bruce, Assistant Vice President for International Education at Emporia State University conducted the Parent Survey on SECUSS-L on Feb. 4, 2010.
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