Beyond “Awesome”: Interns as Ethnographers in International Education

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•CAPA International Education is a private U.S. based organization founded in 1972
•Centers in Beijing, Buenos Aires, Dublin, Florence, Istanbul, London, Shanghai and Sydney
•Programs are designed to offer undergraduates a unique study abroad experience by blending formal academic courses with experiential learning opportunities
•Experiential learning programs range from 6-8 weeks, through to 12-14 weeks in duration across the calendar year
•Over 60,000 students have studies abroad with the CAPA
Objectives

- Explore the concept of “Interns as Ethnographers” – benefits & challenges
- Discuss existing synergies between academics and work placement experiences
- Review current needs of employers
- Share examples of CAPA‘s “Career Integration” practices
- Workshop & Discussion
The power of “Awesome”
“Awesome” today
Interns as Ethnographers

Ethnography

“"The scientific description of peoples and cultures with their customs, habits, and mutual differences. (1)"

Ethnographic Research

“The observation of and interaction with persons or a group being studied in the group's own environment (2)"

1 Oxforddictionaries.com
2 Thefreedictionary.com
Career Integration – How do we get beyond Awesome?

• Understanding the balance between the “real world” environment and the academic classroom
• Understanding all stakeholders involvement in the study abroad program
Career Integration – How do we get beyond Awesome?

• Understanding yourself as a pivotal step towards understanding others

• Evoking this philosophy through CAPA application process
Career Integration – How do we get beyond Awesome?

- Providing insight into industries
- The interactive “Human Touch”
- Informative documents
- Professional onsite mentors and supervisors that share in CAPA’s mission
- First class academic guidance and support systems
Career Integration – How do we get beyond Awesome?

- Providing insight into employers needs
- Current patterns and trends
- Forecasting movements
- Utilising local, national and international resources
- Knowledge sharing
Current reports on employer needs

The Confederation of British Industry

“We speak for companies of every size, including many in the FTSE 100 and FTSE 350, mid-caps, SMEs, micro businesses, private and family owned businesses, start ups, and trade associations.”

• Education and Skills Survey – 291 employers, 1.4 million employees, cross section of organisations
• The single most important factor in recruiting university graduates ...85% reported this to be “Attitude & Aptitude to work and Character”
• 74% of organisations want to see HE institutions implement courses around “job readiness” and career guidance
• 76% of employers expect that over the next 3-5 years they will have a need staff with leadership and management skills in cultural communications

Gateway to growth: CBI/Pearson education and skills survey 2014
Forecasting

The Bureau of Labor Statistics is the principal fact-finding agency for the Federal Government in the broad field of labor economics and statistics

- Employment Projections Report – 2012 to 2022
- Of the 30 occupations projected to have the largest % increase between 2012-2022, almost 50% (14) are related to healthcare
- Occupational Outlook Handbook
  - In addition to projecting employment stats for each detailed occupation, this depicts the nature work, working conditions, education, work experience and on the job training typically needed for each occupations

http://www.bls.gov/ooh
Career Integration – How do we get beyond Awesome?

• **Provision of excellence in site placements opportunities**

• Personalised placements that are aligned with career aspirations
• Meaningful tasks, projects and responsibilities
• Professional onsite mentors and supervisors that share in CAPA’s mission
• First class academic guidance and support systems
• Focus on holistic learning
Career Integration – Sample Placement

• Please see additional handout
“How was London?”
“It was Awesome”
“I can see you interned in London, tell us more...”
Objectives

- Changing the role of the student at the internship site
- Some particularities of the Learning through Internships model at CAPA
- Thematic overview and meeting structure to support ethnographic research
- The “so what?” factor (objectives and outcomes)
The Student at the Internship Site

As an INTERN
• Agree to a set of objectives with site supervisor
• Carry out tasks as agreed and assigned
• Track and assess progress in development of industry-specific skills

As an ETHNOGRAPHER
• Observe the work of others
• Keep a log of field notes
• Self-reflection/awareness of self
The Student and the LTI Classroom

Some Conditions, Specific to CAPA’s Learning through Internships Model

• LTI is required of ALL students taking an internship

• Classes meet regularly throughout the term

• Diversity in the classroom
The Student and the LTI Classroom

Course Overview: Thematic Organization of Content

• How Organizations Work

• Work, Culture and Governmental Regulations: A Comparative Study

• Self-Reflection
The Student and the LTI Classroom

Weekly Meetings: CAPA London as a Case Study

• Lectures and In-Class Activities

• The Weekly Check-In

• Periodic Engagement with Internship Placement Team
The Student and the LTI Classroom

So what?
The Student and the LTI Classroom

The “So what?” Factor: Students Showcasing What They’ve Learned

• Participation

• Presentation

• Written Portfolio

• Supervisor’s Feedback
The Student and the LTI Classroom

The “So what?” Factor: Learning Objectives and Outcomes

• Ability to identify and discuss individual strengths in the workplace

• Ability to apply theoretical materials (largely about organizational behavior) to observations and/or experiences from internship site

• Ability to articulate the value of this as an international experience to a potential future employer, colleague, advisor or peer

• Broadened and more nuanced understanding of how each student can individually thrive within a multi-national, multi-cultural, and ever-changing workplace

• Sharpened focus of career objectives
“It was Awesome!!!”
“It was BEYOND AWESOME...”
“...and here’s WHY”
Questions for Discussion
Stay in Touch!

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