



Managing Group Dynamics and Student Behavior

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Our Contexts



Melissa:

3-week CFANS International Program (May Short-Term Program) – Belize and Guatemala

Topic: Group Dynamics

June:

3-week LAC Global Seminar – Belfast, Istanbul, Buenos Aires, and Bocas del Toro (Panama)

Topic: Leadership and Social Change

Impact of negative behavior

- ✦ Group dynamic
- ✦ Perceptions in the host culture
- ✦ Time and energy of site host
- ✦ Your sanity!

Team Building



- ✦ Rearranging groups
- ✦ Team building ideas
 - ✦ Physically strenuous
 - ✦ Caving, night hikes, sunrise/waterfall missions

Managing Expectations



- ✦ Tolerance of ambiguity – things may not go as planned!
- ✦ Can't meet all individual needs
- ✦ Not a vacation! Have to balance with onsite coursework

Personality Issues



✦ Personality clashes

- Importance of icebreakers – strengths/triggers/background values, etc.
- Mixing up pairs/groups often

✦ Cliques

- Again, mix up often!
- Assign a “coffee date” with someone you don’t know well. Report back on something you learned about that person

✦ Not connecting with the group

- Do more small group activities
- Identify another student who could be proactive

Behavior Issues



- ✦ Alcohol
- ✦ Lack of respectful engagement
- ✦ Mental health
- ✦ General health


Preventive Strategies

Alcohol



- ✦ Identify your 2-3 areas of zero tolerance – consult with site host
- ✦ Pre-departure or first few days – have group identify expectations for how they want to represent themselves, and how they will handle conflict
- ✦ Accountability/Responsibility Contract
- ✦ Prompt response is essential

Contract as a Learning Tool



- ✦ Broader impact of individual behavior
- ✦ Increased awareness of how they are representing themselves in a different cultural context
- ✦ Increased attention to respect and responsibility in a different cultural context
- ✦ Reflection on individual credibility/leadership
- ✦ Carrying responsibility back home

Lack of Respectful Engagement



- ✦ One-on-one discussion with student first
- ✦ Engage in a group conversation about how they are being perceived

Mental Health



- ✦ Be familiar with issues on health forms
 - Have site host locate a provider ahead of time
- ✦ Be observant for signs
- ✦ Give time off if needed

General Health



- ✦ Allergic reactions – different foods/sources
 - Advise they bring Benadryl, stomach digestive relief
- ✦ Motion Sickness – plane, vans, busses, boats, trains
 - Dramamine, wristbands
- ✦ Colds/flu – take a break!

Q & A



✦ Other strategies/experiences?

✦ Q & A