

# Synchronous and Asynchronous Data Collection from Students Abroad

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## Workshop Schedule

- Introductions
  - Name
  - Representing Institution
  - Do you collect data from your students abroad?
- Defining terms
- Answer 3 questions
  - Group discussion
- Break Into Groups for Case Study Discussion
  - Assign a spokesperson for your group to give the findings to the group
- Discuss the advantages and disadvantages to various data collection methods
- Codes of Practice\*
- Personal Experience for thesis\* \*Time permitting

## Defining Terms

- Synchronous [Data Collection]
  - *existing or occurring at the same time (Oxford dictionary)*
  - data collected sequentially and within a confined period of time
- Asynchronous [Data Collection]
  - 1 not existing or occurring at the same time.
  - 2 (*Computing & Telecommunications*) *controlling the timing of operations by the use of pulses sent when the previous operation is completed rather than at regular intervals (Oxford dictionary)*
  - data collected through different methods at different times

## Defining Terms - *continued*

- Course Management System, Learning Management System or Virtual Learning Environment such as Web CT, Blackboard, and Moodle ... provides web based delivery of course information and is intended for use in group work, collaboration, communication, sharing, activities, critical reflection as a collaborative type of learning; can also be used as a data collection interface
- Email - electronic mail
- Computer chat - synchronous electronic posts
- VOIP - voice-over-internet protocol (Skype, VOIP, Engin, etc.); telephone for the internet
- Telephone - an instrument that converts sound signals into a form that can be transmitted to remote locations
- Survey - to query (someone) in order to collect data for the analysis of some aspect of a group or area.
- Journal or diary or blog - personal record of events, experiences and observations; blogging is an online form of journaling or keeping a diary

## Answering questions

- What sorts of data do you collect on your student(s) abroad and for what purpose? [Please answer on BRIGHT ORANGE paper provided]
- How do you currently collect data from your student(s) abroad? [Please answer on the AQUA BLUE paper provided]
- What questions do you have about collecting data from students abroad? [Please answer on the SPRING GREEN paper provided]

*When complete, please bring forward and place on board.*

## Possibilities for Data Collection

- Course Management System
- Email
- Computer/Internet Chat
- Telephone
- Voice-over-Internet Protocol
- Survey (Paper)
- Journal/Diary/Blog
- Face-to-Face Interview

## Course Management Systems (CMS)

- Advantages
  - Queries come quickly
  - Less storage requirements
  - Less use of paper
  - Corrections easy to make
  - Transcription is provided by participant through typing own responses
  - Doesn't require reading handwriting
  - Doesn't require good handwriting
  - Secure protocol
- Disadvantages
  - Systems slow/crashes/shuts down without saving data
  - Requires internet access
  - Requires some basic understanding of usage
  - Takes longer to complete
  - Internet costs
  - Time Zone and date concerns ... potential problems with down time during active times in other countries
  - Lag time in start-up

## Email

- Advantages
  - Bulk distribution/greater sample size
  - Low cost
  - Can reach international populations
  - Time required for implementation reduced
  - Easy response
  - Relative ease in organization pre- and post-data collection
- Disadvantages
  - Software access
  - ISPs/line speed, connectivity
  - Uncertainty of delivery or of reading
  - Computer access

## Computer Chat

- Advantages
  - Instant response
  - Lower costs
    - Potentially no paper cost or very little
    - No postage costs
    - No mailing concerns
    - Data entry is handled by participant
  - Implementation time reduced
- Disadvantage
  - Primary concern is being able to save record of chat
  - Computer accessibility
  - Connection quality

## Telephone

- Advantages
  - Reduces travel costs
  - Clarification of question may be given
  - Quicker to conduct than mail and face-to-face surveys
- Disadvantages
  - Remote areas of the world may not have telephone accessibility
  - Capturing response must be determined and put into place prior to call; potential of loss of data if capture fails
  - Transcription time is 6 hours for every 1 hour of telephone interview time
  - Unable to obtain non-verbal reactions, confusion or uneasiness
  - If there are any language or dialect/accent of either researcher or participant, telephone usage could exacerbate the problem

## Voice-Over-Internet Protocol

- Advantages
  - Allows users to make calls with high-speed broadband connection instead of traditional telephone line reducing the cost of long-distance calls significantly
  - Access anywhere there is a stable high-speed internet connection and microphone
  - Reduces travel costs
  - Clarification of question may be given
  - Quicker to conduct than mail and face-to-face surveys
  - Webcam usage
    - if used along with VOIP, non-verbal reactions, confusion or uneasiness may be observed and clarification given
    - Dialect, accent or other language impediments may be lessened with the ability to watch the participant during the call
- Disadvantages
  - Remote areas of the world may not have high-speed internet accessibility
  - Capturing responses must be determined and put into place prior to call; potential of loss of data if capture fails
  - Transcription time is 6 hours for every 1 hour of VOIP interview time
  - Unable to obtain non-verbal reactions, confusion or uneasiness unless web cam is used
  - If there are any language or dialect/accents of either researcher or participant, VOIP usage alone could exacerbate the problem
  - Broken connection
  - Unstable service
  - Computer battery power, if plug-in is not available
  - Capturing the data
  - Potential poor voice quality
  - Potential poor sound quality

## Survey (Paper)

- Advantages
  - Relatively inexpensive (especially self-administered surveys)
  - Useful in describing the characteristics of a large population
  - Administered by mail, email, telephone, VOIP, or CMS
  - Flexibility both in number of questions to ask and administration
  - Makes uniform measurement to all participants
  - Typically high in reliability
- Disadvantages
  - Standardization forces generic questions appropriate for all participants
  - Inflexibility in the tool once established
  - Can seldom deal with "context"

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## Journal/Diary/Blog

- Advantages
  - Provides reflective insights into the experience in the current timeframe of the experience
  - Visual transcription is easier than audio
  - High level of information and usually excellent personal reflection
- Disadvantages
  - Transcription of data, unless blogged or kept on a computer journal/diary format

## Face-to-Face Interviews

- Advantage
  - Potentially less time (no sending & receiving time) taken to obtain data
  - Clarification and confusion regarding questions may be addressed
  - Establishment of relationship between researcher and participant helping with any reluctance the participant may have to give truthful insights
  - Supplementary questions may be asked to obtain adequate responses
- Disadvantages
  - Intentional or unintentional influence on participant by the researcher
  - Participant may be sensitive to any cues, verbal or non-verbal, by the researcher thereby skewing the response
  - Costly in time and travel expenses
  - Transcription time is 6 hours to 1 hour of interview time

## Codes of Practice

- Researcher
  - Are Human Ethics Committees in your organization good enough?
  - What sorts of codes of practice should be considered?
- Participant
  - Are the requirements of participation enough when given to participants for signing prior to participation?
  - Not all studies are through institutions of higher learning, what should a participant expect or require?

## Thesis:

UNRAVELLING THE TAPESTRY OF THE STUDY ABROAD EXPERIENCE:  
An Investigation of the Role of Self-Identified Goals and Motivations  
in University Students

- Initial contact
  - Email and snail mail to determine if the student might be interested in participation
- First Study Contact
  - Blackboard
    - Video introduction
    - Slide show of photos of places visited while on their study abroad
    - First set of questions
- Further Contact
  - Email
  - Online chat
  - Face-to-face interview



***THANK YOU  
FOR ATTENDING***