Pre-departure workshop
Exploration

pre-departure
We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And to know the place for the first time.

T. S. Eliot, Little Gidding
Encourage a sense of exploration
Acquire concrete knowledge about the country you are visiting
Heighten curiosity about your own country
Encourage reflection on your own culture
how does it feel?

anticipation

Tuesday, 6 March 2012
i remind myself that it is going to be amazing, i am going to meet sooo many new people, everything is going to be exactly the same when i get back...
As Danielle writes:

How does one fit their life into a few bags?

So much will be left behind – and not just clothes.
It’s really confusing – you think, ‘Why can’t I function? Everything seems so similar, we speak the same language. I am perfectly capable of doing what I need to do here so why does it seem so difficult?

Something is missing but you don’t know what it is.

Student in Canada
Exploration is a state of always being lost, because one is in a new place.
Explorers carry with them ‘a sense of optimism about surviving and finding their own way’.
Getting lost is about ‘the unfamiliar appearing’ where you didn’t see it before.
When you get lost, ‘the world has become larger than your knowledge of it’.

**Getting lost is an opportunity for growth.**

Rebecca Solnit, *A field guide to getting lost*
You need to start by doing some basic research...
Trade discussions with Malaysia
6 February 2012
Dr Emerson meets with the Malaysian Minister of International Trade and Industry, Dato’ Sri Mustapa Mohamed, during trade discussions in Kuala Lumpur.

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Foreign Affairs

Trade

Getting results from Australian international agricultural research

Trade Minister consults business leaders on Asian Century

Australia condemns attacks against Israeli diplomats in India and Georgia

Australia's response to Sri Lanka's LLRC Report

Escalating crisis in Sahel and Sudan
Viktor was a very inquisitive man... He made it his mission to get out all the information I had on Australia... ranging from what were some famous Australian icons/celebrities/brands/foods; the metric system; the Australian dollar; house prices; Australians’ average annual income; the distance between capital cities; the population and demographics; the weather... and the list continues....
I am starting to suspect that Americans are not really interested in my version of Australia. They are more interested in simplified caricatures and national symbols, that offer them a more comfortable albeit conventionalised version of Australia.
Insofar as I had accumulated... expectation of Australia at all..., I had thought of it as a kind of alternative southern California, a place of constant sunshine and the cheerful vapidty of a beach lifestyle, but with a slightly British bent – a sort of *Baywatch* with cricket...

Bill Bryson, *Down Under*
How well do you know Australia?

- Indigenous issues?
- Migration & refugee policies?
- Racism?
- Compulsory voting?
I’ve noticed many weird things about Americans and their slightly skewed perception of Australia. The first thing is the fact that the kangaroo is the first thing that comes up in conversation.

The stereotypes about Australia are so apparent when people start asking you questions like do you have Kangaroos in your backyard and other silly stuff like that.

Americans are very gullible and believe anything you tell them which can be funny at times.
I don’t exactly represent the quintessential Australian, but I offer some diversity that could potentially educate Americans about Australia, and relieve some of the simplistic views they might have of us.

I think that a country is more than just the image it projects, but sometimes the image is all people care to consider..

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Relations with Australia?

• What are the particular relationships or trade issues between Australia and the country you will be visiting?
• Do we have many nationals from that country living in Australia?
• Any particular ongoing cultural/historical/political/economic relations?
• Is there any particular point about Australia which might interest people in your host country?
• Any points of conflict or potential issues?
Towards the end of orientation I left and went to my room and crashed, having not slept in nearly 48 hours.

When I lay down on the bed I was SHOCKED! The mattress was literally made out of some sort of plastic and was sooo uncomfortable. At this point i was sleep deprived, angry lonely and really missed home as this was the first time I would be away from my family for so long.

I lay there freezing and trying to sleep thinking how am I going to make it through the next three months. It was not a good feeling, I had never felt like this before, I just wanted to go home.

Sahil, USA
My first week here was the worst. I didn’t have an official orientation so I had to walk around campus and discover everything on my own (UCLA is a massive campus). I had arrived on one of the coldest days, and my room did not have heating. I lay awake in bed for most of the night thinking about home.

I guess prior to departing I thought I’d get a great big warm welcome from the university, but sadly that did not happen! It’s really quite a lot more difficult than I imagined, there’s a lot more independence involved and if you need help you have to force yourself to ask for it.

I mean, really this is a great experience but it’s not easy at all. I can safely say that not everyone is cut out for exchange!
getting ready for arrival

- Look at your host university's website
- Revisit what previous exchange students have had to say about your host country
- See ozstudentsabroad.com
- Email host university's International Office - at least you will know whether they are helpful or not!
- Plan on taking up at least familiar activities and find out ahead of time how to do so!
It was an amazing and surreal experience to be driving a dog sledge and racing through the arctic wilderness in temperatures averaging negative 25 degrees Celsius. This image represents the sense of freedom and adventure that gave me the confidence to embark on adventures such as dog sledging, snowmobiling, toboganning on the Salzburg winter Olympic track, horse riding in Iceland and snorkelling in the crack between the Eurasian and North American tectonic plates to name just a few!

Megan, 2011
BULA FROM FIJI!!! I realise that there are three things that are important to Fijians; Kava, Rugby and Church.

What surprised me at the beginning was that Islanders can be very shy especially around international students. Many presume (and sometimes they are right) that the international students are more than happy to stay together and they are shocked when you actually show interest that you want to do more than just be acquaintances.

Some of the highlights of the exchange experience is the moment where you transfer from being that Australian exchange student to being part of the group. And every time that it has happened, it has been while doing one of the three things mentioned above.

Katie, Fiji
developing a taste for discovery

- encountering the new & the unexpected
- getting lost
- but that doesn’t mean you don’t need to plan ahead
developing a taste for discovery

1. Write down five to ten things you would put on your ‘must do’/bucket list for your exchange destination getting lost.
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2. Group: Write a bucket list for visitors to Australia. Provide them with a realistic & balanced overview of Australian society, culture & way of life.
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2. Group: Write a bucket list for visitors to Australia. Provide them with a realistic & balanced overview of Australian society, culture & way of life.

3. Review your own bucket list in light of the one prepared for incoming visitors.
Sometimes I feel guilty that I am spending too much time with the other international students and therefore I am missing out on other cultural experiences.

Then I realise that spending time with the other international students, who are mostly from the USA can be at times more of a cultural experience than hanging out with friends who live in Suva. I’ve learnt so much about Americans while I am here. Some of them I love and others are so different from me in their attitudes and goals for their time in Fiji.

Katie B, Fiji
I’ve actually begun a list of crazy things other international students have said. At the top of my list, and my current favourites, are “is Wales in New Zealand?” and “Katie, why don’t you have an Australian accent?” (still don’t understand what accent they think I have).

Katie B, Fiji

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... to arrive where we started
And to know the place for the first time.
on finding the foreigner in oneself

Robert Lane Green
How do you think that foreigner will fit in when you return?
Pre-departure workshop

Thank you!
Exploration of pre-departure workshop

The Bringing the Learning Home Team: Jan Gothard (Murdoch), Greg Downey (Macquarie), & Tonia Gray (Wollongong).

The BLTH Students at all three institutions.

For more information: ozstudentsabroad.com or http://www.tlc.murdoch.edu.au/project/btlh/
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