

**LIVE FROM THE
MUSEUM! [OR, THE RED
SQUARE! OR, KYIV!]** :

***VIRTUAL EDUCATIONAL
TRAVEL IN HISTORY
CLASSROOM***

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ABSTRACT

Fieldwork is a staple of experiential teaching, whether it involves going to a museum, an archeological site or participating in a study abroad trip. The reality of the pandemic, however, placed formidable limitations on in-person travel. Whether live, synchronous, remote virtual field trips (RVFTs) could present a viable option in the context of such constraints constituted the main subject of my investigation. In 2021 and 2022, I traveled to several museums and historical sites in Wisconsin, connecting students in my global history classes via streaming interactive video platform.

This study concluded that RVFTs demonstrate a potential to enhance course content for the participants by making the globalization of curriculum and interaction with sites and sources more accessible not only for students whose travel is affected by exigencies, but also for contexts where institutional or personal considerations inhibit such journeys.



• What are Virtual Field Trips?

Fieldwork is a staple of experiential teaching. It has string potential for “activating” student minds, while thrusting them into “transformative” experiences that last a lifetime [Hovorka 2009;Pashby 2008;Lyons, Stoner, Tarrant 2014]. Since the 1960s and especially since the publication of Kolb’s Learning Cycle theorem, higher education saw an exponential increase in the study and praxis of fieldwork teaching [Kolb 1984].

The arrival of the digital age opened new opportunities for experiential learning via online-based or digital representations of reality.

Elementary versions of the virtual field trips or VFTs, whereby students visit a website, or go through 360’ panorama pictures in class have been around since the 1990s [Radke 2016;Stainfield 2000]

*To see how the U Colorado’s Boulder Creek Virtual Field Trip worked in 1999, take an Internet Archive’s WayBack Machine to:

<http://web.archive.org/web/20000901232629/http://www.colorado.edu/geography/COGA/geogweb/boulder creek-2/> *above – Prado Museum, Madrid, panorama.

What are Remote-Virtual Field Trips?

With the advances of technology and the challenges of the 2020 pandemic, new, live-streaming, interactive or VR-enhanced platforms of RVFTSs/ virtual educational travel emerged throughout higher education [Rose 2020; CEA 2021; IES-Abroad 2021].

RVFTs can be VR-enhanced and non-VR-enhanced.

Non-VR RVFTs usually feature the instructor at the site connecting to students via Zoom or other live streaming platforms. As instructor's live-streaming camera moves, students explore the site as directed/guided by the camera and the instructor.

Non-VR-enhanced and VR-enhanced remote-virtual field trips have been prominent lately in the adoption of virtual study abroad offerings throughout the higher education sector.

Such as....

UW Art, Design and Wellness in China



EXAMPLE 1:
VIRTUAL
STUDY
ABROAD UW-
MADISON

This virtual program is currently accepting applications for Summer 2022.

Due to the global pandemic, the Program Leader for the UW Art, Design, and Wellness in China program developed a virtual program option for Summer 2021 which will run again in Summer 2022, replacing the in-person program. The in-person program is expected to run again in Summer 2023.

China, Beijing

Virtual Course Description (Summer 2022)

Join us for an exciting three week, three-credit program combining well-being, public health, art, history, the environment, and sustainable design in China. Over 400 students

Eligibility

- 2.0 cumulative GPA
- Sophomore, Junior, Senior, Graduate Student
- Open to UW-Madison degree-seeking students and Wisconsin residents seeking a degree at a US college or university. Preference is given to UW-Madison students
- Good academic and disciplinary standing

Example 2: Virtual Study Abroad – VR-enhanced. Tennessee.



International Studies takes students on global virtual trip

By Diana Fedinec and Jessica Miller

When the Coronavirus pandemic hit in March 2020, one of the first safety measures enacted by the COVID-19 Task Force was to halt all local, national and international College-related travel. The decision actually impacted the International Studies Program as students were preparing to study abroad.

The pandemic may have disrupted international travel, but it did not stop international study. The International Studies Department launched a new virtual curriculum that allowed students to travel from the safety of a PC or laptop. “COVID-19 may have shut down borders, but it opened a gateway for students to expand their horizons and connect with people from different cultures through a new virtual reality (VR) study abroad



Dylan Hartmann navigates a virtual reality tour on an Apple computer using an Oculus Quest 2 headset.



2022

VIRTUAL REALITY & STUDY ABROAD: LONDON & OXFORD

Utilizing virtual study abroad programming and virtual reality (VR) technology, immerse yourself in history and culture as the class travels virtually to London and Oxford. The course will highlight the fascinating topics of history, science, business, and global awareness.

**15-17 FEBRUARY 2022
7PM TO 8:30 PM**

SOUTH PIEDMONT COMMUNITY COLLEGE
OLD CHARLOTTE HIGHWAY CAMPUS
MAIN BUILDING, ROOM 3211

NON-CREDIT COURSE

**OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
AGE 18 YEARS & OLDER**

**COURSE UTILIZES
VR HEADSETS**



INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Kira Ferris
Director, International Education

FOR REGISTRATION CONTACT:
704-290-5110, NAVIGATE@SPCC.EDU OR GO TO:

www.spcc.edu/internationaleducation/virtual-study-abroad-opportunities

How can short-term RVFTs improve student learning in the history classroom in comparison to other online modes of experiential learning?

Can a lecture delivered directly from the museum bring students a better educational experience than exploring a website art collection of that museum?

Can a lecture taught live from, let's say, the museum, or the Red Square, aid student experience of a particular historical topic tied to the site of exploration?

In 2021-2022, I have conducted several RVFTs trips for my students enrolled into my World Civilization II courses. Among them were:

October 2022: Chazen Museum of Art, Madison, WI

November 2022: Jewish Museum Holocaust Museum Milwaukee

March 2022: Chernobyl Museum, Kyiv, Ukraine (trip cancelled, more on this later)

April 2022: Chazen Museum of Art, Madison, WI

CHAZEN MUSEUM HIGHLIGHTS
2021 AND 2022:

East Asian and Japanese art

East Asian material culture and
industry historical artefacts

Russian and Ukrainian art

World War I and World War II
memorabilia



JEWISH MUSEUM
MILWAUKEE/HOLOCAUST
EDUCATION CENTER
HIGHLIGHTS:

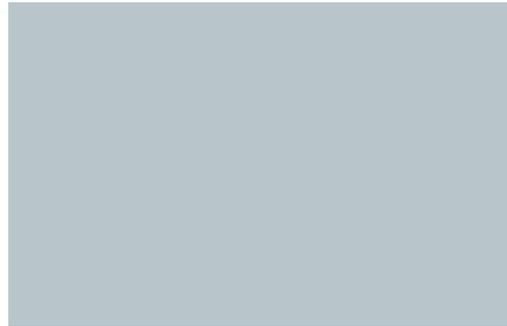
LETTERS/POSTCARDS

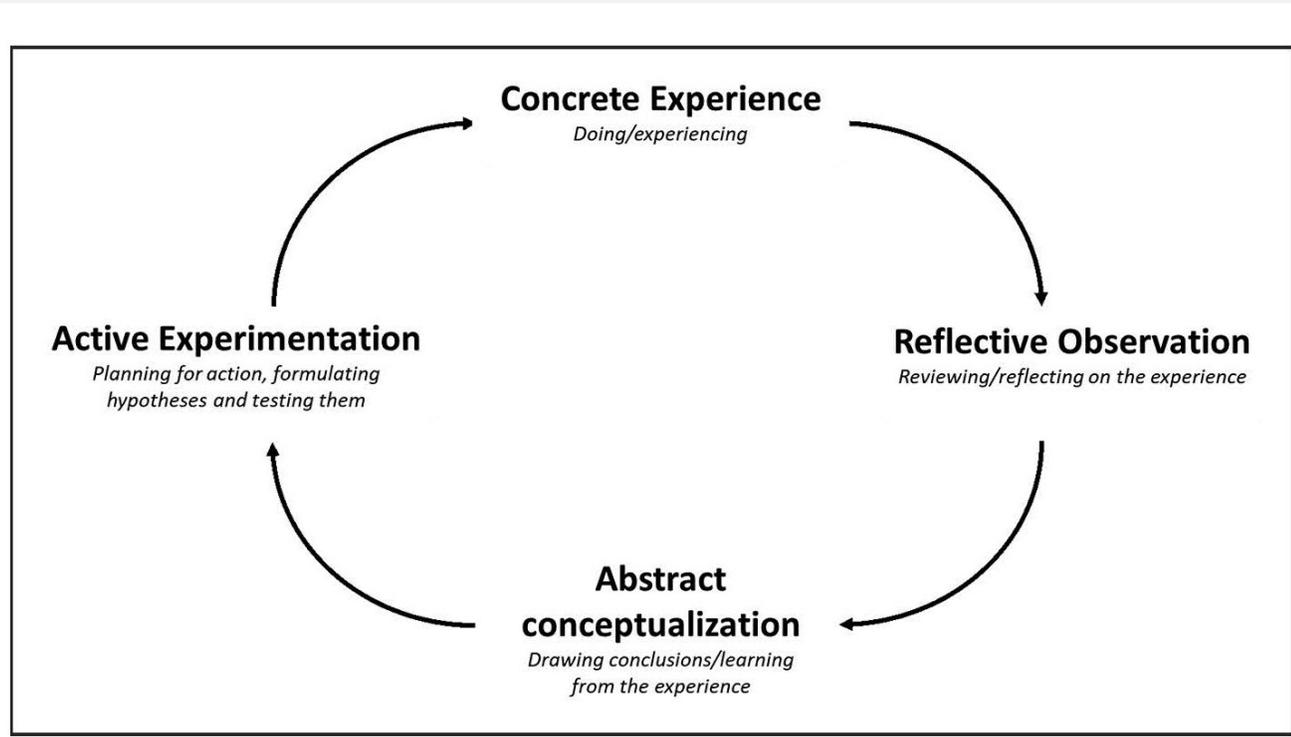
JEWISH LIFE IN WISCONSIN

IMMIGRATION

LIFE IN THE GHETTOS
(MATERIAL ARTEFACTS)

LIFE IN CONCENTRATION
CAMPS





- Kolb (1984) Experiential Learning Cycles

Novelty or exceptionality of experience. “Concrete experience” and “reflective observation” of Kolb Diagram.

1) October 20, 2021. Chazen Museum.

Does the experience of this fieldtrip (or content/knowledge learned) connect to what you studied in any other classes at UW-Platteville?

Many connections to other classes.		0 %	✓
Some connections to what I studied in other classes.	12 respondents	24 %	██████████
Very little connections to what I studied in other courses.	22 respondents	44 %	████████████████████
No connection whatsoever.	16 respondents	32 %	████████████████
No Answer	1 respondent	2 %	██

2) November 18, 2021. Holocaust and Jewish Museum

Does the experience of this fieldtrip (or content/knowledge learned) connect to what you studied in any other classes at UW-Platteville?

Many connections to other classes.	1 respondent	2 %	✓
Some connections to what I studied in other classes.	12 respondents	29 %	██████████
Very little connections to what I studied in other courses.	21 respondents	50 %	████████████████████
No connection whatsoever.	8 respondents	19 %	██████████

3) April 6, 2022. Chazen Museum of Art

Does the experience of this fieldtrip (or content/knowledge learned) connect to what you studied in any other classes at UW-Platteville?

Many connections to other classes.		0 %	✓
Some connections to what I studied in other classes.	9 respondents	32 %	██████████
Very little connections to what I studied in other courses.	14 respondents	50 %	████████████████████
No connection whatsoever.	5 respondents	18 %	██████████

“Concrete experience”: novelty or exceptionality of experience

CLASS DEMOGRAPHICS BY MAJOR/FIELD OF STUDY compared to previous slide’s responses (SLIDE 13):

FALL 2021:

Engineering majors = 58%; traditional arts and sciences (arts, humanities, social sciences, natural sciences) = 21%; health sciences = 7%; construction management = 7%; Agriculture = 3%; business (accounting, management, etc.) = 4%

SPRING 2022:

Engineering majors= 60%; traditional arts and sciences (arts, humanities, social sciences, natural sciences) = 27%; health sciences = 4%; computer science = 2%, Agriculture =5%, marketing = 2%.

(*I have no access to how students identify based on race, identity, etc.)

Chazen Museum Experiences

October 20, 2021

In regards to the Japanese art, how much did you know about the culture of Japan before the fieldtrip?

A lot.		0 %	✓
Some knowledge.	24 respondents	48 %	
Very little.	23 respondents	46 %	
No knowledge.	5 respondents	10 %	
No Answer	1 respondent	2 %	

Percentage of students learning more after the field trip than known before: **98%**

April 6, 2022

In regards to the East Asian art, how much did you know about the culture of Japan and China before the fieldtrip?

A lot.	1 respondent	4 %	✓
Some knowledge.	10 respondents	36 %	
Very little.	15 respondents	54 %	
No knowledge.	2 respondents	7 %	

Percentage of students learning more after the field trip than known before: **100%**

- Wisconsin Jewish Museum Experiences

- Exploration of primary source/material collections (letters and postcards sent by Holocaust victims to their relatives in Wisconsin)

During the fieldtrip, we looked at the letters and postcards, written by Jews during the Holocaust. How much did these letters/postcards help you learn better about the reality or context in which the Jews lived?

A lot.	19 respondents	45 %	 ✓
Somewhat.	21 respondents	50 %	
Very little.	2 respondents	5 %	
No additional knowledge gained from studying letters/postcards.		0 %	

Other statistics:

(1) Preference for RVFTs versus VFTs in October 20th (Chazen) fieldtrip – 90%; Nov 18th (Jewish Museum) fieldtrip - 93%; April 6th (Chazen) fieldtrip – 96%

(2) Abstract conceptualization - connection to class materials studied in World Civilization II (whether the field trip helped connect to or better understand course content):

October 20th fieldtrip: 66% many connections; 34% some connection; 6% little or no connection; 2% no answer

Nov 18th fieldtrip: 52% many connections; 43% some connection; 5% little or no connection

April 6th fieldtrip: 37% many connections; 59% some connections; 4% little or no connection

OVERVIEW:

*This study argues that RVFTs enhance student learning in hybrid or entirely online teaching environments where in-person fieldtrips are out of reach.

*This study argues that RVFTs provide a superior learning experience to rudimentary VFTs such as panoramic or digital image/site exploration.

*This study demonstrates that RVFTs can engage students with three out of four Kolb's learning cycles: concrete experience, reflective observation and abstract conceptualization.

*This study does NOT conclude that RVFTs can be superior replacements to the in-person fieldwork modalities.

*The example of RVFTs aims to raise the question of necessity of developing hybridized or flexible educational travel options in times when travel becomes limited by exigencies.

POSSIBLE BENEFITS TO UW-PLATTEVILLE:

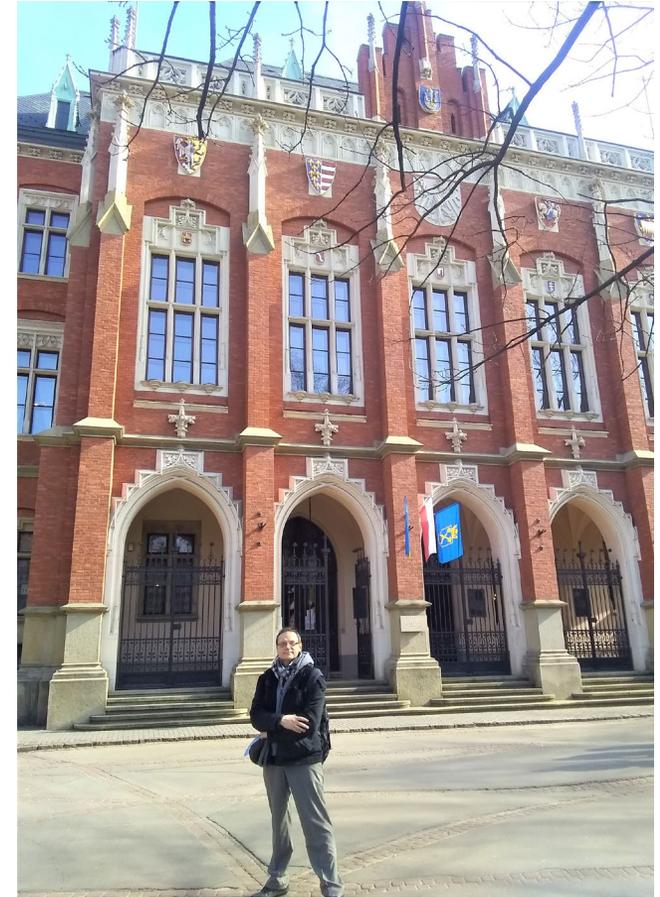
- (1) UW-Platteville's revenue stream may benefit from remote virtual fieldtrip or study abroad experiences. For example, UW-Madison was charging the instate tuition of \$1,750 (fees are extra) for its virtual study abroad excursions, while commercial higher ed organizations often charge more.
- (2) Developing a dedicated RVFT-type platform can offer benefits to students who are not in the instructor's classroom (for example, the on-campus instructor connects UW-Platteville's engineering or history classroom to the live-streaming on-site location inside the VW factory in Germany or the KGB Museum in Prague)
- (3) Use of RVFTs can stimulate our campus' international exchange where virtual or hybridized study abroad engagement can develop further in-person collaborative partnerships.
- (4) RVFTs may offer artistic or travel-themed virtual enhancement of curriculum in the tourism and hospitality program at UW-Platteville Baraboo/Sauk City.

POST SCRIPTUM: *REFUGEE PEDAGOGY*

My spring semester travel to Ukraine to connect my students to the museums in Kyiv did not materialize due to the war and due to the catastrophic family situation there.

During the spring break 2022, I traveled to Krakow, Poland to assist my refugee family members' evacuation.

Although this was a personal trip and not related to WTFS, I managed to spend several days at Krakow's Jagiellonian University (right) to assist in any way I could with the emerging educational and existential needs of many displaced scholars and students arriving at the university from Ukraine.



My hosts at the Jagiellonian gave me a privilege to deliver a lecture in Ukrainian to the classroom where half of the students were recently displaced from Eastern Ukraine.

In addition to discussing the nuances of virtual fieldtrip learning, I learned a lot about refugee pedagogy and the role that classroom technology plays in developing and sustaining educational momentum of the war-time curriculum.

I hope that this accidental partnership, developed with the Jagiellonian University, will bring more collaborative opportunities in the near future.

