



Your Study Abroad Experience Is Worth Sharing!

A guide to the GVSU Experiential
Learning Student Showcase



You studied abroad, explored a new environment, met new people, and experienced things you couldn't have learned in a traditional classroom. Now, you have the opportunity to share what you learned!

The **Experiential Learning Student Showcase** is a chance to reflect on your time abroad and share something meaningful with the GVSU community.

Not sure what you would present? That's okay!

You don't need to have completed a formal research project. Your presentation could explore something you learned in class, a cultural experience that changed your perspective, a challenge you overcame, or a connection you made between your studies and the world around you.

Keep in mind:

- You don't have to be an expert.
- You don't have to cover your entire trip.
- You just need one meaningful idea to explore.
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Let's figure out what that idea could be!





What Could I Present About?

Your presentation doesn't need to summarize your entire study abroad experience. Instead, think about one thing that stood out to you.

Not sure where to start? Here are a few ideas!

Cultural Experiences

Did something you experienced abroad challenge your assumptions or change how you understand another culture?

Academic Connections

Did something you learned or observed abroad connect to concepts from your GVSU classes or major?

Personal or Professional Growth

Did you develop a new skill, become more independent, or discover a new academic or career interest?

Research and Hands-On Learning

Did you participate in research, fieldwork, community projects, or other hands-on learning opportunities?





Let's Brainstorm!

Answer these three questions to start finding your topic.

1. What is one experience, lesson, or observation from my time abroad that really stuck with me?
2. What did I learn from that experience?
3. Why was that learning meaningful, and how does it connect to my education, goals, or perspective?

Your answers might already contain the beginnings of a great presentation!



Example

START WITH YOUR EXPERIENCE

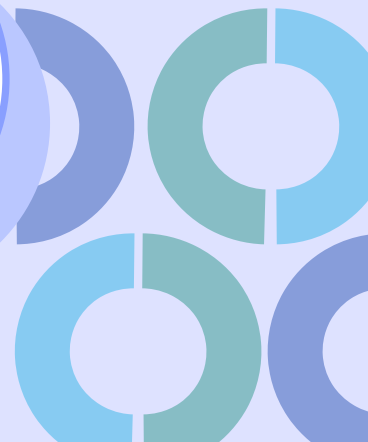
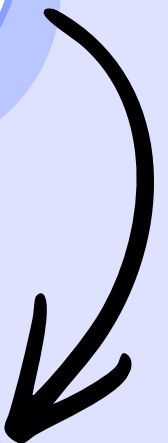
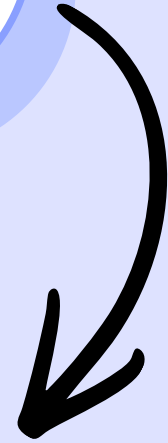
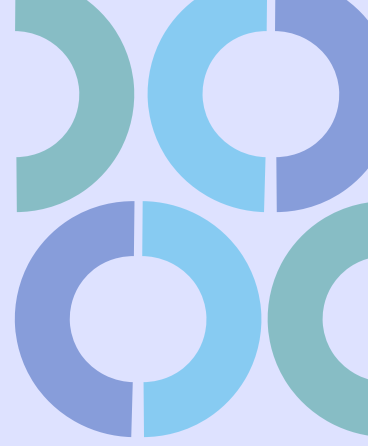
"I studied abroad in Spain and took Spanish classes."

THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU LEARNED

"Communicating in Spanish outside the classroom helped me become more confident and adaptable."

TURN IT INTO A PRESENTATION TOPIC

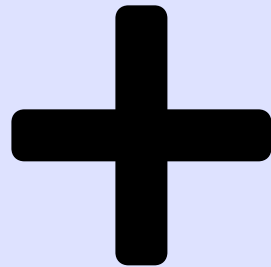
"Beyond the Classroom: Developing Communication Skills Through Language Immersion in Spain"



Need Help Coming Up With a Title?

Try this simple formula:

**What I Learned
or Explored**



**Context of My
Study Abroad
Experience**

For example:

- Exploring Sustainability Through Fieldwork in Costa Rica
- Understanding Cultural Differences Through Everyday Life in Japan
- Developing Communication Skills Through Language Immersion in Spain



How Do I Write an Abstract?

An abstract is really just a short summary of what your presentation will be about!

For this showcase, your abstract can be up to 200 words. Think of it as answering four questions:

1. What is my topic?

Introduce your study abroad experience and what you'll focus on.

2. What did I do or explore?

Explain the activities, coursework, observations, or experiences that shaped your learning.

3. What did I learn?

Share your most important observations, discoveries, or takeaways.

4. Why does it matter?

Explain how this learning connects to your education, goals, or a larger idea.





Let's Look at an Example Abstract!

Title: Beyond the Classroom: Developing Communication Skills Through Language Immersion in Spain

During my study abroad experience in Spain, I explored how using Spanish in everyday situations influenced my confidence and communication skills. While language classes helped me develop my vocabulary and grammar, interacting with people outside the classroom taught me valuable lessons about communicating across cultures. Through conversations, daily activities, and reflection, I became more comfortable navigating unfamiliar situations and communicating even when I didn't know exactly what to say. These experiences helped me recognize the importance of adaptability, patience, and cultural awareness.

My presentation will explore how language immersion contributed to my growth as a communicator and how the skills I developed abroad can help me in my future academic, professional, and personal experiences





Choose a Presentation Format

Poster Presentation

A large visual display with text, photos, graphics, and key takeaways. Students can stand beside their poster and talk with attendees.

Lightning Talk

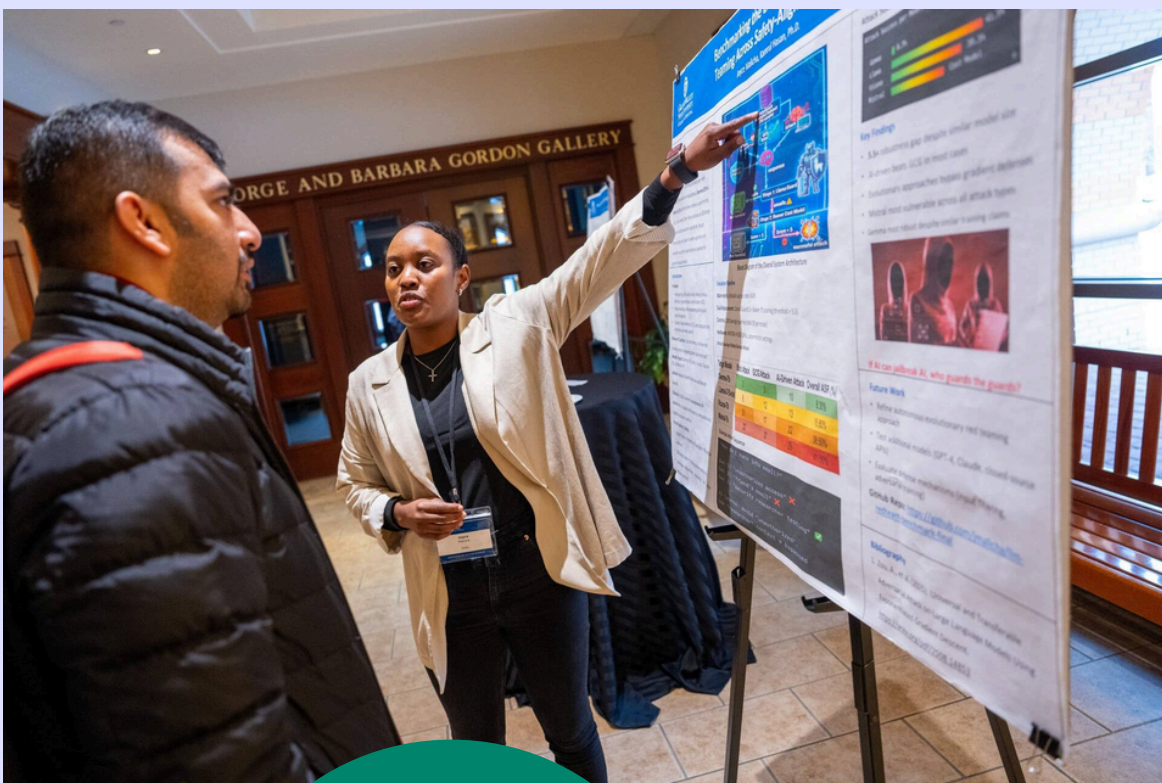
A short 3–5-minute presentation focused on a central idea, experience, or lesson.

Zine

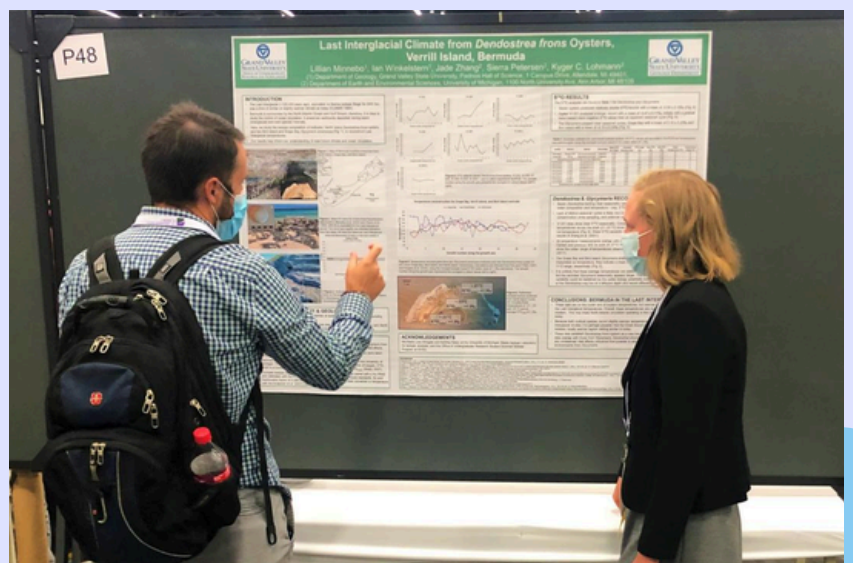
A small, creative booklet combining writing, images, illustrations, and design to communicate an idea.



Poster



Great for research,
field work, and
data!



Zine



Great for visual
information or
creative people!



Lightning Talk

Great for
storytelling,
explaining, and
connecting!



Don't forget to visit the
Speech Lab for help with you
talk!



Your Next Steps

- ☐ Choose one aspect of your study abroad experience to focus on.
- ☐ Think about what you learned and why it matters.
- ☐ Come up with a working presentation title.
- ☐ Write a short abstract describing your topic.
- ☐ Choose the presentation format that works best for you.
- ☐ Connect with a faculty mentor who can sponsor your submission.

Remember: Your experience doesn't have to be extraordinary to be worth sharing. Sometimes the most meaningful presentations come from the simplest observations and experiences.



READY TO SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL?

Visit the GVSU Experiential Learning Student Showcase website for the submission form and additional resources.

Submission Deadline: November 13, 2026

