Preparing to Highlight your Study Abroad Skills in a Job Interview

First, think about some of the skills you may have gained/developed through study abroad:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ability to establish rapport</th>
<th>Familiarity with local customs</th>
<th>Perseverance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to handle stress and unfamiliar situations</td>
<td>Flexibility</td>
<td>Positive outlook toward hardship and adversity</td>
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<td>Ability to make transitions</td>
<td>Goal establishment</td>
<td>Relationship building skills</td>
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<td>Adaptability</td>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Research experience</td>
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<td>Adventurous spirit</td>
<td>Intercultural Competence</td>
<td>Resourcefulness</td>
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<td>Analytical experience</td>
<td>Language proficiency</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
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<td>Assertiveness</td>
<td>Listening and observation</td>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
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<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Managing, organizing, or leading others</td>
<td>Self-reliance</td>
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<td>Cross-cultural communication</td>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
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<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>Open-mindedness</td>
<td>Time management</td>
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<td>Diversity tolerance</td>
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Second, reflect on the following prompts to help you identify and articulate specific indicators of the skills you learned abroad:

1. Identify an experience that would demonstrate that you can have a basic command of the local language, and be able to use it in a practical situation (Student in Spain, apartment, work, took classes)
2. Identify an experience that would demonstrate that you can take personal risks and act independently
3. Identify an experience that would demonstrate that you can creatively solve problems by applying familiar concepts to unfamiliar situations
4. Identify an experience that would demonstrate that you can contribute to an ethnically diverse team
5. Identify an experience that would demonstrate that you can be self-confident, yet able to listen and learn from people whose value systems are different
6. Identify an experience that would demonstrate that you can be flexible and adaptable to rapidly changing situations

Source: Matherly, Ch.. Effective Marketing of International Experiences to Employers. Impact of Education Abroad on Career Development. Volume I.

Third, use the experiences and situations described above to answer behavioral questions asked in an interview.
Behavior-Based Interviews:

These interviews are based on the premise that your recent, relevant past performance is the best predictor of future performance in similar circumstances. Interviewers seek specific examples to get as detailed an understanding as they can about the way candidates have responded in similar situations and challenges. They are looking for proof that you can demonstrate the desired capabilities in the real world.

There is a three-step process to answering these questions:

- **Situation:** Describe a challenge you faced similar to the example posed by the interviewer.
- **Action:** Explain the actions that you took to resolve the situation.
- **Results/Outcome:** Detail the beneficial and positive outcomes that came from your initiatives.

Below are some questions commonly asked in the behavior-based interview:

- Tell me about a time when you changed your approach to a project after starting it. Why did you feel it was necessary to make the change? What was the result?
- Give me specific examples of several projects you were working on at the same time. How did you keep track of their progress? How did they turn out?
- Describe a time when a team member openly criticized you for something. Why were you criticized? How did you respond? What could you have done differently?
- Give me a specific example of a time when you had to meet a deadline, but your professor wasn't available to answer a question and you were unsure how to proceed. What did you do? What was the outcome?
- Describe a creative/innovative idea that you produced which led to a significant contribution to the success of an activity or project.
- Tell me about an interpersonal conflict you have had with someone and how you dealt with it.
- Tell me about a time when you were a leader of a group. What was the most difficult thing about that experience?
- Tell me about a time when you were working as part of a team and someone else wasn't pulling their weight. How did you handle it?
- Tell me about a team you were on that didn't work very well together. What did you do to help resolve the situation?
- By giving examples, what role do you typically play on teams?

Since employers may not ask you direct questions on how your study abroad experience makes you the best candidate for the position, it is up to you to think of some good examples beforehand.

Adapted from the 2008 NorCal Lessons From Abroad Handbook