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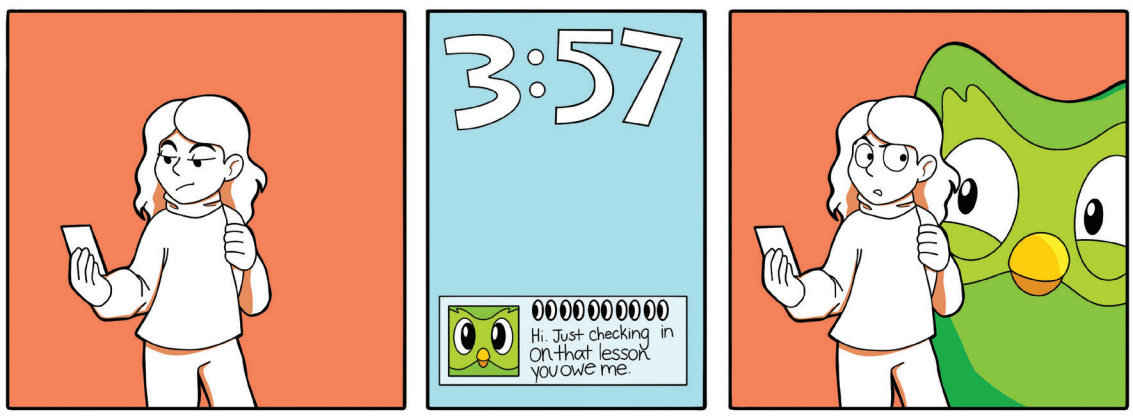
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COMIC BY ERIKA ECHEGOYEN, CONTRIBUTING ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS

Daily OPINION

When studying abroad, don't just visit. Live there

by Evelyn Pazan
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If you scroll through the Instagram account of someone who studied abroad, you might think that it looked like a fantastic vacation. They might've toured the desert in Marrakesh, enjoyed a boat trip on the Amalfi Coast or climbed the Eiffel Tower in Paris.

What Instagram doesn't show is the endless visa paperwork, the unfamiliar class registration system or the countless forms and bureaucratic tasks to be completed before arrival and departure.

Despite what Instagram makes it look like, studying abroad is more than just country hopping every weekend. When you've lived abroad the right way and spent meaningful time in your home base, you've learned much more about the culture, the lifestyle and the politics that truly characterize the country. And isn't that the whole point?

When I decided to go abroad to Germany, I also made the conscious decision to limit my travel. While I did take advantage of a few long weekends to go to surrounding countries, I spent most of my time in the cities near my own. While part of me felt left out seeing the adventures my friends were taking, another part of me knew that I was gaining something that you can't get on a weekend trip: the chance to build a life somewhere new.

Building that life came with experiences much too boring to put on my Instagram, like figuring out how to register as a resident and learning to navigate a different type of grocery store with employees who spoke a different language. At first, these tasks took an exhausting amount of thought. They forced me to practice German words that I had never had to use and figure out new things without relying on the familiar. But after some time, things that were once scary became routine. That taught me more about independence than a trip to Rome ever could.

When what was once intimidating became the new standard, I had more energy to catch the German nuances and secrets that I might've missed as a tourist. The days when I felt bored were often the days when I tried new cafés, wandered into street festivals and observed how those around me lived. Ordinary citizens interacted with strangers differently and prioritized different things in their free time. Even though those experiences don't seem exciting, that was exactly the point. These are the things that you can't learn from a travel guide, because immersing yourself in a culture is so much more than recognizing the famous foods and landmarks. Sometimes you have to spend a day as an ordinary person.

Choosing to prioritize your home base is an important part of fighting homesickness, and the best way to do that is to invest yourself in the community around you. In my abroad destination, I tagged along with a citizen to see what the voting process was like. I even watched political rallies and protests so that I could understand what people in my city believed in and how they made their voices heard. After a while, it didn't really matter that I was there temporarily or that I couldn't even vote. I had spent enough time with my new community that their issues mattered to me too.

Sometimes I hear students measure their study abroad success by counting countries, and don't get me wrong, there is value in taking the opportunity to travel while you're abroad. But does 48 hours in each country really count as international experience when you haven't had the chance to deeply experience one? It's time that we stop measuring the success of a semester abroad with countries visited and instead assess how well we came to know the one we called home.

GET ANALOG!

by Alexander Renzulli
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For the vast majority of human history, we have functioned as an analog society. It's pretty safe to say that from the time we started going "ooga booga" to our time, in which we go "ooga booga" with only slightly more sophistication. We've been mostly accustomed to a world without digital screens, electricity and devices. Furthermore, it seems like within only the last 50 years, we've been in a world where technology and devices seem to control our everyday lives. Recently, I've been thinking about how I can derive more enjoyment from life and spend less time on my iPhone, and the answer is so simple: get analog!

I hate my morning routine. After the alarm on my phone screams at me bright and early, I begrudgingly roll to my side, pick up said phone and then scroll on said phone as the first action of my morning. I create my schedule on my computer, go back to my phone to check the weather and plug my ears with headphones. This is all before I even touch any grass or smell any semblance of fresh air in the morning. As much as I consider myself a nature-loving guy, I'm merely living in a material world, and I am a material girl... or something like that. As Frank Passemato put it in his TED Talk, "the digital world is the infinite world inside your device, and the analog world is the world immediately around you. The world you experience with your senses and inside you."

To get analog is to use devices and mechanisms that can replace the need for a smartphone. Every mechanism on a smartphone is just a digitized version of something that already exists, so why not use the physical item instead? When we invest more time into using a physical item, we invest more time into life. The process of finding, configuring and then using something analog rather than just using a phone for the function gives us more autonomy past our device and ensures we are taking control back from the screen. When we touch, feel and experience things not on the screen, we inherently become more invested in the "real world." To get analog is to get human.

ILLUSTRATION BY KIRA YOUNG, CONTRIBUTING ARTIST/THE DAILY CAMPUS



Living more analog is a better lifestyle choice for us, as a society, than living in a high-speed reality. Analog living can feel like a slow, laborious version of life, but I would say that is a wonderful thing. As Possemato puts it, refusing the device gives you time to think about your own thoughts and not "letting a device make them for you." We have become so accustomed to noise that the lack thereof is uncomfortable. We feel unstable in our own skin, so any distance we get, we resort to the phone. It's why reading a book suddenly felt so ungratifying and hard after middle school. I, too, am a victim of the open one app, close it and immediately open it again loop. We've become so used to everything feeling important, immediate and relevant so that when there is a simulation void, we are programmed to search for something to fill it as soon as possible. We've lost intentionality within that scramble.

In the iPhone world we live in, I feel like we've lost this rich texture that used to exude from the world. In the name of smoothness and efficiency, the iPhone has stripped the tactile aspect of living. The grain and grit that came from the imperfections of older, pre-21st century technology added an element to our products that made them a unique experience. It's the static of vinyl records that make sound cozy and nostalgic, and as a little add-on, I get a nice piece of artwork to admire with it. It is the flipping of a book's pages that gives us a sense of progression, and thus pleasure, when we read. Your teachers aren't lying when they insist that taking notes with pen and paper is more beneficial to memory and success. It's tactile and hardwires learning straight to your brain. When I write, I also get into the wonderful habit of doodling, which leads to a creative offspring of its own.

To love an analog life does not mean giving up technology forever. That would be naive and near impossible in the modern world. Screen technology older than the iPhone is a perfect alternative to screen time and scrolling. Playing video games on a tablet or watching movies are forms of activities that mitigate short-term thinking for long-term dedication.

In essence, when we look up from our phones and spend more time interacting with the world, we spend more time interacting with each other. We unlock that childlike joy and exploration that lends itself to great adventure. To look up and get analog is to acknowledge opportunity, spark ideas and journey off into a physical world we've forgotten.