

Teachers in their own words

Hear from Group Leaders
on what it's like to
TRAVEL WITH ACIS



Exceptional Educational Journeys

How have your students benefited from **educational travel**?

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I have taken nine trips with students since 2007 and with each one I have seen changes in students, or they have shared with me how the experience positively impacted their lives. These two quotes from students on my last trip to Costa Rica sum up these experiences:

“This trip allowed me to come out of my comfort zone with trying new things.”

“This trip has been the most amazing experience of my life; I conquered a lot of fears here and learned I am a lot stronger than I thought.”

Pamela Reynolds
Spanish Teacher, NY



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Every destination I have shared with my students since 1975 **has enriched all of our lives**. I tell my students we are travelers, not tourists, and I have watched as they have been **empowered by their foreign travel experiences**. With every trip, I revel in the looks of wonder in their eyes as they finally get out of textbooks and into this amazing world we share. That travel changes lives is an understatement; **it revolutionizes young lives**.

Michael Conn
Social Studies Teacher, PA

“I love to see my **student travelers with ACIS become more mature and gain confidence**. In the beginning, students are timid in their language interactions and by the end of the trip they are ordering their own food and bargaining at the flea market. The **group experience promotes inclusivity** as students who would probably never have interacted back home forge friendships through their similar experiences. Most importantly, the **trips trigger a passion in students for culture and travel**. I love when former travelers contact me to tell me about their university experiences abroad. It is the true measure of how travel changes lives.”

Elizabeth Zingales
French Teacher, Ohio



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I've witnessed **growth and maturity in big and small ways**. The sheer exposure to another culture via travel abroad **alters the perspectives and perceptions of a student**, and this educational experience is frequently a compilation of mini “light bulb” moments as the student explores museums, eats something new, practices a foreign language, or engages directly with a resident.



Mary Claire Kasunic
French Teacher, PA



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The world is accessible to everyone. In an age when we are spending more and more time behind screens, these real-life experiences remind my students that there is no substitute for the real things. I want my students to **immerse themselves in the culture of a city or country**. Whenever possible, we take walks, go to supermarkets or travel to places where locals might enjoy going themselves.



Anthony D'Amico
English Teacher, NY

What makes ACIS **stand out** from competitors?

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The safety of my students during the trip is the most important thing. Knowing that ACIS will take care of anything that goes wrong, (and hopefully it won't!) is **peace of mind that is priceless**. I will only consider tour companies that make this their top priority. This way I can focus on my students and make sure that they have the best experience. I have traveled once with another company. ACIS was so much better. When it was time for me to pick a tour company, I literally did not hesitate one second.”

Véronique Silverman
French Teacher, WA



“**M**y first European adventure was with another company that another teacher set up and though it was less expensive, you have to consider all the corners the company cut. For example, students were hungry after the meals and were told they could not receive any more food. So our adult travelers sacrificed their meal portions to give to the students or they bought more food afterwards. When a traveler was injured (who had purchased the premium medical plan), the insurance company refused to pay.

Last year was my first trip with ACIS – I inherited it from a teacher who could not travel. After our first trip to England, France and Germany (a WWII tour), **I was so impressed with the quality of lodging, food, tour guide and sites** that I am sticking with ACIS!”

Deanna Chambers
Multi-subject Teacher, OR





My first 3 trips were with a budget travel provider and I was very dissatisfied. **I also learned the hard way that I was not saving money by using a “cheaper” company.** On each of the 3 trips, there were so many hidden costs that in the end I was paying the same price for a trip that did not meet my expectations. I have absolutely loved traveling with ACIS; the tour directors, food, itineraries, and hotels are all fantastic! **When you are asking families to invest their money and time, you need a company you can trust to deliver an amazing trip.”**

Renee Sumption
Spanish Teacher, CA



The reason I keep traveling with ACIS is their **impeccable customer service**. I can count on my travel coordinator to respond to any request within hours. One time, traveling back from Barcelona in January, half the country's airports shut down due to a snowstorm. When I landed in New York City, all the flights heading south had been cancelled. Standing in an airport that was quickly filling with stranded passengers, I thought, “Maybe I should call ACIS.” James picked up the phone, I alerted him to the situation. He said, “Let me call you back in 10 minutes.” In seven minutes, James had re-booked my flight, booked me into a hotel and had directions to the location for me to catch the airport shuttle to the hotel.”

Christie Manners
ELA Teacher, TX



How can ACIS help you meet your classroom goals?

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While specific educational goals can be aligned to ACIS trips, I have an open-ended approach. I teach British Literature and therefore enjoy **watching students experience many of the places where writers gained their inspiration** for the works we read in class. The Lake District in England allows many students to revel in nature the same way that the Romantic Poets did in their work.”

Roxannah Hunter
English Teacher, PA

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I really appreciate that ACIS aids the Group Leaders in personalizing their trips. I have been many times and look forward to making additions and requests to make each trip special. ACIS is willing to customize the trip according to each groups persona.”

Sheila Goodfellow
French Teacher, AR



“**B**eing a Latin teacher, it can be hard to make kids feel like what we’re talking about is real. After all, it happened 2,000+ years ago on the other side of the globe. And while Latin and Roman culture are infused into our lives more than kids realize, nothing beats seeing it in person. Nothing makes it come to life more than feeling small next to the Colosseum, walking the streets of Pompeii, or reaching out and touching a building that has seen so much. ACIS not only takes us to these amazing places, but they tailor the experience to whatever their teachers ask from them.

Ryan Vinson
Latin Teacher, TN





It is so important to work with a student travel company that offers flexibility to an already excellent program. Upon review of the initial itinerary, I communicate any need to add additional educational goals.

For example, Iceland's Natural Wonders already included STEM educational objectives. However, it was very important that I include the "A" of S.T.E.A.M., Arts. All my research said that Iceland is a photographer's dream. So, why not include a lesson on photography?

In addition, I stress the importance of giving back to the community. ACIS worked with me to include a hands-on land conservation pilot program by Carbon and Land Restoration Volunteering Program (CARES) organized by the Icelandic Environment Association, in collaboration with the US Embassy in Iceland, to help out with soil conservation."

Edna Pajela
STEM Teacher, TX



Since 1978, ACIS, the American Council for International Studies, has been a leader in exceptional overseas educational travel for middle and high school students, and their teachers. At ACIS, our mission is to empower educators to introduce their students to the world beyond the classroom and inspire the next generation of global citizens. Pushing the experience from “good enough” to exceptional is what we do every day.



WANT TO EXPOSE YOUR STUDENTS TO OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING ACROSS THE GLOBE?



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