

Guided Engagement Case Study

Why We Used Microsoft Teams

For Junemester 2025, we piloted a creative workaround: combining Microsoft Teams, Planner, and Forms to simulate a single digital space for onboarding, communication, and experience tracking.

Our goal was to validate a key idea:

- Can a unified platform improve student engagement and program efficiency before, during, and after study abroad?

The answer? Yes - concept proven. But the process revealed exactly where Microsoft Teams fell short and why Voyije is purpose-built to do it better.

What Worked

- Microsoft Teams offered a centralized workspace where students could:
- Complete pre-departure checklists
- Receive announcements and logistics updates
- Ask questions and interact with staff
- Submit pulse surveys and stay informed

This multi-functional approach had a real impact:

- 21 of 25 students completed the initial pulse survey
- Over 50% completed all pulses, and 95% responded to the pulses - a dramatic improvement over previous efforts using standalone survey tools
- All communications, calendars, onboarding, and updates were consolidated into one digital home - no chasing emails or toggling between apps

What Didn't Work - and What We'll Fix with Voyije

While the Teams approach validated the concept, it also highlighted major usability issues:

Microsoft Teams Limitation	Voyije Solution
No global onboarding dashboard	Real-time admin dashboard to track all student progress
No task-based messaging	Smart segmentation and targeted nudges based on checklist status
Clunky pulse surveys (Forms)	Beautifully embedded, mobile-first surveys inside the platform
Difficult guest access	Seamless admin and partner logins without IT headaches
Disruptive calendar alerts	Fully customizable calendar notifications
Manual data aggregation	Automated reports and global insights across all students

Even more importantly, Teams lacked a **framework for Guided Engagement** - something generic project management tools just can't do.

Introducing Guided Engagement

Unlike traditional collaboration tools (like Teams, Slack, or Trello), Voyije is built around the idea that students aren't "team members" working side by side - they're **participants on a curated journey**.

Voyije lets program administrators:

- **Assign tasks** and guide progression without requiring full collaboration from all users
- **Segment communications** to specific students based on where they are in the process
- **Control the flow of information** — balancing student input with program structure
- **Create a space for student questions, reflection, and feedback**, while still maintaining oversight

This **Guided Engagement** model is what separates Voyije from traditional tools. It's not just a place to organize work - it's a platform to design, direct, and deliver life-changing experiences abroad.

The Path Forward

Microsoft Teams let us *test* the idea - and it worked. But Voyije is being designed to make it **easy, intuitive, and impactful**.

With Voyije, programs will finally have a digital travel companion for their students — and a strategic engagement engine for their team.

Junemester 2025 Program Overview

This report summarizes student experience and engagement from the Junemester 2025 program. It includes onboarding analysis, pulse survey insights, open-ended response trends, and actionable recommendations for improving future iterations and student outreach.

Key Program Insights & Recommendations

This section summarizes high-level trends across onboarding and pulse surveys and provides specific recommendations for improving future programs and attracting new students.

- Students responded positively to structured onboarding and frequent communication via Microsoft Teams.
- Tasks that required interaction with external platforms were most often incomplete.
- Student moods remained high throughout the program, with 100% positive responses in the closing survey.
- Cultural exploration, faculty interaction, and peer bonding were the most valued aspects of the experience.

Recommendations:

1. Streamline onboarding by embedding all steps in Teams or providing simplified visual guides.
2. Add automated nudges or social posts mid-week to prompt checklist completion and survey engagement.
3. Reinforce cultural learning with student-led highlights or reflection journaling within Teams.
4. Encourage informal meetups early in the program to fast-track social bonding.

Marketing Opportunities:

- Highlight faculty quality and course transformation: 'I was nervous about class... now I want to study abroad again!'
- Promote excursions using visual storytelling from top-rated trips like Kew Gardens and Hampton Court.

- Use student testimonials and pulse data to showcase real emotional and academic growth.
- Leverage word clouds and photo moments to create shareable content for pre-departure students.

Onboarding Analysis

Voyije used Microsoft Teams, MS Planner, and MS Forms to track onboarding progress. Key outcomes included:

- 9 students completed all 13 onboarding steps.
- 2 students never started onboarding.
- 14 made partial progress.

The most overdue steps involved friction with external tools.

Recommendation: Add visual instructions and reinforce with Teams nudges and light social engagement.

Message Board Summary & Observations

How It Worked: The message board in Microsoft Teams was used as the primary communication hub for updates, reminders, logistical instructions, and student questions. Both staff and students engaged actively, contributing to a lively and informative discussion space.

Themes That Emerged:

- **Logistics & Travel:** Airport pickup, coach schedules, bus passes, daily itineraries.
- **Academic Support:** Coursework status, book requirements, class locations.
- **Student Preparedness:** Packing tips, weather updates, dress codes.
- **Community Engagement:** Welcoming messages, reminders for shared meals and events.
- **Safety & Admin:** Weekend travel reporting, contact info, and check-out procedures.

What Worked Well:

- Timely staff responses.
- Peer support and shared insights.
- Frequent use of links and maps.
- Friendly, approachable tone.

Suggestions for Improvement:

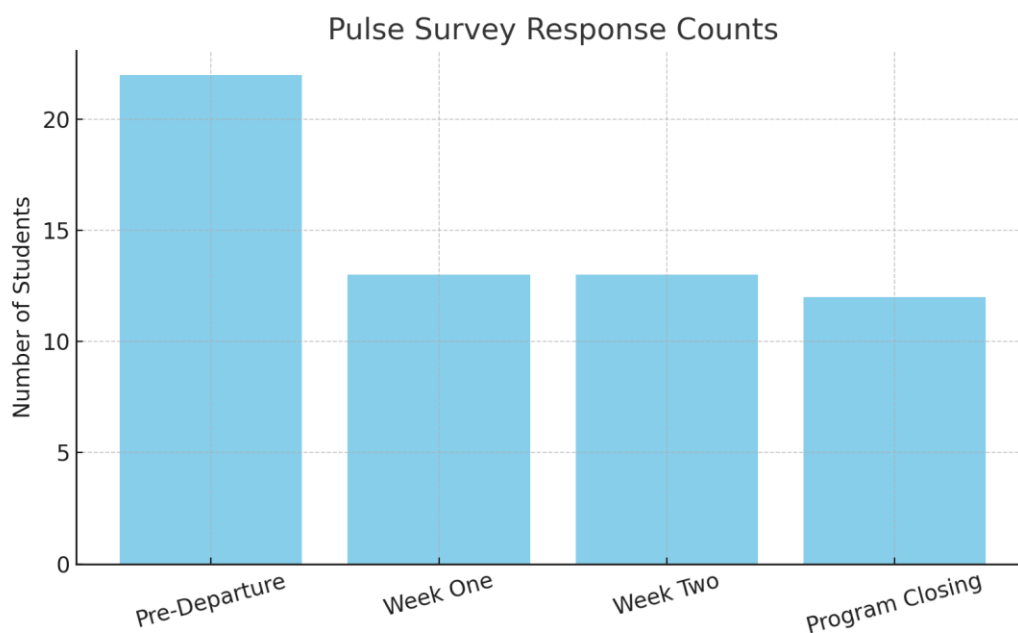
- Pin essential posts (e.g., calendar links, contact sheets).
- Create daily/weekly digest posts.

- Add tagging or channels for post categories.
- Pre-load FAQs during onboarding.

Student Takeaways:

- Checking the board regularly was key to staying organized.
- Questions were encouraged and responded to quickly.
- The board reinforced a sense of belonging and reduced confusion.

Pulse Survey Engagement



Student Experience Timeline

Pre-Departure (May 28)

- Mood: 20 of 21 students felt 'Good' or 'Amazing'
- Excited about: Travel, exploration, friendships
 - *"Going on excursions with my classmates & exploring a new country."*
 - *"Exploring the campus and talking to local students."*
- Nervous about: Coursework and unknowns
 - *"Difficulty of the coursework."*
 - *"All of the unknowns."*
- Goals: Cultural discovery, academic success, and personal growth
 - *"See Jane Austen's house. Explore some English villages. Make friends and have fun!"*

- *"Learn about the history and culture while pushing myself academically."*

Week One (June 14)

- Mood: 12 of 13 students felt positive or amazing
- Highlights: Stratford-Upon-Avon, all the architecture
 - *"Free time to relax and sightsee."*
 - *"Exploring the town and learning about Shakespeare."*
- Classes: Strong faculty praise and enthusiasm
 - *"Exciting! I'm glad to meet the faculty."*
- Memorable moments:
 - *"Making new friends and exploring the Palace."*
 - *"The English countryside view from the buses."*

Week Two (June 20)

- Mood: 11 of 13 students reported feeling good or great
- Course load: Universally seen as 'stimulating' or 'engaging'
 - *"Stimulated — I enjoy how different the teaching style is here."*
- Weekend highlights: London, Scotland, Bath, and bonding
 - *"The Harry Potter show!! Was absolutely amazing."*
 - *"Getting to slow down and enjoy the campus."*
- Other reflections:
 - *"The planned excursions are wonderful! I loved getting to see the UK this way."*
 - *"The friendships I have made and all of the beautiful views."*

Closing (June 23–24)

- Mood: 100% felt 'Good' or 'Great'
- Growth: Confidence and independence increased
- Favorite excursions:
 - *"Kew Gardens, the River Thames, and Hampton Court Palace."*
 - *"Chawton House and the Jane Austen House."*
- Top classes: Shakespeare, Jane Austen, Positive Psychology
- Favorite memories:
 - *"How many amazing people I met."*
 - *"Watching filming for an Amazon Prime show!"*
 - *"The amazing new friends I made and the beautiful places we visited."*



Combined Pulse Survey Insights

The following themes emerged across all open-ended responses from four surveys:

1. 🌟 Exploration & Adventure (62 mentions)
2. 🎓 Academic Engagement (58 mentions)
3. 👯 Friendships & Social Bonds (44 mentions)
4. 🏠 Memorable Places (43 mentions)
5. 😬 Academic Anxiety (27 mentions)
6. 🌱 Personal Growth (10 mentions)

Experience Scoring Summary (1–10)

Category	Score (1–10)	Insight
Cultural Growth	9	Deep exploration, rich cultural experience
Personal Growth	7.5	Confidence and independence gains
Academic Experience	8.5	Strong faculty relationships and course satisfaction
Program Experience	8	Well-paced, high excursion and peer satisfaction

*Scoring Methodology: Experience Scores (1–10)

Each category—**Cultural Growth**, **Personal Growth**, **Academic Experience**, and **Program Experience**—was rated on a 1–10 scale based on both **quantitative data** (survey responses, mood tracking, participation rates) and **qualitative themes** (open-ended responses, word clouds, and trends).

Here’s how the scores were developed:

- **Mood Ratings:** Pulse surveys captured how students felt each week (e.g., "Good," "Great," "Amazing"). Consistently high mood scores increased the category rating.
- **Open-Ended Responses:** Common themes and emotional tone in student comments helped assess depth of experience. For example, many references to confidence or independence raised the score for Personal Growth.
- **Engagement & Participation:** The number of students completing surveys, onboarding steps, and actively participating in team communications informed the Program Experience score.
- **Frequency of Mentions:** Categories where students repeatedly mentioned specific highlights (e.g., excursions, faculty praise) were rated higher.

The scores are directional indicators of how well the program delivered value in each area based on student feedback.