The Site Visit: How to Prepare for It & What to Expect

STARTALK Conference
Atlanta, GA
May 3, 2012
Overview of Session

• Why site visits?
• Preparation tasks
• Who will visit?
• The Site Visit Day
• The Site Visit Report
• Site Visit Perspectives
  – Team Leader
  – Program Director
STARTALK Philosophy

The overall success of STARTALK depends on the success of each STARTALK program.

Our job is to provide the support to ensure program success. We do this by

- highlighting program strengths,
- identifying areas for improvement, and
- providing constructive recommendations and strategies for continued improvement and alignment to the STARTALK principles.
Site Visits: Importance for the Program

Every program participates in a site visit because site visits provide

• just-in-time support to each program,
• an opportunity for the program to implement short-term recommendations for improvement and consider longer-term recommendations, and
• an opportunity for the program to reflect on successes and challenges.
Site Visits: Importance for STARTALK

Site visits provide an opportunity for STARTALK to

• observe, evaluate, and support individual programs as they meet their stated goals;
• provide a realistic snapshot of the STARTALK program;
• offer feedback on short-term improvements and considerations for long-term improvements; and
• gather data for continuous improvement.
The STARTALK Site Visit

2011 Program Director Survey

• 98% found the site visit easy to organize
• 95% felt that the team demonstrated knowledge of the program
• 77% reported that the team had sufficient opportunity to get a full picture of the program
• 95% reported that the site visit team was constructive in their recommendations
• 87% agreed with the site visit report
The STARTALK Site Visit Outcomes

- Formative feedback from the Site Visit Team
- Report of Findings
  - Debriefing at the end of the site visit
  - Written site visit report
Impact on Future Funding

• Application for Summer 2013
  – Question on implementing recommendations
STARTALK-Endorsed Principles

• Implementing a standards-based and thematically organized curriculum
• Facilitating a student-centered classroom
• Using the target language for instruction
• Integrating culture into language instruction
• Adopting and using authentic materials
• Conducting performance-based assessment
Overview:
Preparing for Your Site Visit

- Setting a date
- Providing logistical information
- Setting the site visit day schedule
- Information STARTALK will provide
- How site visitors prepare for the visit
- The site visit day
Providing Logistical Information for Site Visitors

Logistical Information Form: startalk.umd.edu/login

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<th>Archives</th>
<th>User Profile • Log Out</th>
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STARTALK 2011 Site Visit Summary

**Schedule**

- **Start date:** May 13, 2011
- **End date:** May 20, 2011
- **Start time:** 09:30:00
- **End time:** 16:45:00

**Agenda details:**
- Welcome/open meeting
- Apologies for absence
- Approval minutes of the previous meeting
- Matters arising from the previous meeting
- A list of specific points to be discussed – this section is where the bulk of the discussion as well as decisions in the meeting usually take place
- Any other business (AOB) – allowing a participant to raise another point for discussion.
- Arrangements/arrive details of next meeting
- Close meeting

**Logistics**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Site Visit Contact</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Name:</strong> Mr. Ding</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Telephone:</strong> 445</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cell phone:</strong> 333-434-554</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Email:</strong> <a href="mailto:discord@e-mail.org">discord@e-mail.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<th>Site Address</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Address:</strong> Oakland, CA 94811</td>
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**Travel Recommendations**

- **Arrival appliance:** Oakland International (OAK)
- **Arrival train stations:** Renton (BHT)
- **Transportation:** rental car
- **Lodging:**
  - **Lodging address:**
  - **Lodging telephone:**

**Directions and Notes**
Things to Remember on Logistical Form

- Most Convenient Airport/Train Station
- Hotel Accommodations
- Directions to your site location
- Emergency Contact Information
Setting the Site Visit Day Agenda

• You must set an agenda with your team leader
  – Travel arrangements cannot be made without it
  – Must add agenda start/end times
  – Provide agenda details to Program Information System
What will STARTALK make available to you?

TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO SITE VISIT

Via online Program information system:

• Site Visit Team Members Names
• Site Visitor Bios
• Site Visitor Travel Itineraries
• Site Visitor Contact Information
How Site Visitors Prepare for the Site Visit

• Program Review
  – Proposal
  – Previous Site Visit Reports
  – Curricula

• Materials
  – Classroom observation guidelines for student and teacher programs
  – Interview Questions
Site Visit Team Roles

• Team leader: An individual who works most closely with the program and leads the site visit team

• Site visitors: Individuals who offer their linguistic and/or pedagogical expertise to site visit teams

• Observers: STARTALK stakeholders who want to learn more about the program, but who do not contribute to the site visit report
The Site Visit Day

• Meeting with the Program Director
• Observation of Classes
• Interviews with students and instructors
• Debriefing among the STARTALK site visit team members
• Debriefing with the Program Director
Site Visit Agenda: Points to Remember

• A private place for site visit team to debrief
• Site visit team will select interviewees
• No participant interviews for K-5 programs
• Alert Team Leader to uncommon times for observations
  – Evenings only
  – Short time frames for observation (e.g. 10am-noon)
The Site Visit Day: Other Issues

• Allowed
  – Providing Lunch/Dinner for Site Visitors
  – Giving program promotional materials to visitors
• Not Allowed
  – Giving other gifts to visitors
After the Site Visit

• The Site Visit Report
• The Site Visit Report Response
The Site Visit

• Different Perspectives
  – The Team Leader
  – A veteran Program Director
Site Visit Perspectives:
Team Leader

• Opportunity to celebrate successes
Site Visit Perspectives: Team Leader

- Opportunity to celebrate successes
- Balance of perspectives
Site Visit Perspectives: Team Leader

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- Grounded in relationship with program director
Site Visit Perspectives:
Team Leader

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• Focused on growth, not perfection
Site Visit Perspectives: Team Leader

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• Focused on growth, not perfection
• Striving to be unobtrusive, efficient, and flexible
Site Visit Perspectives:
Team Leader

- Opportunity to celebrate successes
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- Grounded in relationship with program director
- Focused on growth, not perfection
- Striving to be unobtrusive, efficient, and flexible
- The visit as a snapshot
Site Visit Perspectives: Team Leader

- Feedback: Big and little pictures
Site Visit Perspectives: Team Leader

- Feedback: Big and little pictures
- Role of STARTALK protocol
Site Visit: From the PD’s Perspective

Hamilton College
PD: Hong Gang Jin

Chinese Teachers Program for K-16 Nonnative Chinese Teachers

Chinese Students Program
From the PD’s Perspective

Use the opportunity to reflect on the program

• Goals and objectives
• Overall design and implementation of the program (The use of authentic materials, leadership training, microteaching model)
• The team dynamics and schedule set up

Identify program’s success and challenges

Make informed decisions about program adjustment and improvement on the program
Three phases of the Site Visit

Before the Site Visit

- Communicate with the team leader on logistics
- Plan for the site visit
  - Set the agenda: dates, activities, meeting time, and place
  - Prepare site visit materials and organize them into a binder (curriculum, textbooks, daily schedule, cultural activities, evening activities, etc.)
- Inform the instructors and participants about the site visit. Mark the event clearly on the program calendar/schedule
- Prepare a participants list on site
- Arrange activities carefully so that it is non-interruptive

Pre-Program

Post-program

During Program
Three phases of the Site Visit

During the site visit

- Print out a hard copy of the site visit agenda for the team
- Remind the instructors and participants of the visitors at least 5 days before the visit
- Review the program proposal, the previous site visit reports, the curricular template for the year
- Review the interview questions by site visitors
- Prepare a campus map or arrange a person to guide the site visitors on campus
- Be ready to take down some of the recommendations for the program

After the site visit

- Read the site visit report carefully and share the report with relevant staff, instructors
- Engage in a constructive discussion, and make immediate improvement if possible. Otherwise note down for improvement for next year
- Write the response to the site visit report and submit it online
A Checklist (see handouts)

• Pre-Program Phase
  – Provide hotel information, campus map, and local restaurants
  – Make a site visit agenda (include 5 key events)
    • Meeting with the Program Director
    • Observation of Classes
    • Interviews with students and instructors
    • Debriefing among the STARTALK site visit team members
    • Debriefing with the Program Director
  – Compile program materials (binder) and highlights
    • Daily theme + 6 key activities: language class on the daily theme, pedagogical workshop, micro teaching planning, technology workshop, daily reflect, and skype sessions
  – Prepare a instructor’s and participant’s list
  – Reserve a meeting room for debriefing
  – Designate a person to guide the site visitors around campus
• **During the program**

  **Meeting with the PD**
  - Block out 1 hour for program overview
  - Prepare a folder with a hard copy of the site visit schedule, campus map, local restaurant list, and a local map
  - Final check on all the materials to be included in the binder
  - Gather daily reflection questions and responses of the day for the team to have a sense of how participants are adjusting to the program
  - Schedule a break during the morning and afternoon for the team

  **Class and workshop observation**
  - Prepare the teaching materials and workshop materials of the day before the observation
  - Final confirmation of the classrooms and activities
  - Reserve a computer for the site visitors during the technology workshop

  **Interviews with participants, instructors and staff**
  - Block out at least 1 hour for the team to meet and interview selected members
  - Send a reminder to all instructors about the site visit schedule, purpose, class observation time, and their scheduled meeting with the team
  - Send a reminder to all program participants about the site visit schedule, class observation time, and their scheduled meeting with the team
  - Find an appropriate time for participants and instructors to meet with the team in between their classes

  **Debriefing of the site visit team**
  - Block out at least 1 hour to 1 hour and half for the site visit team’s own debriefing

  **Debriefing between PD and the site visitors**
  - Block out at least 1 hour for the PD debriefing with the team
• **Post-program**
  – Schedule a meeting with the key coordinators and instructors to discuss the site visit recommendations on the spot
  – Categorize the improvement in terms of immediate ones and next year ones
  – Take measures to make adjustment for the immediate and doable recommendations
  – Make plans for the improvement in the next year’s program
  – Read carefully the site visit response and discuss the issues with key instructors
  – Interview participants to solicit their responses and
  – Write the response to the site visit report
  – Reread the response before planning the next year’s program
Questions?