Digital Storytelling Abroad: Some Lessons Learned in Beijing
John A. Crespi  jcrespi@mail.colgate.edu
Henry R. Luce Associate Professor of Chinese
Colgate University

A. Course Format:
   - “Extended Study”: One semester on-campus + three to six weeks off-campus
   - “Living Beijing”: Once-a-week on-campus class meetings + three weeks
     in Beijing producing digital storytelling projects/documentaries
B. Course Goal: Understand the presence of the past in a globalized Chinese city.
C. Course Content:
   1) Multidisciplinary: Expose students to the varieties of ways one can
      experience and imagine a city.
   2) Historical: Course materials presented in more or less chronological
      order.
   3) Final project: “Continuities in Transition”
      a) On-campus: “Researched proposal.”
      b) On-site: Gather digital data and compose a digital story that
         explains “continuity in transition” as it relates to a specific topic.

II. Lessons Learned: Some Dos and Don’ts
A. Things to Keep:
   1) Preparatory research
   2) Central location on site
   3) On-site production schedule:
      Week One: Getting oriented
      Week Two: Intensive fieldwork and rough cuts
      Week Three: Final fieldwork and intensive editing
   4) On-site tech support (if you can get it!)
B. Things to Change:
   1) More intensive pre-departure technical preparation: hands-on and
      project-oriented
   2) Limit class size and number of projects
   3) Project conception:
      - Site specificity
      - Ethical considerations
      - Local collaboration?
   4) Build on past projects: student project archive

III. Conclusion: Well Begun is Half Done

Suggested viewing:
Beijing 2004: Insight on the Student Process of Creating Beijing Documentaries
(http://computing.colgate.edu/itsl/beijing/)