Should I hire a language school?

To meet grant requirements or to appease administrators, you may want to consider working with a language school for your first trip. Here are some of the advantages and disadvantages to consider. Which are most important to you? Check the boxes that apply to you in the Pros and Cons columns. Use your answers to help decide whether you should outsource to a local school or teach the classes yourself.

| Pros | Cons |
| --- | --- |
| Students can often be separated into different levels depending on ability and receive more one-on-one or small-group attention. | Language schools may prepare students for common immersive situations, but cannot be responsible for preparing your students for the specific out-of-class activities you will be organizing on any given day, nor will they help your students to debrief experientially from those activities to consolidate learning. |
| Students benefit from having structure to their day,  along with norms and routines. | Language school classes tend to be similar to at-home  classes, which fail to utilize the advantages of learning  in an immersive setting. |
| Students learn about school culture in a different  part of the world. | Language schools tend to follow a set curriculum, which may not align with your trip’s objectives and may not be geared to the specific activities that you and your students will be doing. |
| Local teachers may use an approach different from  yours, which may meet the needs of different learners. | Local teachers in the school may not have proper  teaching credentials. |
| Students gain exposure to the local language  variety and learn local vocabulary. | The school likely has other students whose needs  must also be considered. |
| Connecting with language schools provides you  with access to local teachers and a network  of contacts in the community. | The lingua franca of these schools tends to be English, which is great if your students are learning English but not if the purpose is for them to learn a different language. |
| Language schools can help you access cultural activities that are smaller and more personalized than the big tourist attractions or advertised events. | Teaching approaches may not be specifically adapted to learning in naturalistic contexts. |
| Others: | Kinginger (2009) provides convincing arguments why teachers should teach differently in study abroad contexts and cites numerous studies showing that students rarely value learning in language schools during study abroad. |
|  | Others: |
| Total |  |
| X | X |