Re-Entry Exercises

We hope that you have returned from one of the most enriching experiences of your life. We recognize that returning home maybe just as challenging as going abroad was. Often you have an idealized view of home and expect the same familiarity you left when you come back home. You will experience a range of feelings as you adjust to life back in the U.S. The following sheet has been developed to help you begin to “unpack” your experience as you transition into daily life.

REFLECTIONS

⇒ What did you love most about your experience abroad? Why?
⇒ What did you learn about yourself while abroad?
⇒ What challenges did you overcome while abroad?
⇒ What surprised you?
⇒ How was your life different while abroad?
⇒ How did your outlook on the world change while you were abroad?
⇒ How did this experience change your values, perspectives, and goals?
⇒ Did you set goals before you left? Did you achieve them? Why or Why not?
⇒ How did you immerse yourself in the host culture?
⇒ Did your abroad experience fall short of, meet, or exceed your expectations? Explain.
⇒ What skills, knowledge, and attitudes did you gain while abroad?
⇒ How will you make use of these new changes now that you are back home?
⇒ What are new goals you plan to set for yourself because you went abroad?
⇒ What can you get involved in on campus to satisfy your new goals?
⇒ What did you love most about your experience abroad? Why?
⇒ What did you learn about yourself while abroad?
⇒ What challenges did you overcome while abroad?
⇒ What surprised you?
⇒ How was your life different while abroad?
⇒ How did your outlook on the world change while you were abroad?
⇒ How did this experience change your values, perspectives, and goals?
⇒ Did you set goals before you left? Did you achieve them? Why or Why not?
⇒ How did you immerse yourself in the host culture?

SELF-EVALUATION

⇒ Five things that have bothered me most about being home are ...
⇒ Five things that I have enjoyed most about being home have been ...
⇒ Five international things (people, places, situations, activities, etc.) I miss the least since I have returned home are ...
⇒ Five things (people, places, situations, activities, etc.) I miss most from abroad since I have returned home are ...
⇒ I know that I have changed as a result of my experience because ...
⇒ My friends seem to understand ____________________________ about me, but they don’t understand ...
⇒ My re-entry experience would be better if ...
⇒ Now that I am home, I worry most about ...
⇒ I wish I could explain to my family and friends that ...
⇒ The one thing I know I have learned about myself is ...
⇒ Begin thinking about the intangible and intercultural skills you may have gained while abroad. Think of experiences during your time abroad where you used a skill or quality below, or how your time abroad helped you gain or improve a certain skill/quality and why. Write down tangible and specific examples.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

SKILLS
⇒ Time management skills
⇒ Communication skills
⇒ Creative problem-solving
⇒ Achieve goals despite obstacles
⇒ Accept responsibility
⇒ Learn quickly
⇒ Take initiative and risks
⇒ Function with a high level of ambiguity
⇒ Handle difficult situations
⇒ Handle stress
⇒ Lead others in informal or formal groups
⇒ Conduct research despite language and cultural differences
⇒ Adapt to new environments
⇒ Understand an organization’s culture
⇒ Learn through observing
⇒ Active listening
⇒ Perform in an environment with adverse conditions

QUALITIES
⇒ Self-reliant
⇒ Driven/persistent
⇒ Appreciation of diversity
⇒ Flexibility & Adaptability
⇒ Tolerance
⇒ Open-mindedness
⇒ Assertiveness
⇒ Inquisitiveness
⇒ Self-confidence
⇒ Open to relocation

Readings

Transitions Abroad

Coming Home: Relationships, Roots, and Unpacking by Citron, Jim and Vija Mendelson.

Culture from the Inside Out Travel and Meet Yourself by Cornes, Alan.

Back in the USA: Reflecting on Your Study Abroad Experience and Putting it to Work by Dawn Kepets