

REENTRY WORKSHOP

The goal for this activity is for students to practice communicating their international experiences and to realize the importance of context. These prompts spark conversations about experiences abroad and teaches students how to verbalize and contextualize them.

Communicate Your Abroad Experience

Exercise 1. True or False

Instructions:

The following statements are from a CIEE survey. Read the statements to your class and follow up with a discussion- Do your students agree or disagree with the statement? Why? Ask participants to provide examples to support their answer.

1. "I tried to instill some of the practices and values that I learned abroad in my own family."
2. "I had a lot more freedom when I was abroad, whereas my parents at home are a lot more restrictive."
3. "It was so frustrating to try to explain everything I had done and seen while I was abroad to people who had no idea what I was talking about."

Exercise 2. Rapid Fire Responses

Instructions:

Match up all students with a partner. If there is an odd number of students, join in the exercise. Each round of this exercise will offer students a finite amount of time to communicate their abroad experiences with their partner. Partner "A" will speak first. Then when time is up, partner "B" will discuss his/her abroad experiences. After each round, offer students time to quietly reflect for 1-2 minutes, making a point to write down 3 key words that conveyed their experience.

Round 1. Each partner gets 3 minutes to share their travel experiences. Say "stop" when time is up. After both students have spoken, ask them the following questions:

- How did that feel?
- Was it difficult? If so, why?
- Did you have too much time? Not enough time?
- Did you say everything you wanted to say?

Student reflection for 1-2 minutes

Change Partners

Round 2. This time, each person will have 1 minute to share their experiences abroad. When this round is over, ask your students the following questions:

- How did that feel this time?
- Was the time difference difficult to manage?
- Did you feel like it was too much or not enough time?
- Did choosing key words help you talk about your abroad experience in the allotted time?

Student reflection for 1-2 minutes

Change partners

Round 3. In this last round, each person will have 30 seconds to communicate their experiences abroad to their partners. When this round is over, debrief your students with the following questions:

- How was this experience for you?
- What was challenging about this exercise?
- How did your words change each round?
- How would you characterize each round? What was consistent in your descriptions and what was dropped?
- Who would you share your 3 minute, 1 minute, and 30 second descriptions with?

When exercise is over, spend time with the group discussing best ways to relay experiences abroad in a context appropriate fashion. Various contexts to consider:

College Applications: Colleges want to know about your academic and personal growth that took place on your study abroad program. That means focusing on what you learned and how you grew as an individual during that time. Many students on their college applications will give an overview of their time spent in another country and just say “it changed my life.” HOW?? That’s what colleges want to know. That is the time to get specific. Tell a couple specific stories from your time abroad and describe what you took from them. If your college plans were changed by your experience- say how and why!

Internship Interviews: Employers want to know more about the skills you acquired during your study abroad. These could be hard skills like language proficiency and specific cultural knowledge, or soft skills like adaptability and openness. Like with a college application, it’s a good idea to start with a specific story as your example to convey the skill that’s relevant to the interview.

