



Bringing the
learning *home*

Reflection



A *resource* for study abroad

Australian Learning & Teaching Council

Produced by Tonia Gray,
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Reflection

Program goals

- To understand the reflection cycle in experiential learning
- To recall past experiences through storytelling and photo-reflection (re-storying)
- To apply the basic tenets of reflection to study abroad experience
- To become life-long learners by developing skills of reflection.

Rationale

The contents of the reflection module, which is grounded on the principles of experiential learning, are integral to the assimilation and integration of the study abroad experience into the students' lifelong learning, based on the premise that carefully guided reflection can facilitate self-growth and transformation. When overseas, some students can become 'experience junkies,' trying to rack up as many activities, side-trips, and photo-worthy opportunities as possible; they may have a surplus of experience while seldom pausing to take in or learn from what they are doing.

This module seeks to provide a flexible, basic framework for helping students to process their memories and experiences into learning, incorporating experience into higher-impact, transformational events or into long-term changes in attitudes or perspectives. We offer a number of examples of how reflection might enrich students' interpretation of the things they see or experience overseas, but reflective learning depends upon the students' own experiences, so it cannot be wholly determined in advance. Each cohort or group will undoubtedly achieve its own set of learning outcomes, but the overall goal of modelling reflective learning and deeper engagement with experience will hold across all groups.

The reflection module is central to the other nine teaching modules in this program. Some of the basic concepts taught in Reflection, for example, recur in Globalisation, Cultural Relativism, Transformation, and Professionalisation. The module assumes that the learning emanating from an experience can be incorporated into the participants' lives in the future, but that they may need support and encouragement to make the most of this deeper reflective process.

Mode of delivery

The majority of this reflection module is delivered pre-departure although the concepts are incorporated 'in-country' and upon 're-entry'.

Parts of this module are delivered in pre-departure and in re-entry, with the option, too, of using key concepts from the module when interacting with students during their sojourns. Students should be prepared for cultural difference (including the possibility of 'culture shock,' see the Adaptation Module). The pre-departure materials offer examples of students contending with cultural difference, analysing cultural practices (or failing to), and coming to new understandings.

Pre-departure

Conceptual material provided in this module is delivered pre-departure. Highlighting the theme of reflection in the pre-departure phase can increase *student engagement* whilst overseas. Helping students to see long-range opportunities can assist them to treat their sojourns abroad as much more than extended study-vacations or travel opportunities; rather, they are encouraged to gain greater intercultural, pre-professional and related experience.

In country

The module can be supported in country through reflective questions on the blog, Facebook groups or through emails. Especially if students are sharing reflections, they can be encouraged to use the reflective cycle to learn from their experiences through reflection.

Re-entry

Especially if students have not had in-country reflective assignments, engaging them in reflective learning upon re-entry can be a way to deepen their learning from the exchange experience. See the sample re-entry workshop video available on the [BTLH website](#) under 'workshops' for an example of how this might work.

This module is supported by:

☐ *Exploration*

*The content of this module supports
or feeds into:*

☐ *Transformation*

☐ *Cultural relativism*

☐ *Globalisation*

☐ *Professionalisation*

Contents of this module

This text, intended for workshop facilitators and exchange curriculum coordinators, comprises the primary pedagogical material. This **instructor's guide** includes a discussion of the module's goals, rationale and strategies, advice for running the workshop, scripts to accompany the workshops, and additional resources.

Slides (in Prezi, Apple Keynote and Microsoft Powerpoint) are provided for both a pre-departure orientation and a re-entry workshop on Reflection skills (see [Bringing the Learning Home website](#) for links).

Student guide (useful if the module is to be run through self-study).

Video of the workshop being run, available through Bringing the Learning [Home](#) on YouTube.

If you are preparing your own reader, the student guide materials are all made available under a Creative Commons licence. You are free to incorporate the materials into your own reader or course package as long as you clearly attribute the origin of the work to Bringing the Learning [Home](#) (see Creative Commons licence). The creators also include in the licence the option of using the work for commercial gain, although we respectfully ask that the material not be republished and sold (we hope that the workshop materials will be useful to both university-based and commercial providers).

Contents



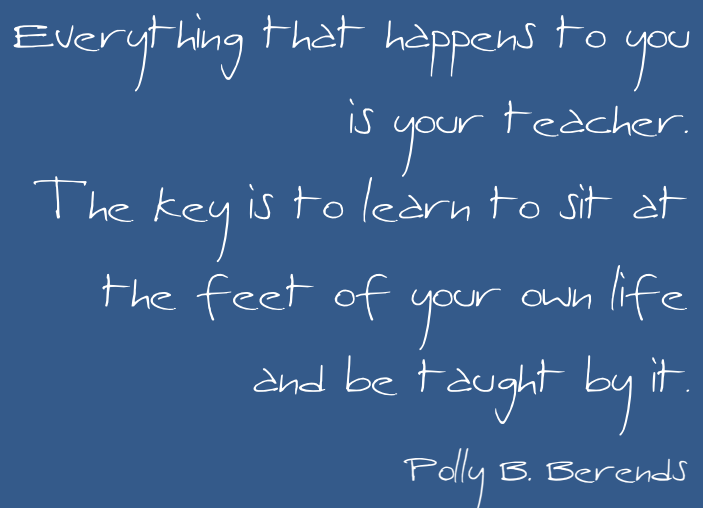
Instructor's orientation

So often in overseas travel, we want to achieve a 'jam-packed itinerary,' to tick off the bucket list, so to speak (see the Exploration module). Travellers too easily fall into the trap of becoming too frenetic in their quest for *doing* all the sightseeing adventures. The t-shirt logo, 'Been there, done that', says it all. In doing so, we overlook the importance of *being* part of the new host culture. In pre-departure, we stress the 'mantra': **less doing, more being**.

Our past experience with study abroad students have shown that they are very receptive to the reflection material, especially whilst in their host culture and in the re-entry phase. However, we stress that **anyone presenting the material must review the module in advance**. We would recommend that you set aside two hours to familiarise yourself with the material. Think about examples from your own life or teaching and advising. You might also consider incorporating students' own materials into the workshop. For example, if you are running the photo reflection module (see in-country reflection exercise #3), using either a photo blog or photo competition, consider using some of these photos to prompt students in the discussion of **turning travel stories into career stories**.

The pre-departure portion of the reflection module includes a handful of slides and a short discussion. We recommend incorporating a brief discussion of reflection goals.

- Locate this discussion within a broad framework outlining the intended outcome of this whole multi-faceted package.
- Outline also the **limits** of our materials - designed on the whole for students going to particular sorts of countries on Exchange programs offered by Australian universities.



Everything that happens to you
is your teacher.
The key is to learn to sit at
the feet of your own life
and be taught by it.
Polly B. Berends

What is experience and reflection?

Experience is a profound and powerful teacher, and yet experience alone does not constitute learning. Many of us have to repeatedly make the same mistakes before the 'ah-ha' moment and indelible learning occurs. Carefully guided and structured reflection is required to process an experience so that participants draw meaning from an event (Warren, Mitten, & Loeffler, 2009). Processing an experience encourages individuals to 'reflect, describe, analyse and communicate what they have recently experienced' (Nadler & Luckner, 1992: 1). Well-devised and facilitated reflective activities can augment the mastery of new skills, attitudes, behaviours and knowledge (Smith, 2009).

However, a word of caution for potential facilitators of the module. Teaching reflective skills can sometimes be fraught with difficulty as reflection is the internalisation of thoughts, feelings, beliefs, attitudes and values. Initially, students can be reluctant to engage in deep reflection as it is somewhat threatening and daunting to expose their inner selves. It can be confronting. It helps if the facilitator is willing to disclose something of her- or himself to engender trust and respect. Building a relationship which is mutually respectful will augment the reflective process. Be ready for some participants to resist, but remember to remind students that dissonance and discomfort are part of the learning process.

For example... *Your new host culture may be confronting or scary – do they become paralysed by it, or embrace the challenge?*

The primary aim of this module is to acquaint the study abroad participant with the inherent value of reflection and assist the sojourner to recognise the 'learning' contained within the 'experience'.

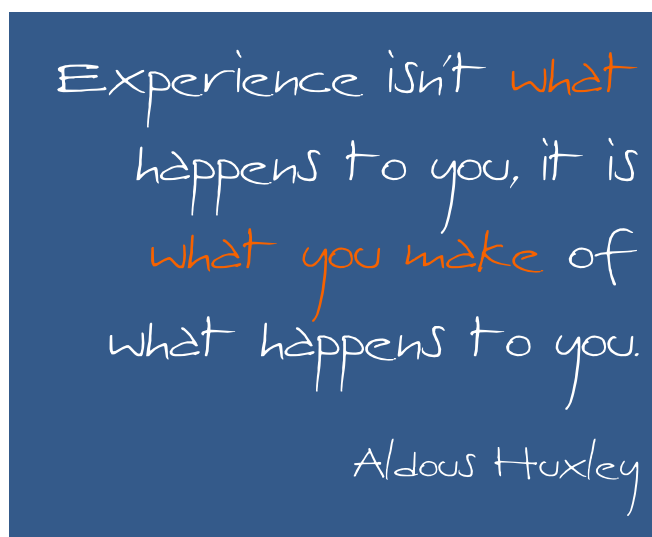
Depending on the specific goals of your program, the pre-departure reflection workshop materials can be used in concert with other re-entry materials to build an effective two-part teaching module that best meets your students' needs and interests.

Orientation

Experiential learning & reflection cycle

At the outset, it is crucial to be cognizant of the foundations inherent within experiential learning.

Experience occurs naturally in all life situations, but we need to carefully digest our responses to experience and become craftsmen at incorporating experience into our journey through life. As Aldous Huxley wrote: 'Experience isn't what happens to you, it is what you make of what happens to you.'



Experience-based learning differs from traditional classroom learning because each individual learns from his or her own experience (Swiderski 2009). Dewey's (1938a) seminal work postulated that:

Learning ...means acquisition of what already is incorporated in books and in the heads of the elders. Moreover, that which is taught is thought of as essentially static. It is taught as a finished product, with little regard either to the ways in which it was originally

built up or to changes that will surely occur in the future. It is to a large extent the cultural product of societies that assumed the future would be much like the past, and yet it is used as educational food in a society where change is the rule, not the exception. (Dewey 1938a:19)

General learning themes may emerge, but each workshop will be unique – contingent upon the varying experiences the participants bring to the group session. Part of reflective learning is to get students to share and the teacher elicit .. the students have the material in their memory bank and they need to examine their memories in a new light... some may do better in discussion, others do it by journal... others draw or doodle.

Based upon the work of Dewey (1938b), Kolb (1984), and later Itin (1999) it is generally accepted that there are four distinct phases of the experiential learning cycle: **experience; reflection; processing; application**. Action creates experience, leading to reflection on the action; processing the experience results from reflection; and finally the new process or understanding is applied to subsequent experience. This is graphically illustrated in Kolb's Experiential Learning C (1984), in Figure 1.

Students need to be aware of this cycle before departure. One thing that is guaranteed about travelling overseas is that students will encounter a vast array of novel and unique

experiences. By understanding the complexities of the experiential learning cycle and by overlaying the experiences with focussed reflection, participants can optimise their learning.

To 'reflect' comes from a Latin word *reflectere* which means 'to bend back'. Just as a mirror bends back or returns our image to us, enabling us to review it, we can do the same by reflecting on experience.

Reflection, therefore, is based on the features or aspects of an experience, that may otherwise could have gone unnoticed. These experiences need

to be processed, analysed, incorporated and applied to future events (Knapp, 1992). To enhance learning we must reflect systematically over time. This leads to the development of metacognition – that is, higher order thinking. Kolb (1984: 21) represents this concept diagrammatically below.

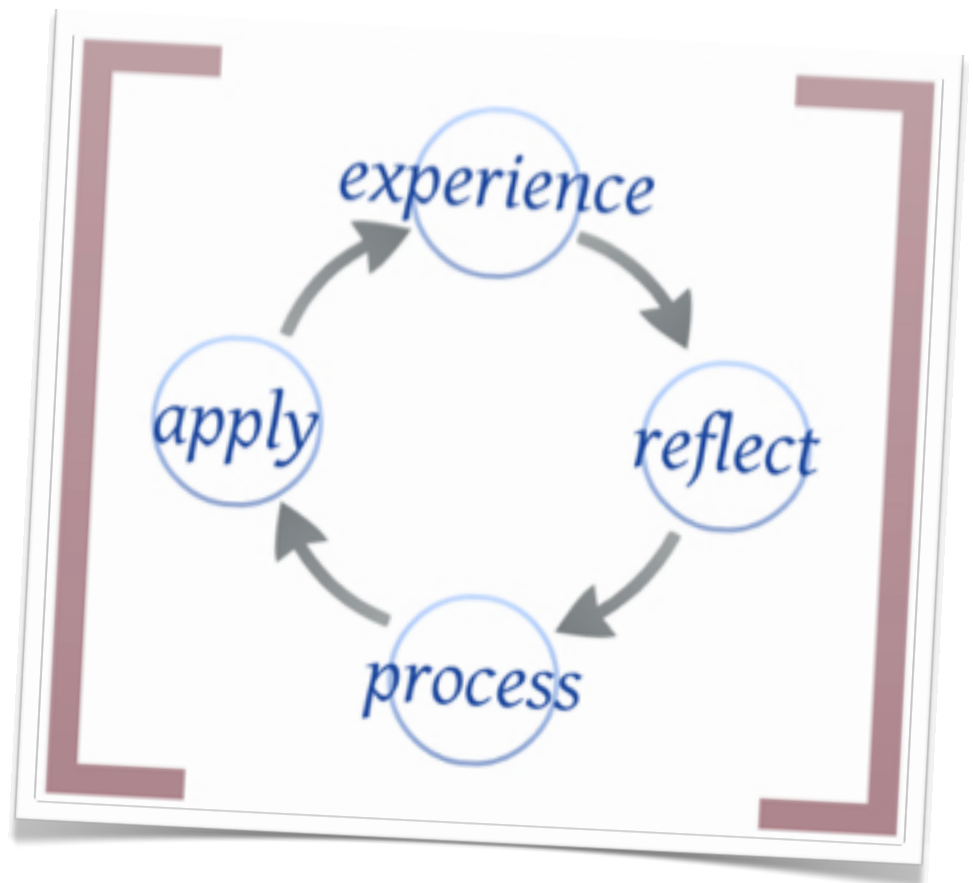


Figure 1: The Experiential Learning Cycle:
Nadler & Luckner, (1992:1)

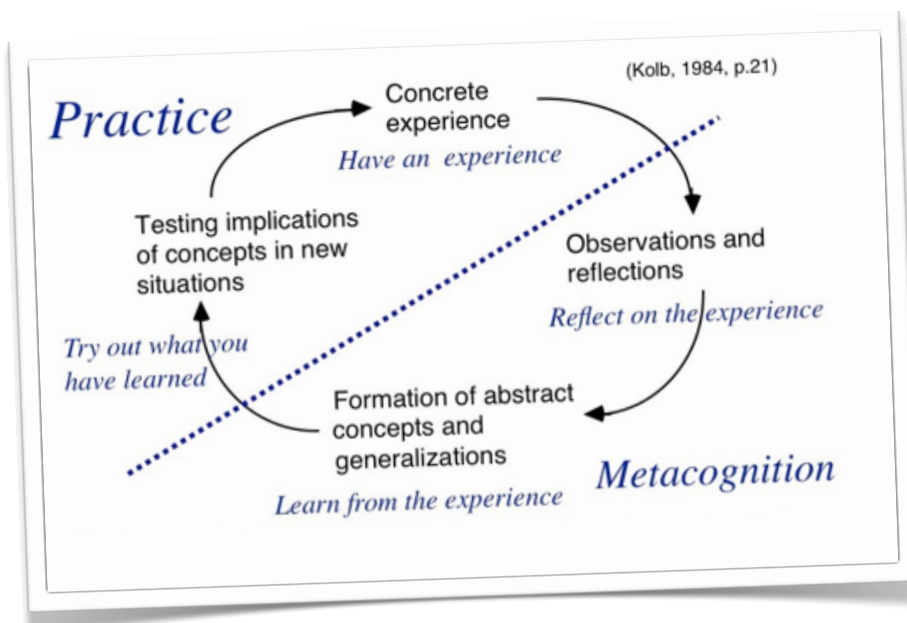


Figure 2: The Reflective Learning Cycle

Research indicates that reflection is an integral component in promoting meaningful experience as it brings order to the mind by integrating a person's actions into a unified 'flow' experience (Dickson & Gray, 2006).

Teaching Reflection:

Reflection plays a pivotal role in experiential learning (Moon, 2009) and this is especially so in the study abroad experience. Reflection is a cyclical and evolving process which is the corner stone of learning.

Bengtsson (1995) describes reflection as an intentional metacognitive process, a form of self-examination, in which individuals evaluate their actions and makes choices about which behaviour patterns need to be altered or improved to achieve the learning outcomes they seek. The importance of providing students with adequate training in how to reflect more deeply cannot be over-estimated (Dyment & O'Connell, 2010 & 2011, Epp, 2008). Indeed, there is a plethora of research to suggest that the models and theories of reflection and higher order thinking must be taught to students in order to extract the most out of their experience (Epp 2008; Estes, 2004; Fisher 2003). However, a definition of reflection can be problematic. As Dyment and O'Connell (2010: 237) point out:

‘Educators must not be overly concerned that there is little agreement about a shared definition and understanding of “reflection”—in fact, it is quite a contested term. In our own work we have found that acknowledgement of multiple perspectives lifts some of the pressure from our students to feel there is a “right way” to reflect.’

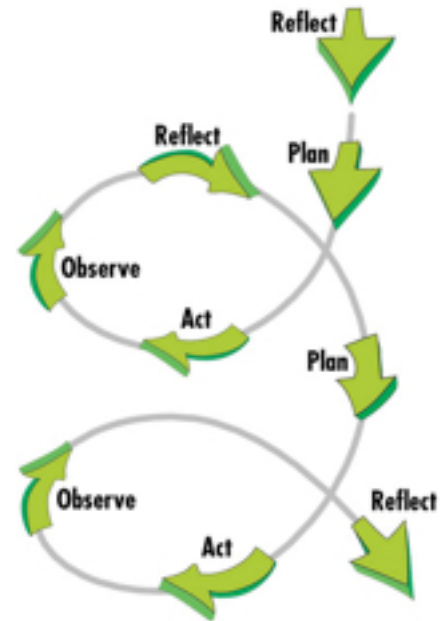


Figure 3: The Spiral of Learning and Growth

Given the above stance, although ‘experience’ is widely accepted as a universal phenomenon, a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach to teaching components of experience and reflection is not recommended. To this end, Bell (1993:20) writes, ‘there is no generic clone for “the experience” which applies to everyone’. Indeed, even given the same environment and circumstances, no two peoples’ experiences will be the same (Panicucci, 2007).

In simple terms, reflection is the intellectual and affective activity that fosters new understandings and appreciation. It is a time to review, revisit or replay an experience and evaluate its learning potential. Sometimes

Experience without reflection is like eating without digestion.

our initial reaction, especially to something unfamiliar or confronting will not be our final conclusion. And re-examining why we came to our first impression offers insight into ourselves and the circumstances. The aim of reflection is to “promote meaningful experience ... In reflection, the learner is either becoming aware, transforming,

analysing, recapturing, reliving, exploring or linking parts of an experience” (Knapp, 1992:17). Albeit, reflection allows us to think deeply about our experiences so that in the future, we may act with more insight and effectiveness.

Processing the Experience

“A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions.”

--Oliver Wendell Holmes

Referring back to Figure 1, the generic pattern for this cycle is as follows: **What? So What? Now What?:**

“Experience” is the **data-generating** section within the cycle that sets the foundation for learning. From this comes analysis and reflection:

1. **WHAT** did you experience?

Look back and replay in your mind’s eye what happened during the experience. This may incorporate cognitive, behavioural and affective domains. What did you see, sense, smell? Was there an emotional or visceral reaction? How did this make you feel, think?

2. **SO WHAT?**

What was the MEANING behind this experience? WHY was it this way and not another? This is the space for processing the experience, and for developing a better understanding both of the event or experience itself, and of your reaction to it.



3. NOW WHAT?

This is the last and crucial phase of the learning cycle which returns us to the start of the cycle again. How would you apply your new-found learning and plan differently if you encountered this experience in the future?

This is the basis of reflective learning.

Using the metaphor of the chemistry experiment, in Figure 4, an event or experience is processed, or subjected to reflection, and out of this process new knowledge is distilled.

Experience + reflection = learning

Guided reflection can enhance, magnify and maximise learning potential. A reflective person can become more cognisant, by recapturing, replaying, processing, exploring, bridging or transferring aspects of their learning trajectory. Reflection is also important in shedding a different light on an experience. A well-devised study abroad program should encourage students to reflect on many levels.

On a pragmatic level, it is important for the facilitator to be mindful that the goal of reflection is 'for the participant to construct meaning out of their experiences ... [and to discover] new connections' (Dickson & Gray 2006:44), fundamental to indelible learning.

The following examples, all excerpts drawn from student posts on the OzStudentsAbroad weblog, demonstrate how experience and guided reflection can be used to stimulate deep learning.

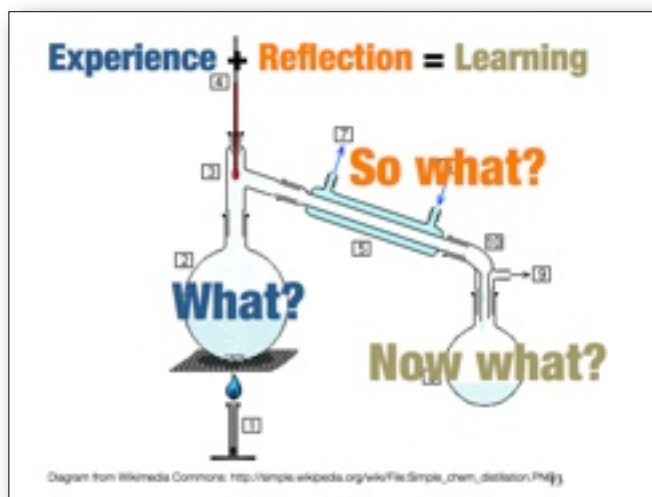


Figure 4: Reflection as Distillation



Example one: merry racism

Blog Entry by Nathan B

I have been in the Netherlands for over three months now, and I haven't really been shocked by anything. Sure, their commitment to riding their bicycles in the rain, snow and hail is mystifying. But until the lead up to December, I was pretty cool, calm and collected.

But then I began to notice some odd decorations in the windows of shops. Namely, colourfully dressed black dolls similar to 'Golliwogs'. I was quite shocked, because the Netherlands has a reputation for being a free-thinking liberal minded country, and these dolls would be completely unacceptable in Australia.

Apparently, the decorations were for the Dutch Christmas, called Sinterklaas. Sinterklaas is celebrated on December 5th, and involves a Santa type figure arriving on a ship from Spain to give presents to children. However, he is not aided by elves, but by black slaves called the Zwarte Piet.

So every shop in Utrecht has pictures and dolls of Zwarte Piet. However, the Dutch claim that the tradition is not racist. They argue that Zwarte Piet isn't an African slave, but is only black because of soot from coming down the chimney. But then how are their clothes perfectly clean?

I couldn't believe it, so I went shopping and took photos of every example of what I perceived to be blatant racism. But I was absolutely floored when I saw people actually dress up as Zwarte Piet and paint their face black. Seriously. I do not think that you could get away with that in Australia.



This example is discussed on Slides 17 to 22 in the Pre-departure workshop slideshow for the Reflection module.

Original post at <http://ozstudentsabroad.com/2010/12/08/merry-racism/>

Reflection



Blog Response by Alex Haaxman – a Dutch woman, now living in Perth Australia

I must say that I was initially a tad surprised by your reaction to my favourite Zwarte Piet, as he resembled joy to me when I was a child in Holland – he even rode on the back of my father's motorbike to visit us on Sinter Klaas!

Racism was never factored in – not even in my later years there. Zwarte Piet's mantra was one of respect – that we should respect others. And that just goes to show – cultural experiences and values are quite personal. That said, it does raise our awareness considerably.

For me, it was delightful to view your snaps as I have just returned from Holland after seeing him swinging from the balcony in "De Bijenlorf" in Amsterdam.

Applying the Experience and Reflection model to Zwarte Piet

Without question, experience is a great teacher and it allows us to develop a unique understanding of any subject or event. Unlike the academic model of learning, reflection-based learning draws on students' direct experience so the lessons are thoroughly integrated with their everyday life whereas

An ounce of experience is
better than a ton of theory
simply because it is only in
experience that theory has vital
and verifiable significance.

John Dewey

classroom learning can sometimes seem abstract, distant, or difficult to apply outside the classroom. Because it draws on students' experiences, as well, reflection-based learning is individualised and specific to each participant.

Let's walk through an example of how experiential learning is embedded within the reflective cycle. The example of Zwarte Piet provides the following scaffold as a guide. (Please note that the Zwarte Piet example is available on the pre-departure workshop slides.)

Reflective cycle:

□ Experience

□ What?

□ So what?

□ Now what?

Experience: Seeing for the first time a Black Zwarte Piet as a Christmas symbol/icon

What? Nathan was confronted by the Zwarte Piet and labelled it 'blatant racism'

So What? Alex (a native from the Netherlands) wrote a blog comment Nathan which gave a new perspective to the symbolism of Zwarte Piet. Nathan digests the information and comes to the conclusion that the Dutch have vastly different interpretation of the festive icon. *This is a telling illustration that you cannot make*

effective judgements within a vacuum, or through the lens of your home culture. ... you should seek verification. (See the module on Cultural Relativism and Analysis for a discussion of cultural difference and the DIVE method.)

Now What? The next time Nathan sees a Zwarte Piet, he will integrate the learning extracted from his first encounter and hopefully become less judgmental or parochial when confronted with a similar incident in the future. In addition, Nathan might wonder how customs in Australia, his home, might appear to other people, if, like Zwarte Piet, an outsider might see something quite different.



Example two: shocking...

Hayden's blog entry:

Experience: First time visitor to Roserito Beach, Mexico.

This Photo is in Mexico on Roserito beach, we tried to sit down eat some food and drink a little, but that was interrupted every five seconds buy someone coming up to us and trying to sell us something.

We took it in our stride and just kept saying our "no thanks, we're fine," but these Mexicans were persistent! To try and get the deal they would send their children up to try and make us feel a little guilty.

One bloke finally tricked us by throwing these metal objects into our hands and telling us it was free. We were intrigued, so believed the man and tried it. The device ends up sending volts through your body to make all your muscles contract. It hurts big time. Yet it was kinda cool so we – Ethan and I – both did it again, this time for photo evidence for this blog.

After we were done, the guy tried to hit us up for \$4 American. It was no longer free as he had first promised. However his slyness was matched by Ethan's. Ethan gave him 50 cents Australian which the guy was very impressed with. He thought it was worth a lot of money because of its size and interesting shape.

My experience taught me that nothing in Mexico is free... just super cheap.



Reflective cycle:

- ☐ *Experience*
- ☐ *What?*
- ☐ *So what?*
- ☐ *Now what?*

Experience: Being a tourist in Mexico for the first time

What? A bloke cleverly tricking us into paying for our “shocking” event.

So What? I felt like the typical naïve, gullible tourist, as if I had been deceived. Emotionally, there is a certain degree of anger, and a little shame that I’ve been outsmarted and outwitted. But by the same token, we used our initiative to get even.

Now What? The next time, I will be more astute and more aware of the possibility of being conned or gullible.

In fact, Hayden stops short of deep learning in his reflective cycle. In a facilitated reflection exercise, the facilitator might encourage Hayden to consider some other potential lessons from his experience. Especially in international exchange, our learning goals extend beyond self-awareness or basic life lessons to objectives that can only be achieved through international experience. For example, in Hayden’s case, we might ask questions to encourage him to reflect upon the relationship between tourists and local people, why ‘cons’ may be more common in Mexico than in Australia, what would motivate the person who tried to get his money, and even why he might feel especially irritated to part with US\$4 in this situation. The point is that reflective learning takes advantage of opportunities presented by student experience; facilitating student reflection is a craft, requiring careful listening to their accounts, patience with the reflective process, and a willingness to fish for student insights without knowing in advance where the discussion might lead.

The hallmark of deep learning

A fundamental goal of reflection is to instill deep learning, in other words, life lessons that are indelible and enduring. Too often we fall into the trap of “shallow or superficial learning”. Here the learning may be transitory or fleeting. For one moment you get a glimpse of the lesson, but you don’t embed or concretize the learning into metacognitive processes. What we are looking for here is a life-long learner to emerge from the study abroad experience. (This is explained more thoroughly in the transformation module).

In some instances, it may be a long time after the event or experience (such as study abroad), before the meaning is distilled. As the adage says: “Like red wine in the bottle, it gets better with age” — reflection upon experience is no exception.

Activities

inviting student input

Exercise One

Photo passport

Homework for next class: Invite the students to provide a one-page PowerPoint photo collage which summarises their identity – in other words, select photos (maximum of 8 or 12) that tell the story of “who you are” to a stranger you might meet in your new host country. The activity is discussed extensively on pages 12 to 13 of the Communication module.

Then ask students to reflect upon their choices:

- What does each photo represent?
- How might other people read the image on the photo? What do we learn about the student from each photo?
- Is anything substantial about their lives being left out by the photos? What would a person who saw these photos *not* know about them? Is the exclusion intentional, an accident, or a result of it being difficult to photograph?



- Are some important parts of their lives not photographed? Is there a reason? If the student is going to live overseas, does he or she want to make sure to photograph their life more broadly before departure?
- Is the image of their lives presented by the photos accurate? If it distorts their lives, do they want to fix that before going abroad, or is it simply a fact of the way that photographs are built into their lives (for example, that photos are more common in leisure activities than in work or school)?

Overall, the photo passport activity, when included in the Reflection curriculum, gives students practice working through the Kolb cycle with a set of familiar materials and experiences. It also alerts them, in ways discussed in the Communication and Stereotypes modules, to the way that representations, even their own representations of their lives, can skew others' impressions of them. That is, simply by examining the relation of their photos to their lives and priorities, we may alert students to the way that selective representations are constructed.

Using the photo passport activity as part of Reflection provides students with easy material on which to practice reflection (familiar images, memories of their own lives), but it also may alert them to biases in the way that they record and represent events in their lives.

After they've had a chance to look at the kind of pictures that they tend to take, and how these photographs might present a particular, even a distorted view of their lives, you might consider presenting a workshop on the use of photography while studying abroad. The Communication module also has a discussion of basic advice for getting the most out of photography while abroad (see pages 41-43). Or consider inviting an instructor from your Media, Journalism, or Photography staff to talk to students about how to better integrate photography into their communication and reflection skills.

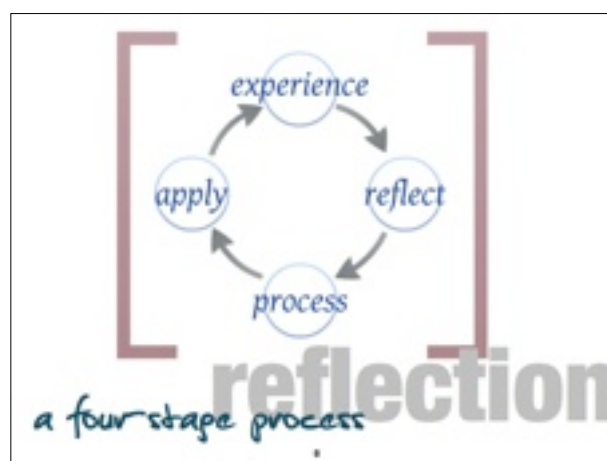


Exercise Two

Pre-departure discussion

Use the slides provided for the Reflection module's pre-departure workshop to have a discussion with your students of the basic principles of reflection-based and experiential learning. These slides were originally devised for an all-purpose pre-departure workshop, so they include brief discussions of exploration and the need to take some risks to get the most out of their experiences.

Use the discussion above (pages 4-15) to prepare for the workshop, including to discuss with students the cycle of reflective learning. The slides should specifically help to orient a discussion of reflective learning, as well as provide some general advice and inspiration to encourage greater reflection. The exhortation to reflect more can run up against a tendency for some students to pursue *more* experience, sometimes without much reflection. We advocate that you share with students a 'less doing, more being' motto for actually taking the time to fully experience their new environment, new sights, unfamiliar sounds, and all the opportunities that study abroad and international exchange bring. The slides specifically discuss the Zwarte Piet example that is included in the Instructor's Orientation.



In-country exercises

Exercise Three

Photo-reflection and blogging

Once familiar with Kolb's cycle, students can anchor their experiences overseas within this experiential model. Many students can do this by blogging and photo-reflection. It is important to note from the very outset, that not every student will find reflection an easy task. For some it comes intuitively or naturally, whilst others will struggle with divulging the innermost contents of their hearts and heads. Recording emotions and feelings is an individual ability. Some may become stuck, frozen and even resistant. The facilitator needs to be cognizant of these "blocks" and provide sequential baby steps to assist the familiarisation process.

Reflection can occur through speaking, journal writing, drawing, watching plays, acting, reading, listening, doodling, poetry, felt pipe-cleaners, sculpture, mime, music, photo collage, blogging, installations, videos: in more ways than you can probably imagine. The way we incorporate reflective activities in higher education is only limited by the scope of our imagination. In this project, we drew on the visual image as a method of tapping into inner reservoirs of knowledge, skills, behaviours and values. This method comes in many guises and names, such as 'photo reflection', 'photo-elicitation', and 'photo-voice'.

Since the advent of photography the photographic image has been regarded as an aide-mémoire.

The very act of taking a photograph signals the moment as worthy of remembering and, while objects break, landscapes change, and people die, the photograph endures, allowing it to be used to remember 'what has been'.

Molly Rogers

<http://tiny.cc/t86xew>

One of the reasons we chose a social networking and visual literacy method i.e. the use of photographs and blogs as a reflection tool in this module, is because some students struggle

to recall the essence of their experiences, in their richness and complexity. Photographs are an *aide memoire*. They provide the impetus for memory recall – the flood gate of memories take you back to what you saw, smelt, heard, felt ...

Talking through a visual image or representation encourages introspection, reflection, dialogue, self-discovery, two-way communication and personal development (Harper, 2002). Premised on being a versatile and powerful reflective tool or medium, photo reflection has also been incorporated into psychotherapy and counselling (Martin, 2009; Wang, 1999). The spread of digital photography and online photo-sharing through social networks like Facebook and Flickr have created an opportunity here to optimise reflection through photos, even before students have returned to their home country.

Gen Y students use photos and narrative as their predominant social networking tool, primarily through the medium of Facebook. We have found that incorporating both photographs (visual literacy) and students' voices, we can help them to increase their visual literacy and provide a familiar anchor for the unfamiliar tasks that we are encouraging them to attempt. A narrative should accompany the photographs, as part of the individual empowerment is in re-telling the story aligned with the visual image. In re-telling and re-storying, the learning is concretised.

Setting up a "safe" and "secure" place for sharing and disclosure is of paramount importance. Students need to trust the facilitator; after all, they will be disclosing their thoughts and feelings. And the facilitator must ensure that the emotional welfare of every participant is being protected and honoured. For this reason, photo reflection may be possible on the web, but we would also suggest an instructor consider a confidential or private channel for displaying student images and reflections, especially if the topics are liable to be personal. For a much more complete discussion of available channels and their different strengths, please see the Communication module.



Re-entry activities

Exercise Four

Photo-based reflection workshop

Because reflection-based learning depends on the experiences that the students have had, the instructor or discussion facilitator will have to build a framework or be prepared in some way to work with students' stories, photographs, and memories of study abroad. We suggest using the Kolb cycle and guiding questions, but we do not provide a re-entry slideshow because our experience is that too much lecture-like presentation fails to encourage students to engage in their own active reflection and learning.

If you would like to use a slideshow, we suggest compiling photographs that the students themselves indicate are reminders of powerful experiences, either from their blog posts or elicited separately prior to the workshop. These photos can then be put up for all to see, and the student asked to recount why the image is particularly powerful. Other students may have comparable experiences, or they may have questions for the student recounting his or her experience.

Reflection workshop require patience and a willingness to let the students think silently. When you ask a question, remember the '10 second rule': don't move on to another question or answer your own question until you have given students at least ten seconds to respond. The better the question, the harder it may be to answer quickly, so do not rush the students or leave insufficient time for them to actually reflect and come to their own conclusions. Silent time to think or write out a few ideas may be necessary.

The bottom line is that a reflection-based workshop has to facilitate reflection, a practice which students may not find easy. Too much presentation by the instructor, or too little time to think, will work at cross-purposes to your goals for the workshop. Although this approach can be difficult, even socially awkward, the result can be a kind of authentic learning and thought which is often squeezed out of the educational environment. Students and instructors alike may struggle, but the benefits are well worth the effort.

The two following BTLH YouTube clips, both of which come from a re-entry workshop, provide a starting point for suggesting a framework or scaffold for conducting a reflective workshop. They demonstrate the use of the Kolb diagram, and show how the presenter has

incorporated student photos and comments from a blog as a means of eliciting responses from other students. For those doing a self-study module, these clips will convey how other students have tackled the topic. These and other video clips are available through the BTLH site under 'video resources':

- Reflection - Going Deeper (4:35) <http://youtu.be/bRuabPEyFHo>
- Finding the Meaning (3:27) <http://youtu.be/005NNH5-geU>

Reflecting on the value of reflection

Prior to uploading the BTLH teaching materials onto Youtube, one of the students interviewed in our pilot study, Sarah, was offered the opportunity to review and approve the materials. You can view Sarah's interview on the BTLH website under 'video resources'. Her unexpected response to revisiting the materials six months after the initial filming, highlights to us the importance of reflection both 'in action' (i.e. concurrently reflecting whilst in the experience) and post activity.

Sarah succinctly sums up the value of reflection but also the importance of creating forms of reflection to which people will return and see again, and the ineffability of our interpretations and learning. There's so much in this quote, which she relayed in an email to the project team:



I just wanted to say a huge thank you to both you (Tonia) and Greg for your commitment and efforts in creating the BTLH videos ... It was quite confronting seeing myself in the videos and reliving my experiences through watching it. I didn't realise how much of my story I had shared through the filming or how emotional I would feel watching them back.

Thank you for allowing me to share my story. I never expected that exchange would have such a profound effect on me....

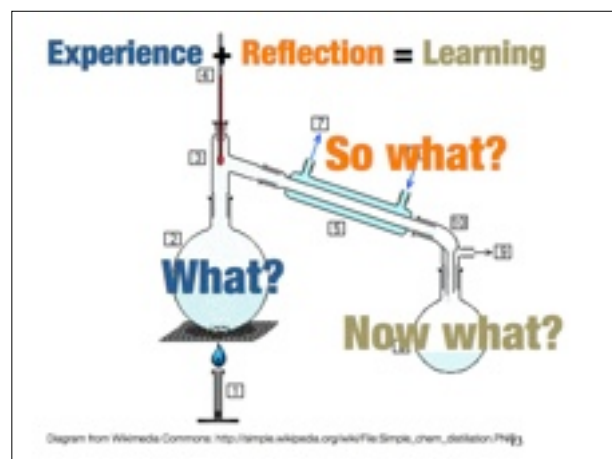
Sarah had been in Japan during the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami that caused the shutdown of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. She was eventually evacuated from the country, returning home early from her exchange program. The videos available of her reflecting on her experience are powerful, but the point of her email was: even though she was eloquent student, very capable of expressing herself, she benefited both from a structured forum to reflect on her experience, and from rereading her own reflections.

Facilitator questions for reflection sessions

As you facilitate student reflection, the following questions may help you to structure your sessions and to elicit student reflection. Remember that reflection sessions tend to start slow, and as students become more familiar with the instructor and each other, and their discussions inspire insights in each other, they can become more and more engaged. Some of these questions relate to facilitated in-country reflection opportunities, online; others are more relevant to re-entry sessions.

WHAT?

- Describe something that pushed you outside of your comfort zone.
- Describe a feeling you experienced.
- Describe how the host culture communicates.
- What behaviours are demonstrated in this society?
- What made you smile or laugh recently?
- Describe some of the values or attitudes in your host country.
- Describe a good idea you've heard today that doesn't happen back home.
- Acknowledge someone for a job well done.
- What nonverbal communication did you observe?
- Name someone who supported you.
- How do you ask for advice or directions?
- Give an example of when you trusted someone.



SO WHAT?

- What personal strengths did you use today?
- How did your actions affect others?
- What did you learn and how can you use it?
- What was difficult for you? Why?
- Why is this experience important?

- Describe something that was hard to hear. Why?
- Name something new you saw in yourself. Someone else?

NOW WHAT?

- Based on your study abroad experience, describe a vision you have for the future.
- Describe the greatest insight you had today.
- What will you do with what you've learned?
- What is one thing you may do differently in the future?
- What did you learn about communication that will help you later?
- How does this relate to real life?
- What do you want to remember about what was experienced?
- What direction would you like to see your life take?
- What would you do differently next time?
- How can you use this experience to help you in the future?

Adapted by Tonia Gray from the 'Debrief Thumball,' information at <http://store.training-wheels.com/deth.html>.



Exercise Five

Targeted topics for reflection

A facilitator doing a re-entry workshop may also wish to target particular topics for reflection, especially if those topics have been the subject of online discussion or posts by students while studying abroad. In our workshops, we tend to place key words on large cards and pin them to the walls of the room, but you might also use a whiteboard or circulate cards among students. In this case, using Kolb's cycle, you can target shared experiences among students around a specific topic.

For example, you might ask students to focus on 'sport' as a topic for the 'What?' part of the reflective cycle. 'What' kinds of experiences of sport did they have overseas. Then ask them to reflect on the 'So what?' of the experience – how they felt, was it peculiar, uncomfortable, exciting? Did what they see cause them discomfort, was it weird, or disorienting? Then the 'Now what?' question: what sort of learning can they take away from the experience? Do they now know something more about themselves or the world? Have they gained a new appreciation for the other culture or their own? How do they distill their experience, and what effect does it have upon them?

What?

Architecture
Health care
Streetscape
Humour
Gender relations
Educational system
Law/crime
Stereotypes
Sport
Differences/similarities
Mode of transport
Landscape/street scape
Media
University life

Social-economic status/
poverty

Values/morals

Educations system

Hierarchies

Politics

Funny incidents/helping
hand

So what?

Homesickness

Vulnerability

'Truth' of your experience

Ambiguity

Disequilibrium

Euphoria

Growth

Crazy/weird

Now what?

Boon/reward/positive
outcomes

Rewriting/re-storying
yourself

Transformation

Globally aware

Resourceful

Adaptable

Resilient

Cosmopolitan

Hybrid

Empathy

Supplementary material

Suggested additional readings

Bean, Thomas, and Lisa Patel-Stevens. 2002. Scaffolding Reflection for Preservice and Inservice Teachers. *Reflective Practice* 3(2): 205-218.

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Web-based resources

Murdoch University re-entry workshops:

Reflection - going deeper (4:35)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bRuabPEyFHo&feature=youtu.be>

Finding the meaning (3:27)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=005NNH5-geU&feature=youtu.be>

Interviews with Sarah S.

http://www.tlc.murdoch.edu.au/project/btlh/vid_interviews.html

All available at BTLH website, under video resources.

Reflection for Learning

<http://reflectivepractice-cpd.wikispaces.com/Definitions>

Reflection definitions

<http://www.compact.org/disciplines/reflection/bibliography/>

Photo-elicitation project in Texas: What do you value in your landscape?

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9c8SGeYAYPo>

Photolanguage – American Dreams

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pVff-XTuj9w&feature=results_main&playnext=1&list=PLD06BA868C4BE0521

Photostory

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-SHU8nT3FTs&feature=related>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0pt15eCqNQ>

Direct Experience and Focussed reflection

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r0pt15eCqNQ>

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Credits

Cover photos by Liam Turbet from his travels in the United States.

Photos of Zwarte Piet in the Netherlands by Nathan B; available at <http://ozstudentsabroad.com/2010/12/08/merry-racism/>.

Collection of images for photo passport by Negar.

Photo of reflected temple in Japan by Riku; available at: <http://tiny.cc/4k8xew>.

Empty grocery store shelves in Tokyo following 2011 earthquake by Sarah.

Reflections in window by Sandy.

After-hours cigarette vending machine in Rome by Zhijia.







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