



Toolkit: Grounding Intercultural Growth:

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This toolkit features reflection activities that can be implemented throughout the study abroad experience.

Name Game (Student Instructions)

Part I. Do the Name Game Activity with a Partner

Answer the four questions (below) and then try to identify some of the cultural aspects your names reveal. You might also share what, if anything, the other person's name means to you (and ask your partner to do the same for your name).

As a reminder, here are the four questions:

- Who named you?
- Why are you named what you are named?
- What does your name mean to you?
- What does it mean to other people?

Here is a partial list of some of the possible cultural aspects your name could reflect:

- Nationality
- Ethnicity
- Region
- Education
- Religion
- Spirituality
- Nature
- Social class
- Mythology
- Profession
- Art
- Music
- Sports
- Hopes or aspirations

Part II. Conclusions

Write approximately one page discussing the results of your interview; you will hand in what you've written next week. You don't have to answer all of the following questions, but here are some you may want to think about:

- What did you learn about your partner's name that surprised you?
- Was there anything your partner said about his or her name that you still don't understand?
- Can you identify 2-3 cultural influences that you share (for example, the role your family and religion played in your and your partner's names) and 2-3 influences that are different (maybe

your name shows the influence of your mother's ethnicity, or your father's profession, while neither of these influenced your partner's name)?

- What did you learn through this process?

Debriefing Questions:

1. What did you think of the Name Game? What was it like to think of your name in cultural terms? Was it easy? Difficult? Why do you think that is?
2. What similarities and differences did you notice about the name practices described by your peers? Did you observe any patterns? What aspects of our cultural background determine naming practices in different places (e.g. religion, gender, family, etc.)?
3. What did you learn from this activity about yourself and others? What did you learn about the complexity of culture?

(Vande Berg, 2009)

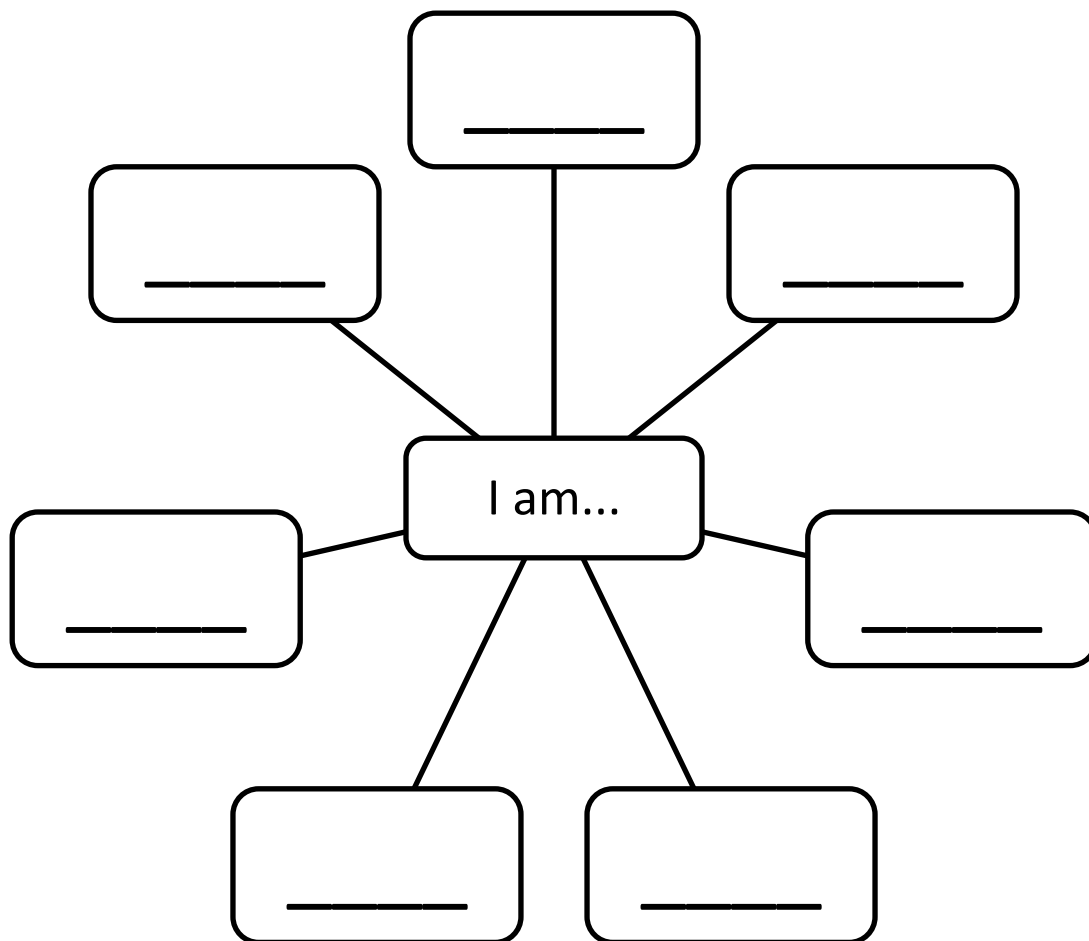
'I Am' Activity & Discussion

A first major step toward intercultural competence is helping our students become more aware of their own cultural perspectives, assumptions and frames of reference: in other words, cultivating their self-awareness. Provide the diagram on the next page to students.

In as many circles as you can, write a word you feel describes you or is a significant part of who you are or how you choose to identify yourself to others.

- If you had to pick just one circle, which would it be? Two circles? Why are these the most important parts of your identity?
- Did you have difficulty filling in seven circles? Did you find seven was not enough?
- What insights have you gained about yourself from this exercise?
- Which identity gives you the greatest sense of pride? Why?
- Is there an identity that others don't readily recognize in you? Is this okay? Or is it frustrating?
- Go back to the diagram and add some of the values you attribute to the circles. For example, if one circle says "student," values from being a student might be "independence," "respect for knowledge," or "question authority." After adding in the values, consider if there are places where the values conflict. How have you managed to cope with these conflicts?
- How have these circles changed or might they change while you are abroad? Can you imagine other identities becoming important while you are in a new culture? For example, did you list your nationality in one of the circles? Your social class? Did you list the languages you speak? How might it feel to be seen as just one or another circle—such as U.S. American?
- Put a star next to the identifiers that are immediately visible to people in the host culture when they meet you. Are these the same identifiers that are immediately visible to people upon meeting you in the United States?
- Underline the three identifiers that you feel you are wrestling with or will wrestle with the most while you are abroad.

Instructions: Please pair up with a partner; feel free to share whatever you are comfortable sharing and keep private whatever you are not comfortable revealing. Try to listen for both similarities and differences in your identity dialogue. What is the one insight you've learned by talking to your partner?



Adapted from Paige, R.M., Cohen, A.D., Kappler, B., Chi, J.C., and Lassegard, J.P. (2006), *Maximizing study abroad: A students' guide to strategies for language and culture learning and use* (2nd ed.). Minneapolis, MN: Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition.

Packing and Unpacking

This activity is an icebreaker for groups to start moving into the reflection space. Pose the question to your returning students:

When you studied abroad, what did you pack in your suitcase and what did you bring back?

Encourage students to consider what skills and attitudes they developed by going abroad. They should strive to dive deep and go beyond literal responses. Some follow-up questions to get them reflecting include:

In what specific ways did your perspectives shift? What concrete experiences transformed your worldview?

Give students a few minutes to brainstorm and then have them introduce themselves and answer the question.

Debrief (5-10 minutes)

1. What was your initial reaction or response to this question?
2. Was it easy or difficult to think of a concrete answer?
3. Why do you think that is?
4. In what ways can you continue developing your newly cultivated skills, attitude, and knowledge?

(Bennett, 2017; Sherman, 2018)

The Describe-Interpret-Evaluate Method (Overview for Facilitators)

When interacting with someone from a culture with which you are unfamiliar, it is relatively easy to jump to conclusions. There is a tendency to view the situation with the cultural lens you are accustomed to using; however, that lens may not be helpful if the other person is not viewing the situation with the same cultural lens. As a result, your inferences may be flawed. The following process of Description-Interpretation-Evaluation (D-I-E) can be a helpful tool in coming to a new understanding of the other person's culture (as well as your own).

Step 1: Describe

- Describe the object or situation in concrete, observable terms.
- What happened in the interaction?
- What was said? What did you see? What did you feel at the time?

Step 2: Interpret

- Think of possible explanations (interpretations) for what you observed or experienced.
- From your cultural perspective, try to explain why you think this situation or experience occurred.
- Try to find at least three different interpretations of the interaction or occurrence. What cultural information have you used to produce these interpretations?

Step 3: Evaluate

- Evaluate what you observed or experienced. What positive or negative feelings do you have regarding the situation?
- Consider how you might have felt if you were a member of the other culture and held the dominant cultural values and beliefs.

The D-I-E model of debriefing can help you consider multiple perspectives and interpretations for intercultural encounters. By listening to and understanding varied interpretations, you will become more open to differing perspectives. You will be able to switch to alternative perspectives that are required in different cultural settings in order to make more accurate inferences. D-I-E will also help you deal more effectively with emotional reactions to differences that often result in a lack of understanding or a rejection of the new experience.

Asking questions using D-I-E

Along with learning the D-I-E process, it's helpful to learn what kinds of questions to ask. Descriptive questions are usually the best place to start with difficult-to-understand cultural phenomena. Descriptive questions start a dialogue without injecting your own values into the mix. Through descriptive questions you may find out much more information that will assist you in forming interpretations and subsequently evaluating the event. In the following sample questions, notice the differences in the evaluative, interpretive, and descriptive approaches.

Evaluative: Why are these people so rude?

Interpretive: The people here aren't very trusting of foreigners, are they?

Descriptive: Why do so many of the villagers follow me around when I go to the market?

As the result of asking either an evaluative or interpretive question, you may alienate yourself from those you are trying to understand. The third question, from a descriptive approach, is more concrete (you are asking about a specific behavior you've experienced) and more open-minded (you have not, at least in the words selected, and hopefully not in your tone, revealed a negative evaluation of the culture involved).

Student Activity Instructions:

Display an image or mystery object for students (example below). Have them complete the following:

On a piece of paper, draw three vertical columns.

In the first column, write down as many value-neutral descriptors as you can think of. Spend as long as possible in this column, noting every imaginable descriptor.

In the second column, write down several interpretations based on your description. What might be happening in this image? What might be the function or purpose of the objects displayed in the image?

In the third column write down at least one positive and one negative evaluation. Your evaluations should draw from your interpretations, just like your interpretations draw from the description.

Debrief:

- What was it like to apply the D-I-E to an unfamiliar image or event? What was it like to spend so much time on description?
- What have you learned about the processes of describing, interpreting or evaluating – either

about these processes, or about how you personally tend to approach them?

- How might you use what you've learned here outside this training (in your own life)?



Describe Judgment-neutral, descriptive statements	Interpret Statements on what it might be for (or in the case of photos, what the photo might be about)	Evaluate Statements containing some form of judgment or emotional nuance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's white • It's hard • It's made of plastic • There are 5 compartments • There is a lid • The lid doesn't lock • There is a kind of ridge on the lid • There are holes in the bottom of each compartment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looks like a pill box, but it can't be one because of the holes. • It looks like a mold for making something. • Some kind of kitchenware, I think. • Is it maybe Japanese? • Is it something for astronauts? • Why doesn't the lid lock? • Is it missing a piece? • I think it's for holding something that's attached to something else, like wires through those holes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's weird • It's useless because of the holes in the bottom • It's cool • I feel like I've seen something like that before... • It would be easy to clean

Cultivating Brave Spaces: How to establish ground rules for conversations and behavior around social justice learning opportunities

https://www.naspa.org/images/uploads/main/Policy_and_Practice_No_2_Safe_Brave_Spaces.pdf

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/75c5/6a5dba81efd0954597ea39eb7d55acc7a202.pdf>

Brave Space

By Micky ScottBey Jones

Together we will create *brave space*

Because there is no such thing as a “safe space”

We exist in the real world

We all carry scars and we have all caused wounds.

In this space

We seek to turn down the volume of the outside world,

We amplify voices that fight to be heard elsewhere,

We call each other to more truth and love

We have the right to start somewhere and continue to grow.

We have the responsibility to examine what we think we know.

We will not be perfect.

This space will not be perfect.

It will not always be what we wish it to be

But

It will be *our brave space together,*

and

We will work on it side by side

Characteristics of Brave Space:

Encourage students to move beyond Safe Spaces and think about Brave Spaces. Help students get out of the **Comfort Zone** and into a **Learning Zone**. Make sure that they are challenged and supported so they are not in the **Panic Zone**.

OUT	IN
Safe	Brave
Agreeing to Disagree	Controversy with Civility

Don't Take Things Personally	Own Your Intention and Impact
Challenge by Choice	Encourage People to Push themselves beyond their comfort zones
Respect	Multi-partiality - Overlapping
No Attacks	Comments will make you feel uncomfortable. Lean into the discomfort.

Person, Process, Place

Background

Students work in groups according to their Learning Style to imagine their perfect learning environment. This is a fun activity that most students enjoy. It's important that you help the students make the connection between learning style and cultural worldview.

Here's an important note, also on using the LSI as a means to greater understanding (vs. labeling):

“The point of identifying learning styles is not to label individual students and tailor instruction to fit their preferences. To function [in any] profession, students will need skills characteristic of each type of learner: the powers of observation and attention to detail of the sensor and the imagination and abstract thinking ability of the intuitor; the abilities to comprehend information presented both visually and verbally, the systematic analysis skills of the sequential learner and the multidisciplinary synthesis skills of the global learner, and so on. If instruction is heavily biased toward one category of a learning style dimension, mismatched students may be too uncomfortable to learn effectively, while the students whose learning styles match the teaching style will not be helped to develop critical skills in their less preferred learning style categories. The optimal teaching style is a balanced one that sometimes matches students' preferences, so their discomfort level is not too great for them to learn effectively, and sometimes goes against their preferences, forcing them to stretch and grow in directions they might be inclined to avoid if given the option.”

(Felder & Brent, 2005, p. 57)

Before you facilitate this lesson, be sure you have a basic understanding of the typical preferences for each dominant learning style AXIS (CE, RO, AC, or AE). This is distinct from the learning style, which is the quadrant, or “kite” (Diverging, Assimilating, Converging, or Accommodating dominant learning styles).

You may be surprised by the extent to which the groups come up with responses that match their predicted preferences. Focus on these as a way to establish validity, and to help the students feel a sense of belonging and difference with regard to others in the group.

If you encounter resistance from students who have done this before (or just think it's silly to take all these inventories), you might tell them that you as their teacher will find it useful to know their preferences, both individually and as a group.

Objectives

The purposes of this activity are:

- To lend credibility to Kolb's Learning Styles Inventory
- To explore difference and similarity among group members and demonstrate that differences

often exist “below the surface” (i.e. as referred to in the iceberg analogy in the embedded component first session).

- To help students begin to reflect on their own tendencies and preferences.
- To help them understand why the course is designed the way it is (“around the wheel”).
- To encourage students to “stretch” and learn in new ways while abroad.
- Time

Facilitating the Activity (60 minutes)

Break students into groups according to their preferred learning style, which means the dominant axis (not their quadrant). It is easiest if you organize these groups ahead of time and simply tell them the groups to which they are assigned. Ideally you do not want to have groups that are larger than about six students, so if your class is large and you have many students with the same preferred learning style, you may want to divide one group into two smaller groups.

Note: You can identify the students’ dominant preferred learning style by looking at which of their four “kite” points reaches the highest percentage on the concentric rings in the diagram. Note that the dominant axis is not always the highest “score” on the worksheet, as the axes (w, x, y, and z) are numbered differently on the diagram. See the resource ‘Interpreting the LSI’ for more information.

1. Pass out large pieces of flip chart paper (one per group) and some markers. Ask each of the small groups to pick one person to be the artist/recorder.
2. Divide the board or flip chart into three columns and label the three columns “Person,” “Process,” and “Place.” Ask each of the student groups to copy what you have done onto their piece of paper.
3. Explain to students that you are going to ask them to imagine their perfect learning situation. Tell them to go through the categories one by one and talk about how they like to learn. Write the following questions under each respective category and give students an example (perhaps from your own experience) of something that might fit in each category.
4. Person: With whom do you learn best? (Example: From teachers who are more like coaches/mentors, from experts, etc.)
5. Process: How do you learn best? (Example: From reading and thinking about things, from experimenting, doing group projects, etc.)
6. Place: Where do you learn best? (Example: In comfortable yet quiet surroundings, in busy environments, etc.)
7. Ask them to record images and/or words they have in common with each other within each of the categories so they will be able to present to the rest of the group. They should also put their names on this paper (so you can reference it later). Give the students approximately 15 minutes to work in their small groups.
8. As they work in their small groups, walk around and listen to what they are saying and try to help connect what they are saying with the groups’ preferred learning style. For example, CE’s will likely say they prefer to work in a loose interactive style and with many opportunities for sensory input and experimentation. They tend to like to brainstorm and be among people. They tend to value intuition, relationships, and trying things out more than data, introspection, and establishing rules, structure, or systems. They are often “creative” types.⁸ As you walk around, provide more information as needed to help them further define their categories. The following are some supporting questions for each category that you might ask if groups seem stuck or unsure of the category.

9. Person: With whom do you learn best? Mentor? Teacher? Coach? Lecturer? Peers?
- What is the rapport like?
 - What kind of credentials and/or skills does the person have?
 - What sort of style?
- Process: How do you learn best?
- Through hands-on activities? Discussion? Lecture? From books? From images? Alone or in groups?
 - Do you need an emotional connection? Do you require data? Do you like structure or do you prefer improvisation? Do you need examples? Do you need to understand the underlying theory?
 - Do you like to learn in groups or alone? Do you like to move your body or sit still? Do you like to have music on or prefer silence?
 - Do you like to process information through conversations or in your own head? Do you like to use technology?
- Place: Where do you learn best?
- In a classroom? At home? In a busy cafe? Outside? In a library?
 - Is the space cozy and small or large and spacious? Light?
 - Have each group report out. As they report, remark on aspects in which the group conforms to the predicted preferences.
5. Give students the Kolb Graphic and Explanation of Kolb's Learning Styles handouts for reference. Follow this activity with the debrief outlined in the next section. The activity is wasted without the debrief!

Debriefing the Activity

The key points you should be sure to emphasize during the debrief are:

- Most people have a preferred learning style, though some people are more balanced in their preferences than others.
- Many people find it difficult to understand how others may learn differently, especially across the "hemispheres" (CE vs. AC or RO vs. AE).
- The point of this exercise is not to label your style, but to understand that there are many different ways of being that are equally valid and effective.
- In order to learn deeply, we need to practice "stretching" outside our usual learning preferences.
- Analogously, in order to grow interculturally, we need to practice stretching outside our usual cultural preferences.