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Self-Development Reflection Journal for Students

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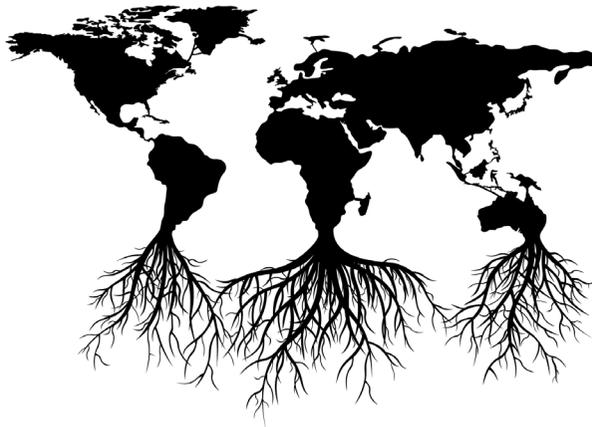
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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REFLECTION JOURNAL FOR TRAVEL ABROAD

By Margaret Shu-Mei Sass, EdD, JD

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to traveling abroad! You are on your way to a great cultural adventure, an academic journey, and a self-reflective voyage. This handbook provides an opportunity for you to understand your own personal cultural path throughout your traveling experience, to examine what you are learning about the country you are visiting and about yourself. You have now entered a new world of opportunity. Take advantage of this academic expedition and explore!

How this handbook works:

- Complete the Pre-entry Reflection prior to your international trip
- Complete the Pre-entry Assignment
- Choose one of the items on the Multicultural Teamwork activity page
- Fill out “What is your level of Cultural Competence?”
- Complete “Plan of Action for Cultural Competence”
- Fill out the Professional Experience Daily Journal
- Fill out the Personal Experience Daily Journal
- Complete the Final Reflection Report
- Complete the End of Travel assignment
- Complete the Re-entry Reflection assignment

PRE-ENTRY REFLECTION

1. Why did you choose to participate in this trip?

2. How does this trip affect your work?

3. What do you expect to learn?

4. How do you think this class relates to your career path?

5. What do you think culture shock is?

6. Do you expect to have culture shock once you arrive? Why or why not?

7. Is there anyone you can talk to about this trip prior to departure?

8. How are you preparing to communicate with residents of the country you are visiting?

9. What do you know about the country you are visiting?

10. What concerns you the most about visiting this country?

11. How are you feeling right now about your future international trip?

PRE-ENTRY ASSIGNMENT A

1. Describe the country you are visiting (1) politically, (2) geographically, and (3) culturally.

2. What do you expect to see once you arrive?

3. What do you plan to visit while you are there?

4. What is your plan of action if you get lost?

5. How do the people of this country communicate verbally and nonverbally (gestures, eye contact, etc.)?

MULTICULTURAL TEAMWORK ACTIVITY

Listed below are suggested teamwork activities to create a more collaborative and interpersonal environment if traveling to another country as a group:

- Complete a community service project together at a food bank, a community center, a school, etc. that represents a population you are unfamiliar with. Think about what you want to accomplish for the organization and for the group.
- Go to a restaurant serving the type of foods the country you are visiting will provide.
- Watch a movie with coworkers that may share what the culture is like of the country you're visiting.
- Volunteer at a cultural center that represents the country you are visiting.
- Invite a speaker that is an expert of the particular country you will be visiting to your meeting. Be prepared to ask many questions.
- Prepare a document as if you were to present it to college students that were traveling to this country. Present the information to your coworkers.
- Prepare a document that would prepare other professionals when visiting this country. Present the information to your coworkers.
- Create a blog system and/or create an email dialogue with professionals currently working in that country or with the businesses you'll be visiting. Invite coworkers to participate or create a "team" page to blog.
- Attend a special event as a concert, food festival, etc. that may expose you to that culture or other different cultures with your group. Discuss your experience with the group.
- Do a search on YouTube and find videos and/or articles and share them with your coworkers as homework assignments. Send it out prior to the meeting for them to read, and then discuss it at the next meeting.

1. What activity did you do?

2. Explain the experience. What did you learn?

WHAT IS YOUR LEVEL OF CULTURAL COMPETENCE?

Please read each of the following statements and rate the extent to which you agree with each one of them by using the scale provided (1 being low, 5 being high):

1. Rate your level of knowledge on world views.

1 2 3 4 5

2. Rate your level of knowledge on different ethnic groups.

1 2 3 4 5

3. What is your perception of other cultural groups?

4. What is your perception of other countries?

5. What is your level of interaction with different ethnic groups (personally and professionally)?

6. What is your attitude towards individuals that do not speak English?

7. Do you seek out individuals different from yourself to learn more about their culture?

8. What is your knowledge of other cultures? Explain

9. How would you describe your level of respect for other cultures and ethnic groups?
What would you like to change regarding your actions toward individuals different from yourself?

10. Do you act different nonverbally with different ethnic groups?

PLAN OF ACTION FOR CULTURAL COMPETENCE

In order to be more culturally competent, reflect on how you can become more knowledgeable about the country you are visiting.

Country you are visiting:

Organization/Business(s) you will be working with:

AREA OF KNOWLEDGE TO WORK ON	CURRENT KNOWLEDGE	ACTIONS TO INCREASE KNOWLEDGE
Traditions		
Business etiquette		
Religion		
Nonverbal communication		
Particular gestures		

AREA OF KNOWLEDGE TO WORK ON	CURRENT KNOWLEDGE	ACTIONS TO INCREASE KNOWLEDGE
Political activity		
Geographical location		
Language		
Climate (business)		
Climate (weather)		
Eating etiquette		
Forms of respect		
Forms of disrespect		
Organizational structure of businesses		

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END OF TRAVEL REFLECTIVE REPORT

Purpose of the Report:

- To reflect on and connect your professional international trip with the objectives and content of your job
- To demonstrate your understanding of your travels
- To show how your trip helped you understand your job better and how to work better with coworkers and clients

Content of the Report:

- The report should include the trip summary, synthesis of what you did and learned, and your personal reflection.

Question/thoughts to consider:

- Define your project and the purpose.
- Define what activities you performed and with whom.
- What did the experience mean to you? Has that definition changed during the course of the trip?
- How did your project incorporate the material you learned at your current job?
- Did the information you learned at your job help you complete the project? Did you find this difficult?
- Is there anything you learned that was unexpected? Explain.
- How was the organization and its employees served through your project?
- Would you consider returning to the organization/business or continuing the project long-term?

RE-ENTRY REFLECTION

1. How satisfied were you with your international professional trip?

2. Are you satisfied with the country you chose? If not, what country do you wish you had chosen?

3. Did you learn what you expected to learn?

4. What important things did you learn while traveling to this country?

5. How do you think this trip related to your career path? Explain.

6. Do you think the trip related to your job's objectives and duties? Explain.

7. Did you have culture shock?

1. If you did have culture shock, how did you manage it?

2. Were you able to communicate effectively with local residents?

3. Did you notice any particular nonverbal actions and/or gestures different from the United States? What were they?

4. Is there anyone you talked to about this trip once you arrived back in the states?

5. What did you learn about the country you visited?

6. How are you feeling right now about your international experience?

7. Is there anything you would do differently when visiting another country again?

RE-ENTRY ASSIGNMENT

1. Describe the country you visited (1) politically, (2) geographically, and (3) culturally.

2. Did you see what you expected to see once you arrived? Why or why not?

3. What places did you visit while you were there?

4. How did the people of this country communicate verbally and nonverbally (gestures, eye contact, etc.)?

5. If you got lost while visiting different locations, what did you do? How did you feel?

**For more information, please contact
Margaret Sass at sassm@purdue.edu.**

By Margaret Shu-Mei Sass © 2013