

Bringing It Home: Designing Re-Entry for STEM Education Abroad Programs

HANDOUT 3 — Capturing Global Learning: From Experience to Evidence

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PURPOSE

The **Describe** stage of the DEAL Reflection Framework helps students move beyond general travel narratives toward identifying specific experiences and documenting evidence of learning. At this stage, students focus on:

- **What happened?**
- **What did I observe?**
- **What evidence do I have?**

Interpretation comes later during **DEAL Stage 2 – Examine**.

PART I. SELECT A SIGNIFICANT EXPERIENCE

Using the **Global Innovation Case**, identify one specific experience, interaction, event, challenge, or observation that deserves closer attention.

The significant experience I selected is:

What made this experience noticeable or significant? *Do not interpret what the experience means yet.*



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PART II. DESCRIBE WHAT HAPPENED

Document the experience as specifically and objectively as possible.

Element	What Did You Observe?
Setting – Where and when did it occur?	
People/Stakeholders – Who was involved?	
Situation/Challenge – What was happening?	
Actions – What did people do?	
Resources – What knowledge, materials, technologies, or relationships were used?	
Outcome – What happened as a result?	

PART III. OBSERVE COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE AND CONTEXT

Global learning involves not only noticing challenges, but also the **knowledge, strengths, resources, and practices already present within communities.**

Community Strengths

What did you observe?

- ☐ Local expertise
- ☐ Collaboration
- ☐ Leadership
- ☐ Creativity
- ☐ Resourcefulness
- ☐ Skilled practice
- ☐ Cultural or contextual knowledge
- ☐ Social networks
- ☐ Local materials/resources
- ☐ Existing partnerships
- ☐ Other _____

What evidence supports your observation?

Community Knowledge

What knowledge, practice, experience, or expertise was evident?

How was this knowledge demonstrated?

Context

What factors appeared relevant to what happened?

- ☐ Resources
- ☐ Cost
- ☐ Infrastructure
- ☐ Geography/environment
- ☐ Culture
- ☐ Policy/regulation
- ☐ Technology access
- ☐ Education/training
- ☐ Workforce availability
- ☐ Other _____

What did you observe?

PART IV. CAPTURE EVIDENCE OF POTENTIAL WORKFORCE COMPETENCIES

Return to the competencies discussed in the Keynote session and listed in Part II of Handout 2. Select two potential competencies and identify what happened that could later provide evidence for that competency.

Potential Competency	What Happened That Might Provide Evidence?

What artifact or evidence could support this claim?

- ☐ Journal/reflection
- ☐ Project artifact
- ☐ Research notes/data
- ☐ Design/prototype
- ☐ Presentation
- ☐ Team product
- ☐ Feedback from collaborators
- ☐ Field notes
- ☐ Other _____



PART V. FROM TRAVEL NARRATIVE TO EVIDENCE

General Travel Narrative

“We visited a community that had challenges accessing clean water. It was interesting to see how people developed their own solutions.”

Evidence-Based Description

“During a community visit, residents demonstrated a water filtration approach using locally available materials. Community members described how the system had been adapted over time in response to material availability and household needs.”

What makes the second description stronger?

What evidence could later be used to examine learning or professional competency?

PART VI. BREAKOUT-ROOM DESIGN STUDIO

Now shift roles from **participant as learner** to **participant as re-entry program designer**.

Step 1: Review the Describe-stage activity you just experienced.

Design Question	Group Recommendation
KEEP: What worked well?	
MODIFY: What should be clearer or more accessible?	
ADD: What is missing?	
REMOVE: What is unnecessary or repetitive?	

Step 2. Draft Your Re-Entry Reflection Guide

Your guide should include three elements:

1. Significant Experience Prompt

Help students select a specific experience worth documenting.

Our prompt:

2. Observation Prompt

Help students describe what they observed, actions, community strengths, context, resources, or outcomes—without interpreting it yet.

Our prompt:

3. Evidence-Gathering Activity

What should students collect, document, or preserve as evidence of their learning?

- ☐ Field notes
- ☐ Journal/reflection
- ☐ Project artifact
- ☐ Research notes/data
- ☐ Design/prototype
- ☐ Presentation
- ☐ Team product
- ☐ Feedback from collaborators
- ☐ Photo/documentation, where appropriate
- ☐ Other: _____

Our evidence-gathering activity/instruction:

Step 3. Check Your Guide

Does your reflection guide help students:

- ☐ Focus on a **specific experience** rather than the trip generally?
- ☐ Describe **what happened**?
- ☐ Notice **community knowledge, strengths, and context**?
- ☐ Capture **evidence that could later demonstrate learning or competency**?
- ☐ Avoid prematurely interpreting or evaluating the experience?

PART VII. PLENARY SYNTHESIS

One prompt from another group that I would use or adapt:

One principle for designing effective Describe-stage re-entry activities:

SESSION 3 DELIVERABLE — DRAFT RE-ENTRY REFLECTION GUIDE

- 1. Significant Experience Prompt** helps students identify a specific experience worth documenting.
- 2. Observation Prompt** helps students capture people, actions, community knowledge/strengths, context, resources, and outcomes without prematurely interpreting them.
- 3. Evidence-Gathering Activity** helps students document artifacts or observations that may later provide evidence of learning and workforce competencies.