Workshop Notes (1/24/06)

Mingling: Ask if they brought picture/memento. What is it? Well, what would you have brought.

Introductions and why we are here:

- Myself—who I am. And why I think talking about reentry is so important
  - My story coming back from my study abroad in Mexico.
    - Wanting to go back
    - Hating how materialistic people seemed
    - Mexico was better
    - Not being able to explain what I went through OR what I was currently feeling
    - Kind of putting it out of my mind as something that was in the past
  - Working with students at IPC 3rd year
    - I have seen the need for some sharing of experiences and information about how to get going in the U.S. again without losing the SA experience
    - Students have suggested the need for it
    - Research shows that this process can be just as difficult but most students are unprepared
- Reentry can be different to different people
  - I’m okay—great experience, happy to be home
  - I need a little help
  - I want to do it again
- Finally, studying abroad is not a one-time event
  - Beginning of a life-long process
    - learning who you are, what’s important to you.
    - some people tend to compartmentalize the experience-
      - “been there done that”
      - yes, you’ve been there, but it ain’t done
- The purpose of the workshop is give you the chance to share your experience with others that understand what you have been through or may be going through and to give you some information that you can take with you so that studying abroad is an experience which you can continue to draw from.
What to expect:

- You’re all part of a unique group who share a common experience
  - Safe place
- Don’t have to bear your soul
  - Self-reflection is important to growth
  - won’t get as much out of this if you aren’t willing to look inside yourself
- Ground rules:
  - Listen to other’s experiences/points of view
  - Be open to new ideas
  - Respect others and their feelings about their experience
  - “I” statements
- Two types of activities:
  - Activities to help you process what you’ve already learned
  - Information to help you apply what you’ve already learned

First activity
  - Four groups with question cards
  - Everyone gets a chance to answer one

Second activity
  - Take a few minutes each to share answers to three questions
    - What did you bring?
    - Why did you choose it?
    - What is significant about it?
  - Others can ask questions to elicit more information, but not steal the stage

BREAK

Now that you’re all experienced at adjusting to another culture, what advice would you give other students leaving for study abroad about adjusting to a new culture?

Did you feel prepared for the experience?

How was the experience in comparison to your expectations?
What expectations did you have for coming home?

How has the reality been in comparison to your expectations?

Has it been easy or maybe a little more difficult?

Take a minute to write down five or so of the things you’ve encountered so far since coming home that have been challenging or frustrating or even downright comical.

HANDOUT: Yellow—Why coming home can be so difficult . . .
  - Touch on a few
  - Talk about the chart—just like adjusting to a new culture, coming home can be more of a series of ups and downs

HANDOUT: Pink—Top Ten Challenges
  - Before you wrote down a few things that were challenging
  - Who wrote down . . . (go through challenges one by one)

HANDOUT: Blue—Intensity Factors
  - For some people coming home is more challenging for others, these are some of the reasons why

Finally, with time things do become easier, next handout describes the stages of readjustment in more detail, and more importantly why taking the time to think about this is so important. In a global society this is important.

HANDOUT: Orange—Stages of reentry

Hand out self-evaluation
Questionnaire:

- **Two purposes:**
  - To help people begin to reflect on how you’ve grown
  - Help improve our efforts in helping students through the SA process, both before and after

- Discussion after:
  - Which were easy?
  - Which were hard?
  - Which made you think of something you hadn’t?
  - Which made you think of something differently?
  - Which made you wonder why we were asking them?

- Discussion questions if time

Don’t forget:

- Stages of reentry
- Top 10 challenges
- Word on transcripts and transfer credit
- **Verification forms**