

## Instructions: Reflective Writing for Global Experiences

### UMB Center for Global Engagement and UMB Writing Center

Credit: James Wright, MFA, Associate Director and Multilingual Writing Specialist, UMB Writing Center

#### What?

This is a guide to help you engage in critical self-reflection to enhance your international experiences and grow from them in ways that skills to take into your career. In addition, this guide can help you turn “field notes” into a compelling narrative that can be used in future personal essays for employment and education and even as a publishable manuscript.

#### Why?

Benefits of critically self-reflective writing....

- Improve academic skills, higher level of thinking and problem solving
- Promote a deeper understanding and personal development by enhancing self-awareness, sense of community and your own capacities
- Examine and question belief, opinions and values
- Facilitate the examination and interpretation of experiences into cognitive learning
- Learn how to articulate your experience to future employers

#### How?

Faculty and students can use these resources in a number of ways – from simply learning the value of reflective writing all the way to engaging in a full-blown reflective writing experience that includes peer review and completion of a final written essay. If you are a faculty member interested in a more robust reflective writing component for your students, please contact James Wright in the UMB Writing Center at [jwright@umaryland.edu](mailto:jwright@umaryland.edu).

#### 1) Before you leave: Prepare

**Stepping In, Stepping Out of Cultures: Guide for Critically Self-Reflective Writing** – this document will guide you through the reflective writing process. Writing “field notes” process can start before you leave for your global experience, ramp up once you are on the ground in the global setting, and can include notes you write when you return.

## **2) When you're away: Write**

While you are engaged in your global experience, write up your field notes and free writing according to the **Stepping In, Stepping Out of Cultures** guide.

## **3) When you come back: Reflect**

Combine field notes into reflective essay according to the **Stepping In, Stepping Out of Cultures** guide. This can start on the plane ride home.

## **4) When you come back: Review**

Peer review: Once you have drafted your field notes into a reflective essay, it is very helpful to ask your peers to review your work – especially peers who were part of the same global experience. You will all learn from each other. Faculty members: peer review will enhance the reflective writing process for your students.

Faculty and/or Writing Center Specialist review: After peer review (if you decide to do peer review), you can submit your essay to your faculty member. This may be required as part of the global experience to get academic credit. You can also work with the UMB Writing Center and have them review the essay. The goal of the reviews is to develop the essay into the best shape possible so that it memorializes your experience well and serves as a document you can use and refer to in the future.

See **Reflective Essay Review Guide**.