**Study Abroad Journal**

As you prepare for your study abroad, you may find that keeping a written record during your time abroad can serve many purposes. It can act as a record of your experiences abroad, help you better understand your reactions to what you are experiencing, and it can even help you plan your time abroad. Start the journal before you go abroad: make a list of all you want to see and do, and of your goals and expectations. Once overseas, keep a record of your experiences and observations, what you think about them, and how they make you feel.

The following layout (called the D.I.E formula) is a good guide for your journal entries:

D  Describe = what you *see*

I  Interpret = what you *think* about what you see

E  Evaluate = what you *feel* about what you see

On the left side of the page, describe what you observe as you experience life abroad (D); on the right side of the page, you should record your reactions to what you see (I) and try to analyze your observations from a cross-cultural perspective (E). The following is a sample of how the journal can be set up.

Date:  
Location:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OBSERVATION/DESCRIPTION</th>
<th>OPINION/ANALYSIS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>On this side of the journal, describe what you saw.</td>
<td>On this side of the journal, describe your thoughts, feelings, etc. about the event.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anything that strikes you as different, funny, weird, sad, etc. is appropriate.</td>
<td>Then try to analyze why you feel this way.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feelings, emotions, judgments should not be expressed on this side. Just stick to the facts.</td>
<td>What in your cultural makeup may be affecting how you feel? How is that different from whatever values or assumptions may be at work in the US culture?</td>
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</tbody>
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The following examples may help you in your journal writing experience.

Date: September 26
Location: Grocery store

OBSERVATION/DESCRIPTION
Today I went to the grocery store but couldn’t buy everything I needed because I woke up late and the store is only open until 1pm because it’s Saturday and it’s closed all day Sunday. When I got to the check-out counter the clerk yelled at me because I didn’t bag my groceries fast enough.

OPINION/ANALYSIS
I felt stupid and was embarrassed when the clerk started yelling at me. I tried to bag my groceries quickly, but I’m just not used to this system. At home the store clerks bag groceries for the customer. I was really annoyed that I couldn’t get all the groceries I needed for the weekend. How am I supposed to eat if the store is never open? I wonder why the law mandates the stores must close at 1pm on Saturdays, and remain closed all day Sunday? The unemployment rate is so high in this country; I think if they let the stores have longer hours, then more people could have jobs. At home we have stores that are open 24/7 so you can get what you need whenever you want to. And our unemployment rate is about 6% lower than here. Maybe the stores are closed so everyone has a day off together, and workers can spend time with their families. I thought this was a capitalist country, but they seem to trade off some market freedom for worker and family protection. Family seems to be an important value in this country. At home we often work on Sundays and holidays, and families may find it more difficult to spend even one entire day together each week.