

Developing Reflective Practice in Global Settings:

The Integrative Processing Abroad Journal

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Reflection & Global Fieldwork

Why?

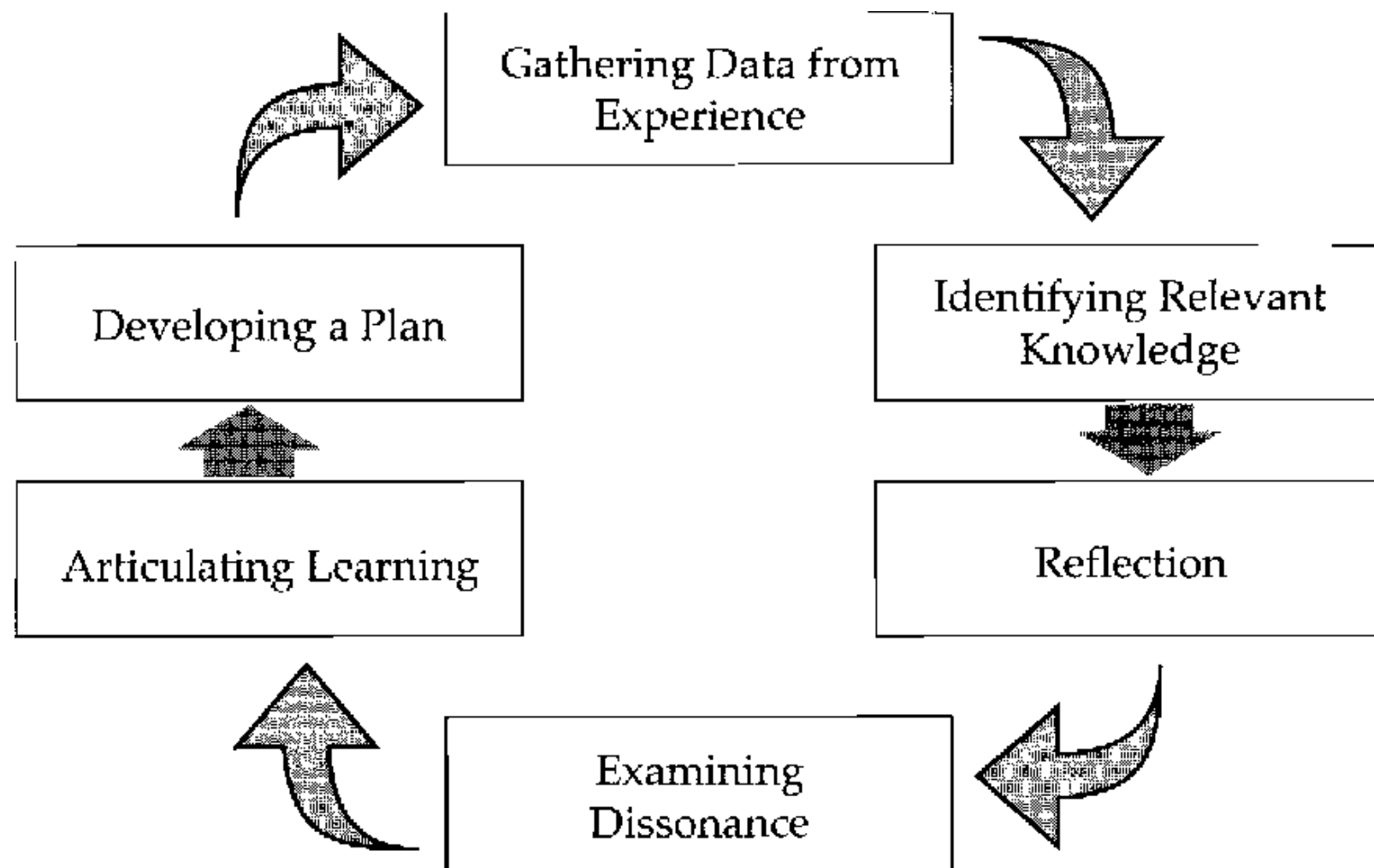
- Study abroad is immersive and emotionally intense
 - Add in the complexities of community-based learning
 - Students encounter unfamiliar family, cultural, and community systems
 - Reflection supports learning, self-awareness, and ethical practice
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But...

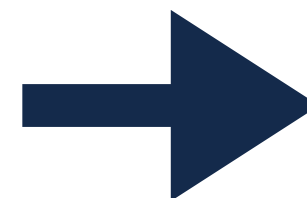
- Reflection treated as a single, end-of-course task
- Global fieldwork requires meaning-making as experiences unfold
- Students need structure to process complexity in real time

Our Starting Point: IPM

The Integrative Processing Model:
A Framework for Learning in the Field Experience
Pam Kiser (1998)



- 6-step model
- Strong reflective framework for CBL
- Designed primarily for US contexts
- Summative use
 - Main reflective model in our dept.



Global Community Based Learning?

Theoretical Grounding

- **DEWEY:**

- “We do not learn from experience... we learn from reflecting on experience.”
- Immersive study abroad fieldwork generates *ongoing* experiences that demand processing

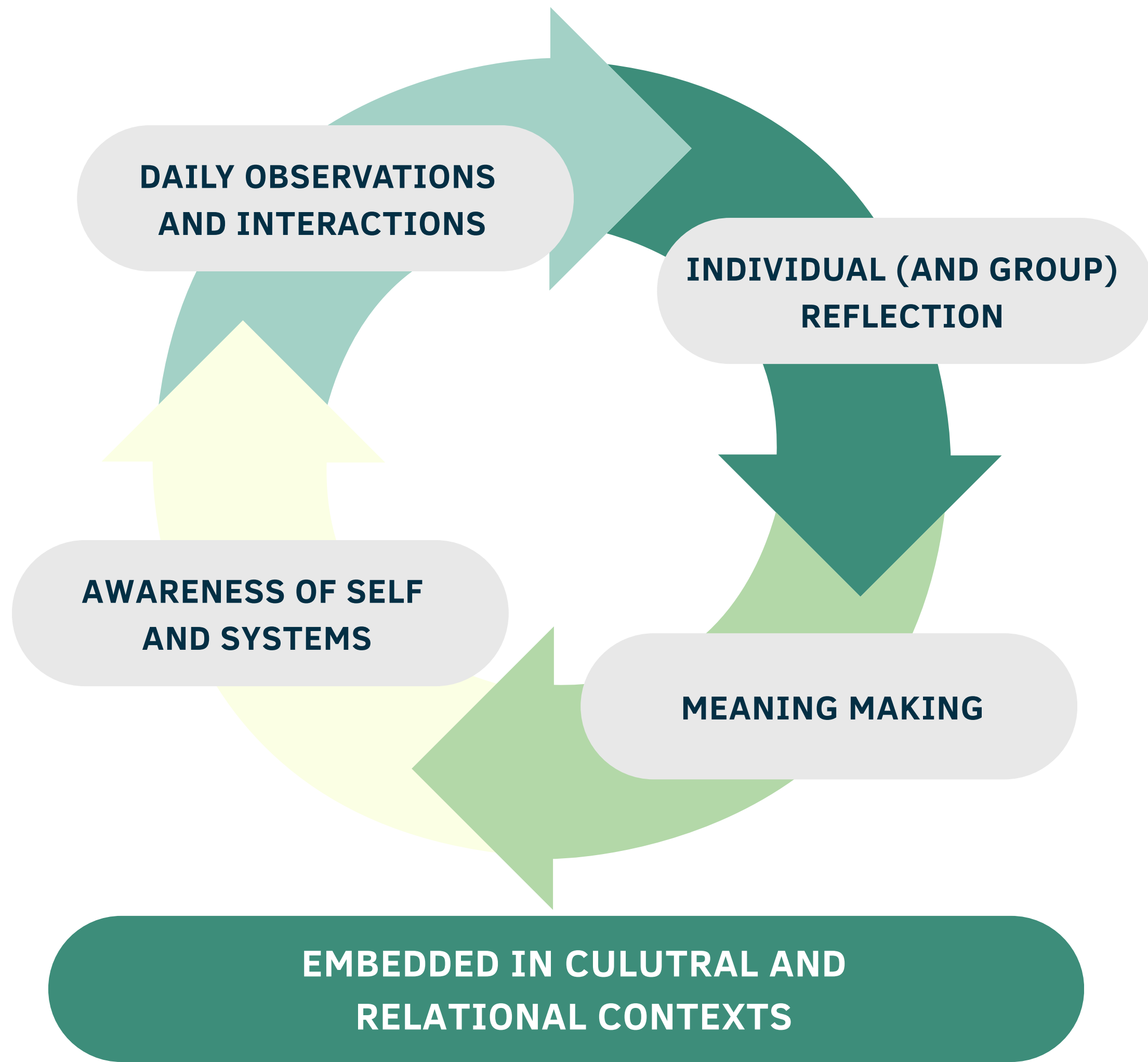
- **BRONFENBRENNER:**

- Proximal processes as the engine of development
- Reflection itself is a proximal process
- Developed through daily practice over a period of time

- IPM required adaptation to:

- Support continuous meaning-making - not retrospective
- Be relevant to cultural/global context





**DAILY OBSERVATIONS
AND INTERACTIONS**

**INDIVIDUAL (AND GROUP)
REFLECTION**

MEANING MAKING

**AWARENESS OF SELF
AND SYSTEMS**

**EMBEDDED IN CULTURAL AND
RELATIONAL CONTEXTS**

IPA Journal Development

- Support reflection across different timeframes
 - Daily, weekly, summative
- Make journaling accessible and easy
- Ability to revisit reflections
 - See patterns/change across time
- Prompts to challenge blank page
 - And fit cultural context
- Enough space/not too much space





Daily experiences → Weekly insights → Summative understanding

Journal Prompts

The daily template is your main guide for reflection. But sometimes, it might be hard to know what to write or how to start.

- If you forget what a step on the template means, flip back to this page.
- If you feel stuck, choose a prompt (or two) to spark ideas.
- Use them as inspiration, not rules. You don't need to answer them all.
- There's also an emotion word bank in case you need help naming your feeling.

Step 1: Observing

This step begins with describing what happened today. Think of yourself as both a participant and an observer; your task here is to collect the "raw data" of your experience before moving into interpretation.

- What were the **key events and features** of my experience today?
- What did I observe about the **physical surroundings**?
- What did I notice today that seemed **culturally relevant** (language, gestures, customs, routines)?
- What **small details** (food, sounds, space, body language) stood out to me today?
- What did I observe about **my own behavior and actions** today?
- What did I observe about the **behavior and actions of others** (including both classmates and people from the host culture)?

Step 2: Reflecting and Feeling

Now that you've described what happened, think about how the experience affected you personally.

- How did today's experiences affirm or challenge my own **values or beliefs**?
- What **emotions** came up for me?
- How might my **cultural background/identity/privilege** have shaped the way I interpreted today's experiences?
- Did I notice myself making **assumptions**? If so, about whom or what?
- How do I think my **actions or reactions** shaped what happened today?

Step 3: Identifying Relevant Knowledge

In this step, think about what knowledge or learning helps you make sense of your experience. This could come from your courses, from what you've learned about the host culture, or from past experiences. This step is about noticing connections across your academic and fieldwork experiences, as well as gaps where you want to learn more.

- What **classwork, readings, or previous discussions** connect to what I experienced today?
- What **concepts, ideas, or skills** I've learned help me understand this situation?
- How does today's experience **support, challenge, or complicate** what I thought I knew?
- What **new questions or curiosities** came up that I want to explore further?
- How did today's experience relate to what I've learned about this culture so far?

Step 4: Examining Dissonance and Discomfort

Sometimes our experiences don't line up with what we expect, believe, or think we know. This lack of harmony (i.e., dissonance) can feel uncomfortable, but it's also an important part of learning abroad. In this step, you look at where things didn't match up and consider what those tensions might mean for you.

- What made me feel **uncomfortable, uncertain, or surprised** today? Why?
- Did I encounter **values, perspectives, or practices** that conflicted with my own?
- How did I respond to moments of **stress, ambiguity, or difference**?
- Was there a gap between what **I expected and what actually happened**?
- Did I experience this **differently from my classmates**, and what might that mean?

Step 5: Constructing Meaning

This step asks: So what does today's experience mean? You're putting pieces together to see how today matters in the bigger picture of your learning.

- What feels **most important** about what I experienced today?
- How does today's experience **deepen my understanding** of what I've learned in class or elsewhere?
- What **new perspective** did I gain about myself, others, or the host culture?
- How did today **confirm, challenge, or expand** what I thought I knew?
- Why might this day's experience matter for my **growth** moving forward?

Step 6: Next Steps

This step asks: Now what will I do with what I learned today? The focus is on small, concrete ways you can carry today's lessons into tomorrow.

- What will I try to do **differently (or similarly)** tomorrow because of today's experience?
- How can I practice more **openness, respect, or _____** in my interactions tomorrow?
- What is **one specific action** I can take tomorrow to build on what I learned today?
- If I felt **discomfort** today, how can I **respond** to it tomorrow, in my actions or in my self-talk?
- What will I **pay closer attention** to in tomorrow's experiences?

Emotion Word Bank

Joyful	Confused	Thoughtful	Respectful
Excited	Nervous	Surprised	Curious-but-uncertain
Curious	Lonely	Unsure	Challenged
Proud	Awkward	Disappointed	Self-conscious
Grateful	Frustrated	Tired	Defensive
Connected	Overwhelmed	Inspired	Appreciative
Hopeful	Embarrassed	Cautious	Humble
Comfortable	Stressed	Relieved	Accepted
Energized	Homesick	Determined	Out of place
Motivated	Impatient	Open-minded	Supported

Wk 1, Day 1 | Date: _____

Thoughts from Today

A large grid of dotted lines for writing thoughts.

1. Observations	2. Reflecting and Feeling
3. Identifying Relevant Knowledge	4. Examining Dissonance
5. Constructing Meaning	6. Next Steps

**Step 1:
Observing**

- What moments or details from this week stand out most clearly?
- Did I notice any patterns across my daily experiences?
- Which single event best captures the week for me?

**Step 2:
Reflecting**

- What emotions showed up most often this week?
- Did I notice any shifts in my values, assumptions, or habits?
- How did my background or identity shape how I reacted to situations this week?

**Step 3:
Identifying
Knowledge**

- What knowledge (from class, readings, or prior experience) helped me understand this week's events?
- Did I learn something that challenged or expanded what I thought I knew?
- What questions do I still have that I want to explore further?

**Step 4:
Dissonance**

- Where did I feel the most tension, conflict, or uncertainty this week?
- Did I handle difference/discomfort in ways I feel good about? Why or why not?
- How did my classmates and I experience the same situation differently?

**Step 5:
Meaning**

- What themes or patterns did I notice across my experiences this week?
- How has this week shaped insights into myself and/or this culture?
- Which moment from this week best captures what I've learned so far? Why?

**Step 6:
Next Steps**

- What is one thing I want to do differently next week based on what I learned?
- How can I prepare myself to face discomfort or ambiguity?
- What will I pay closer attention to in the coming week?

Costa Rica Pilot

- January 2026 CBL course
 - Over 80 hours of CBL
- 17 Human Service Studies students
 - Major and minors (required course)
- Homestays
- Language immersion
- Work with youth, families, older adults
- Entire experience (not just direct hours) conceptualized as fieldwork
- Town of Ortega, Guanacaste



Implementing the IPA

- Introduced during pre-departure course
 - Explained theory and experience driving project
- Journals distributed at the airport
- Daily text reminders to support practice
- Integrated into group reflections
 - Every 3-4 days
- Professors also modeled journaling
- Discussions of re-entry/transition



Upon Return to US

Final Assignment:

- Summarize and synthesize learning from the entire experience
- Analyze how and why changed
- Daily and weekly journals are data; this paper is meaning-making
- 6–8 pages, double-spaced
- Use headings for each IPM step
- Include quotes from own journal



DAILY → WEEKLY → SUMMATIVE = OBSERVING → REFLECTING → MEANING-MAKING

Initial Reactions

- Students journaled consistently! (and constantly!)
- Journals as shared practice
 - Journaling became a way to spend time together
 - Students discussed entries together
- Reflection extended beyond individual writing
 - Students wanted to bring their journals into group reflection
- Reflection became normalized and expected
 - TOOL vs. assignment
- Much richer reflections (group and individual)

Do not have data from pilot yet; final assignment due next week.



Preliminary Lessons Learned

- Weekly reflection timing needs adjustment
 - Both daily/weekly reflection on same day needs more time
- Space needed at end for other notes (lectures)
- Could also use pre-departure
 - Place to articulate pre-reflection thoughts/ideas
 - Projects/activity planning
- Tabs/marker for location





Conclusion

- Reflection as a skill we can develop
 - Increase in self-awareness and self-compassion
 - Professionalism
- Adaptable to domestic fieldwork
 - And non CBL contexts?
- Supports intercultural humility and ethical practice

QUESTIONS?

THANK YOU