# Community of Practice:
Student Learning and Program Design

# Agenda

- Standards of Good Practice
- Program Design / Activity Ideas
- Student conduct/behavior
- Dissonance, Discomfort
- Returning to "Normality"
- Brining learning back to campus
- Student learning assessment

# The Georgetown Consortium Project: Interventions for Student Studying Away

- Research sample of 1,159 students who studied away (many different models), and 138 control students on home campuses

- Pre- and post-tests using IDI and Oral Language Proficiency

- "Mere exposure to new people, events, and institutions did not automatically produce effective learning" (p. 4)

- "Students need to learn intercultural concepts and skills to cope with the cultural differences they experience abroad" (p. 5)

- Interventions needed - such as pre-departure orientations, programs designed to teach coping concepts and skills, orientation sessions abroad, before re-entry sessions

- Programs not done well can actually reinforce negative stereotypes

- **"The presence or absence of a well-trained cultural mentor who meets frequently with students may be the single most important intervention to improve student intercultural learning abroad"** (p. 25)

# Standards of Good Practice for Short-Term Education Abroad Programs

By The Forum on Education Abroad

- **Mission, Objectives and Purpose**: The program relates to the education abroad mission of the organization and has well-defined academic and / or experiential objectives.
  - **Institutional Policies**: The program is organized according to the mission and policies of the sponsoring institution.
  - **Purpose**: The program has a clearly-defined purpose and clearly-defined academic and/or experiential goals.
  - **Appropriateness**: The focus of the program is appropriate to the site chosen.

# Student Learning and Development

- **Student Development**: The program provides opportunities that encourage student development (e.g., leadership skills, service orientation, maturity, tolerance for ambiguity, growth in cultural awareness).

- **Learning Outcomes**: The program fosters discipline-specific and/or interdisciplinary learning outcomes appropriate to the curriculum, site, and program goals.

- **Language and Intercultural Development**: The program provides language and intercultural development opportunities appropriate to its mission.

- **Intrapersonal Development**: The program includes opportunities for reflection during and after the experience.

- **Environmental and Cultural Responsibility**: The organization fosters faculty, staff and student awareness and minimization of harmful individual and program-related environmental and social-cultural impacts.

- **Assessment**: The student learning outcomes and overall student experience are assessed at the program's conclusion so that subsequent programs are improved based on this assessment.

# Academic Framework

- The organization maintains clearly stated and publicly available policies on academic matters related to education abroad.
  - Program designed to fulfill graduation, general education or major requirement
  - Clear policies on enrollment charges, withdrawals, academic credit
  - Program makes effective use of the host locations for structured experiential learning
    - *Consider number of sites proposed and proximity – emphasis on in-depth experiences at each site rather than "seeing everything"*
  - Program seeks to integrate student learning with requirements and learning at students' home institutions

# Student Selection and Code of Conduct

- The program maintains, and makes publicly accessible, its commitment to fair and appropriate policies regarding student selection and conduct. Program designed to fulfill graduation, general education or major requirement
  - Clear and transparent policies on student selection, prerequisites, requirements
  - The program welcomes and acts with respect towards students regardless of race, sex, sexual orientation, physical ability, religion, or national and ethnic origin.
  - The program seeks to keep the program affordable for the greatest number of students.
  - The program informs students of its student code of conduct, disciplinary processes and the consequences of violations prior to the beginning of the program, and consistently applies them during the program.

# Health, Safety, and Security

- The program has established and continuously maintains effective health, safety, security and risk management policies, procedures and faculty/staff training

  - The program leadership is aware of student health issues prior to departure and is well prepared to handle student, faculty, and staff health issues that may arise.

  - The program has contact information at the location to assist with emergencies and health and safety issues

  - Students have health insurance coverage that is applicable in-country, and in the countries visited by the program.

  - Students are well-informed about what to do in the case of emergencies

# Standards of Good Practice (mine!)

Make programmatic choices that enhance immersion aspect of program

- Multidisciplinary programs as an opportunity to work collaboratively, and have students from different perspectives
- Housing location and structure
- Transportation options (public transport verse private bus/van)
- All activities, site visits, and projects should tie back to program goals and outcomes
- Incorporate opportunities for students to experience the diversity within a country/culture/context
- Additional activities that reinforce positive group dynamics and student development

# Programmatic Immersion Ideas

- Group Contract
- Managing Expectations
- Scavenger Hunt
- Leader for a Day
- Fears / Hopes in a Hat
- Interview Locals
- Research
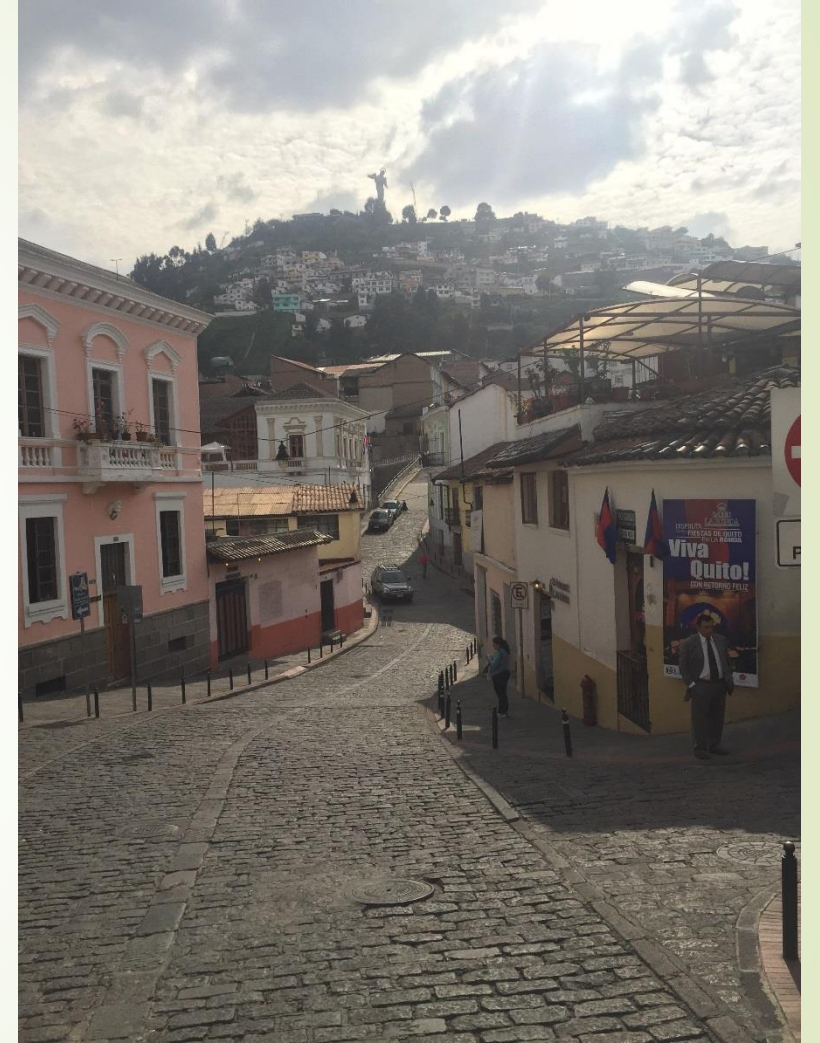- Blogging
- Letter to self
- **Other ideas?**

# Group Social Contract

- Empower students to create their own community
- Students create it, but you have veto power
- Safe space
- Refer back to it if problems arise

# Scavenger Hunt



- First day or two of the program

- Small groups, with a map and specific goals

- Find "never before seen object"

- Explore a local market or neighborhood, interact with locals, take public transit

# Student Conduct and Behavior

- What have been your experiences with students drinking? Have you run into any problems?

- What have been your experiences with students going out? Have you run into any problems?

- How much supervision or independence do you give your students?

- What are the risks and liability to consider in each location?

# Leader for a Day



- Give (group of) students the itinerary the day prior to leading the group

- Each student will have a day on the program

- Must get group from one place to another, keep the group on time, make sure everyone is there

- Empower students to take charge of their own learning
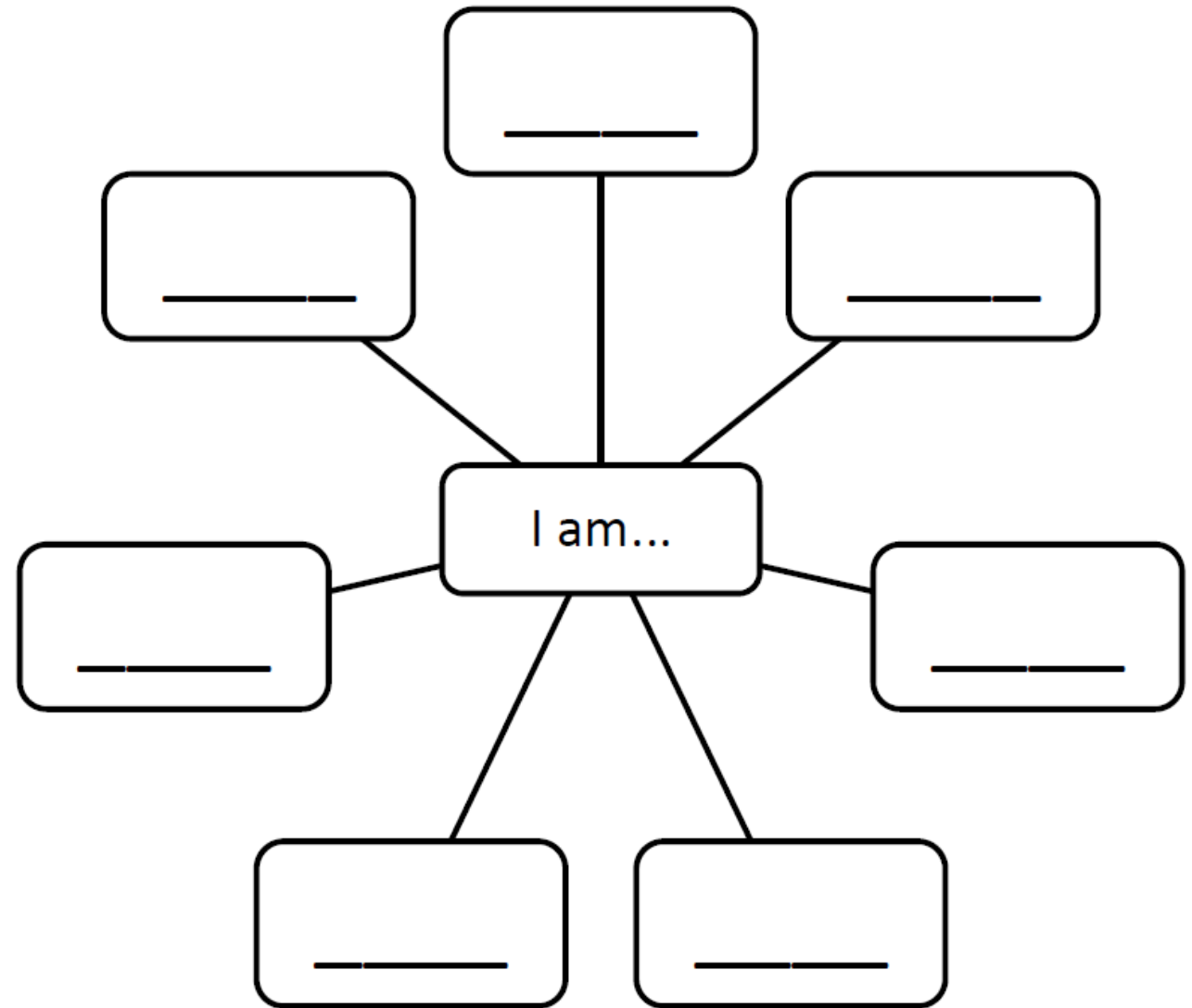
# Fears / Hopes in a Hat

- Could be fears, hopes, goals
- Anonymous to create a safe space
- Students realize they have many of the same fears/concerns
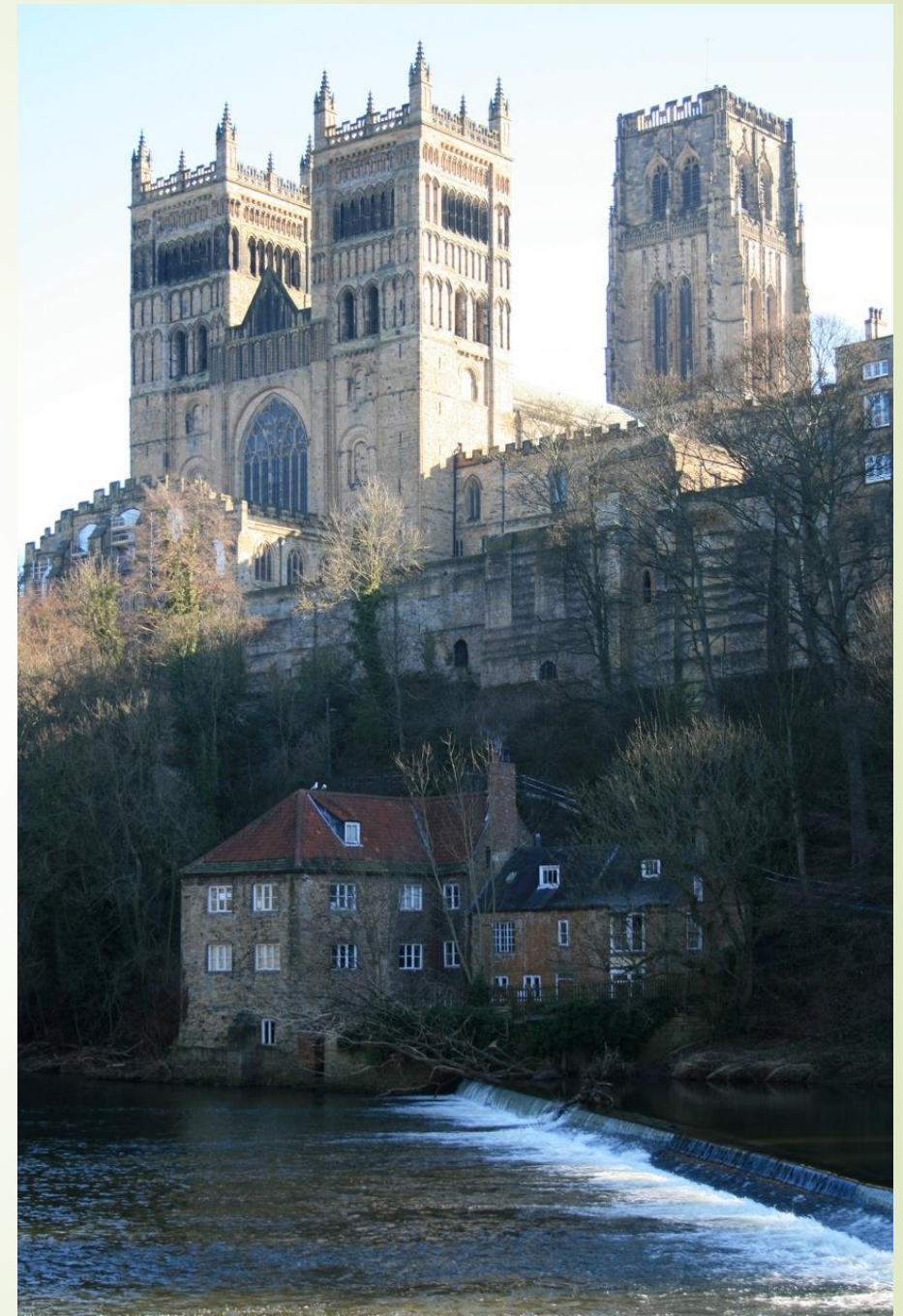- Leaders are aware of the group's fears/concerns/hopes

# I Am…

- In pairs, get to know each other

- Start the conversation about identity and awareness

- Incorporate discussion of privilege and oppression

- How might this look different in different locations?

Take a few minutes to complete this diagram. In as many circles as you can, write a word you feel describes you or is a significant part of who you are or how you choose to identify yourself to others.

# Debrief, debrief, debrief!

- Interview locals
- Research
- Blogging
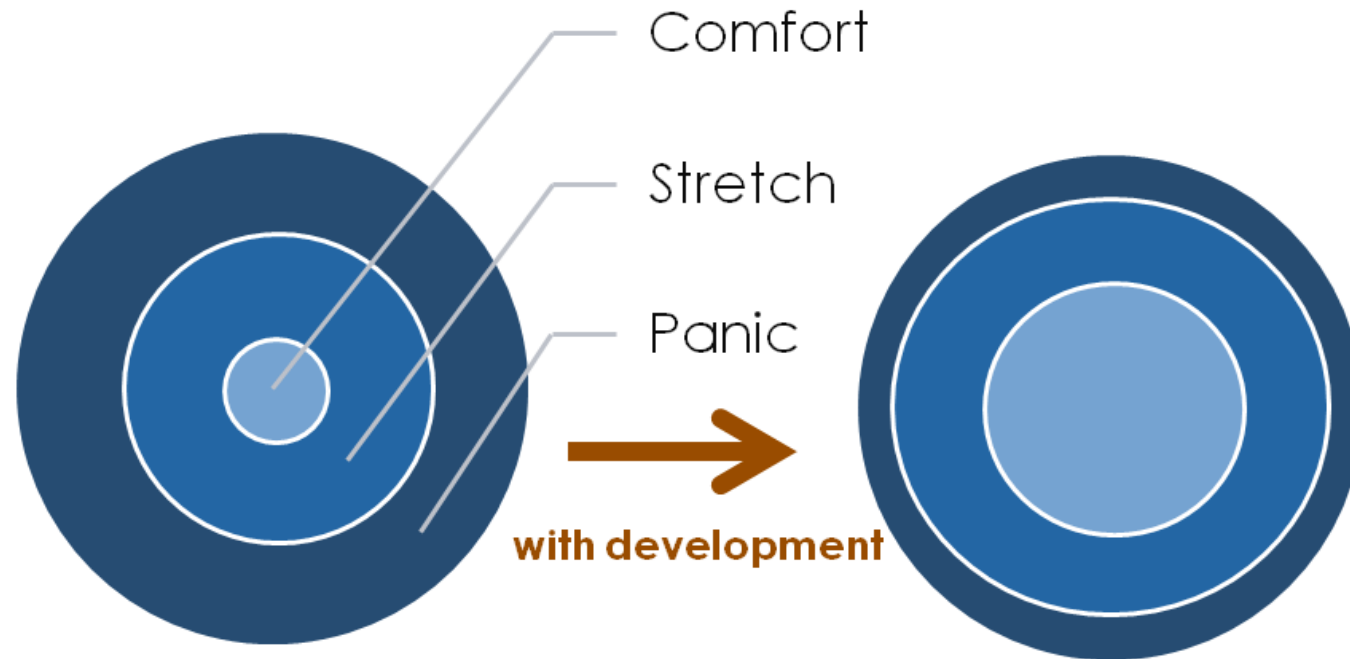- Letter to self
- **Other ideas?**

# Reflection

- Cannot just be a reflection at the end of program - must be **continuous** before, during, and after the program
- Teach students how to reflect with specific prompts
- Group discussion to push the conversation forward
- How do you get students to "dig deeper"?

# Balancing Challenge and Support



Comfort, Stretch and Panic Zones

Comfort

Stretch

Panic

with development

# Dissonance, Discomfort



- Think about timing (culture shock)
- Programs are meant to be disruptive, meant to be challenging and we intentionally put students in that place
- Being uncomfortable is transformative
- **Appropriate challenge**
- Balance challenge and support

# Decolonizing Study Abroad





- Marketing, promotion, representation
  - Students should be learners
  - Often positioned as tourists
- Program Design
  - "culture as a museum" or "authentic"
  - Are we ever "objective observers"?
  - Consider reciprocal designs, equal partners/collaborators
  - Redefine learning from an asset-based model
- Assessment and Evaluation
  - Include partners and their perspectives
  - In program evaluations, who is centered? Can we get other perspectives?

# Assessment



- LE Core (all elements)
- Best Practices
  - Include all stakeholders, at all stages
  - Clarify the purpose, timing and uses
  - Triangulate methods
  - Timing

# Re-Entry Resources

**This is often left out or an after-thought, but oftentimes the greatest culture shock students encounter is when they return home.**

- They are expecting to go back to comfort and familiarity, but their perspective has changed
- They're overwhelmed by the options or differences in lifestyle
- They feel disconnected from their community, friends and family who don't understand their experience
- They don't know how to talk about their experience when asked "How was your trip?"
- Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing
  - Then mourning? (Richard Kiely)
  - Is it ethical?
- What is our responsibility post-program with re-entry?
- How do we help students deal with that dissonance?

# Bringing Learning Back to Campus

- What are examples of how you helped students bring their learning and understanding back to campus?

- How does this help students adjust to "normal life?"