ABSTRACT

Title: Creating a Study Abroad Re-entry Program at Ball State University

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The purpose of this creative project was to create a re-entry seminar for Ball State University students to go through upon their return from any sort of study abroad experience. Through the seminar, students would be able to reflect on their experiences, share their observations, form productive thoughts about their learning, and understand how to apply what they learned during their time abroad to their futures. The re-entry seminar would be a supplemental retreat in addition to the pre-departure orientation students go through before leaving the country. Providing the opportunity for students to connect with professionals who understand reverse culture shock and re-entry fatigue, as well as introducing them to peers who also studied abroad, prepares them for the rest of their academic careers. It also allows students a formal way of processing their experiences abroad so they gain the most learning possible and can be better prepared to market themselves when they begin job searching.

Upon returning from a short-term or long-term study abroad experience, students are not always aware of how impactful their experience could be on their lives. Without having the support of professionals and peers to help them actually process through their experiences, students often lose a lot of the learning that could be harvested from such an
immersive learning adventure. By providing a re-entry seminar to help students think through how much they have grown and changed as well as offering guidance from career center professionals, students returning from study abroad experiences will be ready to complete their final years of college and will thrive when it comes time to search for jobs. After the initial re-entry seminar, students will not only be armed with the resources to succeed through the rest of their college careers, but they will also have a cohort of peers who they can relate to and will serve as a support network as they re-enter life in the United States at their home institutions.