

Structured Reflection for Transformative Learning: Using Sophomore Seminars to Prepare Students for Study Abroad

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Transformative learning...

- ▶ is a fundamental change in one's habit of mind (aka frame of reference or system of meanings or set of taken for granted).
 - ▶ involves a continuum through which students move in a spiral sort of way over the entire four years of learning (and beyond).
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Six levels of learning along the continuum

1. Knowledge gains
 2. Attitude changes
 3. Changes in perspective
 4. Deepening self understanding (becoming aware of one's assumptions & ultimately critiquing them)
 5. Deepening structural understanding (understanding the structural/theoretical context of the issue/problem/experience)
 6. Change in habit of mind
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Key to change in habits of mind....

... is the ability to connect

- a) one's experience with
- b) a critical understanding of one's assumptions and
- c) a structural/theoretical understanding of the context of the experience.

Structured Reflection...

...Catalyzes movement along the transformative learning continuum by employing intentionally designed exercises, activities, or assignments that help students make connections between

- a) assumptions held,
- b) experiences encountered, and
- c) theories/concepts learned.

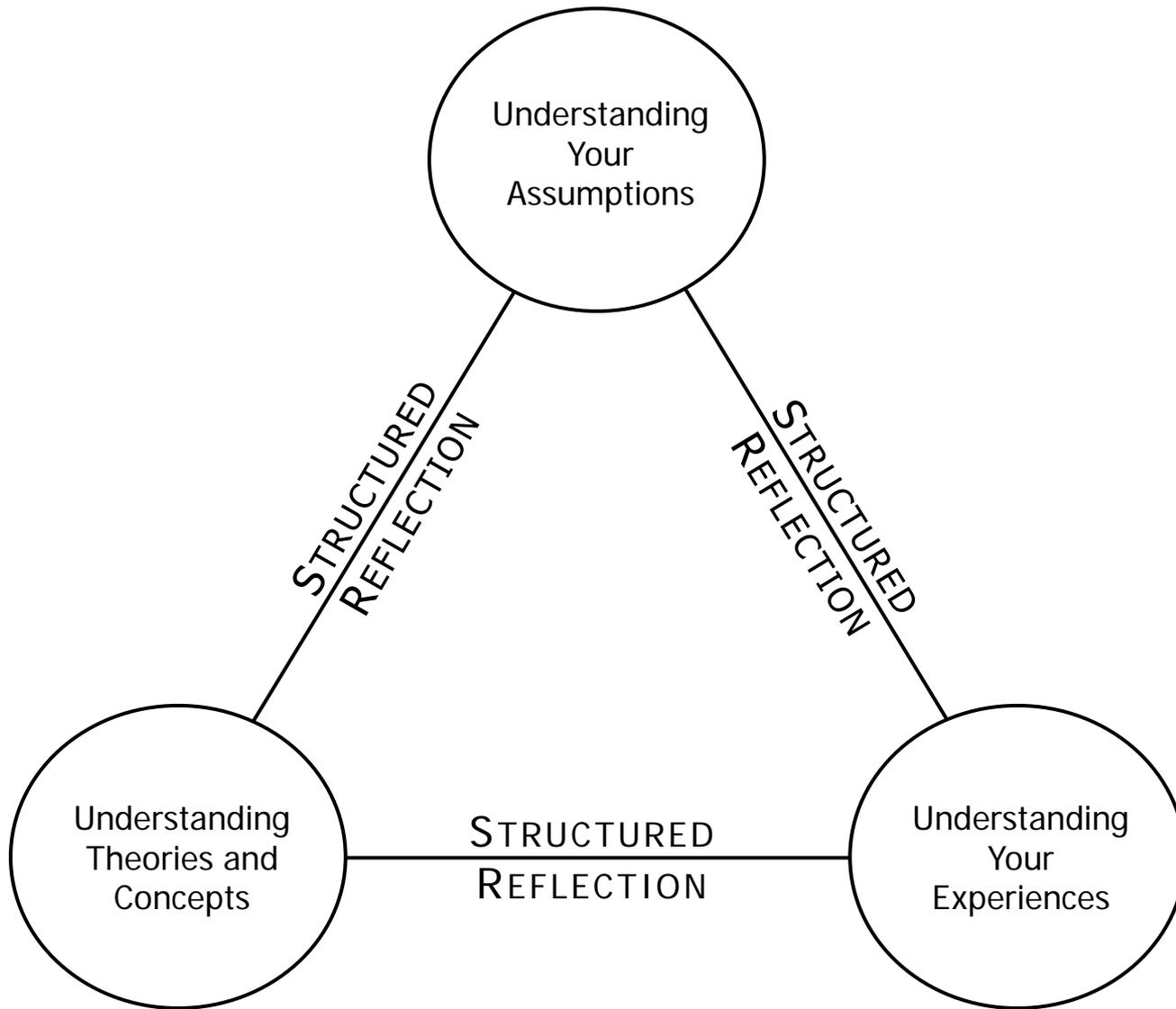


Figure adapted from: "Culture, Religion, and Nationality: Developing Ethnographic Skills and Reflective Practices Connected to Study Abroad," by Carol S. Anderson and Kiran Cunningham. In *Integrating Study Abroad Into the Curriculum: Theory and Practice Across the Disciplines*, Elizabeth Brewer & Kiran Cunningham, eds. Stylus Publishing, 2009.

New Curriculum at Kalamazoo College

- ▶ Eliminated all distributional Requirement
- ▶ Graduation requirements
 - Major
 - Language proficiency
 - Senior Independent Project (SIP)
 - 3 Shared Passage Seminars
 - First Year Seminar
 - Sophomore Seminar
 - Seminar Seminar
 - PE

Sophomore Seminar Goals Include:

- ▶ To prepare students for cross-cultural experiential learning on study abroad
 - ▶ to move students forward on their 4-year collegiate journey toward transformational learning
 - ▶ to master disciplinary subject matter and skill sets
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Structured reflection in Sophomore Seminars...

- ▶ engages students directly in the work of the seminar classroom while also...
 - ▶ developing theoretically informed ways of reflective thinking that will...
 - ▶ help students question assumptions and find connections across cultural boundaries when on study abroad.
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An Example from Classics