Facilitating Reflection

Leading an article-based reflective discussion

Originally developed by Jessica Friedrichs

- Pre-Planning
  - Include standards for discussion sessions in the group agreement
  - Determine if you want to include local community members

- Make sure to transition to reflection
  - Complete all discussions about logistics and related issues
  - Ensure enough time is available and the overall environment is conducive
  - Sit in a circle. Do a check-in “fist to five” to gauge the group energy level.
  - Have everyone close their eyes for a minute and become centered
  - Clarify if you plan to ask everyone to speak or read from their journals so they can prepare

- Beginning the discussion – Some Options
  - Provide an opening question or two to guide the session
  - Have everyone take 10 minutes to write their thoughts or answer a few questions on the article (this will help you be able to activate them later and helps shy or less talkative students get prepared)
  - Have people read aloud from their journals (without having anyone comment afterwards, instead ask the group to practice active listening)
  - Ask someone to start the discussion by sharing and then calling on the next participant
  - Ask students to chose a passage from the article that resonated with them (or with which they disagree) and use that as a starting point
  - For controversial articles, ask everyone to share one word for their reaction

- Facilitating
  - Develop some broad themes or concepts and steer discussion when necessary to cover those topics
  - Promote critical thinking by having students challenge and respond to one another’s ideas
  - Keep conversation constructive – encourage students to critique ideas, not one another
  - Alter the format if needed
    - Have students move around and discuss a topic briefly in concentric circles early on so they mix and meet
    - Pair and share - team up two students or small groups to discuss and report back
    - Have students read and comment in each other’s journals
  - Connect the article content to lived experiences serving in the country.
  - Be comfortable with silence. Give students time to think and share.
  - Be prepared if emotional issues come up – check in with particular students afterwards
  - Be mindful of quieter students and find ways to draw them in (prepare them early on that this course requires participation, have them read from pre-written work, share in small groups, pass around a ball so everyone shares)
  - Give students the opportunity to lead discussions as much as possible. After modeling reflection technique in week one and two, assign them to facilitate various articles.

- Concluding
  - Synthesize themes and ideas that have emerged
  - Encourage students to write in journals after reflection while ideas are fresh
This resource is one among many materials that will be shared as part of Building a Better World: The Pedagogy and Practice of Global Service-Learning (Kumarian 2012) by Hartman, E., R. Kiely, J. Friedrichs, and C. Boettcher. Please cite appropriately. http://buildingabetterworld.wordpress.com/

Example: “Why We Travel” by Pico Iyer
Available at: http://www.goliards.net/Why%20We%20Travel.htm

- Let’s take 5 minutes and write. Choose a passage or sentence from this article that particularly resonated with you - do you agree or disagree with what Iyer is saying? Why? What does travel mean to you?
- A few people will now share from their journals.
- Let’s open the discussion to the group to respond and share reflections.
- How do any of the sentiments expressed in this article connect with your decision to lead an Amizade course?
- What themes or content do you see expressed in this article that relates to the Amizade GSL course? (See suggestions below and add to these)
- How would you use this article in your course?
  o Technique in facilitating reflective discussion
  o Content
  o Use in beginning or end?

TOURISM
“. . .how tourism, which so obviously destroys cultures, can also resuscitate or revive them, how it has created new “traditional dances” in Bali . . .”

CROSS CULTURAL EXCHANGE
“Yet one of the subtler beauties of travel is that it enables you to bring new eyes to the people you encounter.”

“. . .we are objects of scrutiny as much as the people we scrutinize and we are being consumed by the cultures we consume…”

NATURE OF “REALITY”
“. . .the sovereign freedom of traveling comes from the fact that it whirls you around and turns you upside down, and stands everything you took for granted on its head”

“many people feel they can travel around the world without leaving the room – through cyberspace or CD-ROMs, videos and virtual travel.”

“reality is our creation, and that we invent the places we see as much as we do the books that we read.”

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP
“a younger travel writer is in a better position to chart the first days of a new Empire, post-national, global, mobile and yet as diligent as the Raj in transporting its props and values around the world.”

“these days a whole new realm of exotica arises out of the way one culture colors and appropriates the products of another.”

CRITICAL THINKING
“And that is why many of us travel not in search of answers, but of better questions.”

EMPOWERMENT upon RETURN HOME
“I tend to believe more abroad than I do at home”

“That is why the best trips, like the best love affairs, never really end.”

Some common Amizade experiences that can be connected to this article: -Merging travel experience with student’s preconceived Discovery Channel and TV ideas
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- Shaking up preconception and engaging with the resultant discord
- The nature of perception: Different students viewing the same experience totally differently
- Discussing the difference between tourist travel and service-based travel
- Chameleon Complex and how to engage reality when returning home