“Promoting Students’ Integrative Learning through Reflection”

Dottie Weigel, Stuart Hunter, and Victoria Thomas
University 101 Programs
• To define integrative learning and reflection
• To articulate the importance of reflection
• To use theory as a context for reflection
• To provide you with 3 to 4 ideas about how to promote individual and group reflection
• To discuss how to assess reflection
• To apply your learning through a hands-on reflection activity
Integrative Learning

“Connecting skills and knowledge from multiple sources and experiences; applying theory to practice in various settings; utilizing diverse and even contradictory points of view; and, understanding issues and positions contextually.”

Source: Huber & Hutchings, Mapping the Terrain, 2004, AAC&U
Integrative Learning

Integrative learning experiences...

• Occur, most often, as learners address real-world problems
• Involve internal changes in the learner
• Include the ability to adapt one’s intellectual skills
• Provide an opportunity to understand and develop individual purpose, values and ethics

Source: Integrative Learning Value Rubric, AAC&U
Integrative Learning and USC Connect

Classroom Experience

Beyond the Classroom Experience

Source: Irma Van Scoy
Reflection

A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to it’s old dimensions.”

Source: Oliver Wendell Holmes

“Consideration of some subject matter, idea or purpose”

Source: Merriam-Webster, 2016
Description

Reaction ≠ Reflection

Evaluation

Source: Kevin Clarke and Irma Van Scoy, 2012 Building Connections Conference
Critical Reflection

“Critical Reflection is the process of analyzing, reconsidering & questioning one’s experience within a broad context of issues and content knowledge.”

Barbara Jacoby, 2012
The Importance of Reflection

- Increases the **value** of the learning experience
- Encourages learners to **make meaning** out of the process they are engaged
- Enables the learners to relate the **new material** of learning to **prior knowledge** and hence a better understanding of the discipline
- Enhances the learner’s **broader understanding**
David Kolb’s Experiential Learning Model

- Professor of Management at Case Western Reserve University
- Based on work of Dewey, Levin, & Piaget
Concrete Experience

Active Experimentation

Reflection

Abstract Conceptualization
ACQUIRE Knowledge (Prehension)

Concrete Experience

An experience or something that can be examined through the senses.

- Observations
- Demonstrations
- Role play
- Simulations
- Field experience / interviews

Abstract Conceptualization

Generalizations; theoretical; ideas

- Reading
- Lectures
PROCESS Knowledge (Transformation)

Applying information
- Papers
- What if scenarios
- Plans of action
- Problem solving activities

Making meaning
- Journals
- Small group discussion
- Silence
- What; so what; now what
Topic = Income Inequality

Concrete Experience = Hunger Banquet

Abstract Conceptualization = Reading & lecture on income inequality across the world

Active Experimentation = Write an op-ed article for local newspaper with plan to address issue

Reflection = **Journal response** asking students to describe how the experience made them feel, why they reacted the way they did, and what the point of the activity was.
Strategies for Fostering Reflection

Includes four core elements of reflection:

- Continuous
- Connected
- Challenging
- Contextualized

Source: Eyler & Gyles (1999)
# Reflection Map

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Before</th>
<th>During</th>
<th>After</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alone</strong></td>
<td>Letter to yourself</td>
<td>Structured journal entries</td>
<td>Reflective essay Letter of advocacy</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>With Classmates</strong></td>
<td>Discussion of expectations Hopes and fears</td>
<td>Mixed team discussion</td>
<td>Team presentation, collage, mural, video, photo essay</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>With Others</strong></td>
<td>Asset mapping planning with community or organization</td>
<td>Debriefing Lessons learned</td>
<td>Presentation to community group and/or organization</td>
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*Source: Eyler (2001)*
Developing Good Questions

• “Searching questions” - questions aren’t always answered

• Students want resolution, but we can help them become comfortable with ambiguity

• Examples of “good” questions
  o What does the experience mean to you now compared to how you felt about it at the beginning?
  o Is there anything about the experience that was familiar to you? How did this help or hinder you?
  o What questions still remain about the topic or experience?
How We Assess Reflection

- Subjective versus objective knowledge

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
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<td>1. Gives examples of observed behaviors or characteristics, but provides no insight into reasons behind the observation; observations tend to become dimensional and conventional or unassimilated repetitions of what has been heard in class or from peers. 2. Tends to focus on just one aspect of the situation. 3. Uses unsupported personal beliefs as frequently as &quot;hard&quot; evidence. 4. May acknowledge differences of perspective but does not discriminate effectively among them.</td>
<td>1. Observations are fairly thorough and nuanced although they tend not to be placed in a broader context. 2. Provides a cogent critique from one perspective, but fails to see the broader system in which the aspect is embedded and other factors that may make change difficult. 3. Uses both unsupported personal belief and evidence but is beginning to be able to differentiate between them. 4. Perceives legitimate differences of viewpoint. 5. Demonstrates a beginning ability to interpret evidence.</td>
<td>1. Views things from multiple perspectives; able to observe multiple aspects of the situation and place them in context. 2. Perceives conflicting goals within and among the individuals involved in a situation and recognizes that the differences can be evaluated. 3. Recognizes that actions must be situationally dependent and understands many of the factors that affect their choice. 4. Makes appropriate judgments based on reasoning and evidence. 5. Has a reasonable assessment of the importance of the decisions facing clients and of his or her responsibility as a part of others’ lives.</td>
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Reflection Exercise

• What key issues arose in your discussion?
• Why are these issues important?
• What strategies did you use to address the scenario?
• How might this connect to your work with students?
Concluding Thoughts

• Connect your reflection to your learning outcomes
• Be intentional in how you structure your reflection
• Make reflection engaging, practical, & meaningful
• Help students integrate their learning from multiple sources & experiences
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