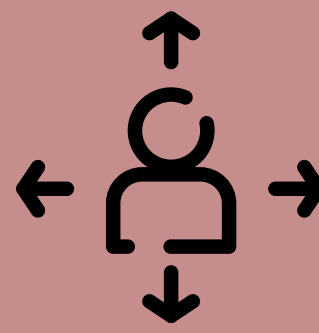


Reflection is an essential component of experiential learning. Providing students with opportunities to reflect creates spaces in which they can connect their classroom learning and life experience, leading them to create new knowledge.

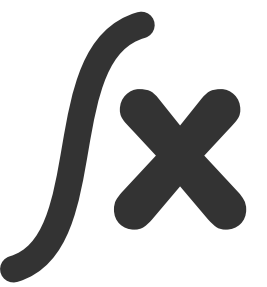


REFLECTION PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY TO:



- Make Meaning
- Develop Social Emotional Skills
- Engage the Whole Person

INTEGRATING REFLECTION INTO PRACTICE



- Consider reflection in action (during an experience) and reflection on action (after/before an experience). Good reflection includes both!
- Keep it fresh. Utilize a variety of strategies and prompts upon which to reflect.
- Simple is good. You don't have to make it complicated.
- Be consistent. Create a habit of building in reflection in small, consistent ways.
- Intentionally connect previous learning. Invite and allow space for bringing other experiences into the conversation to help students build connections.

REFLECTION

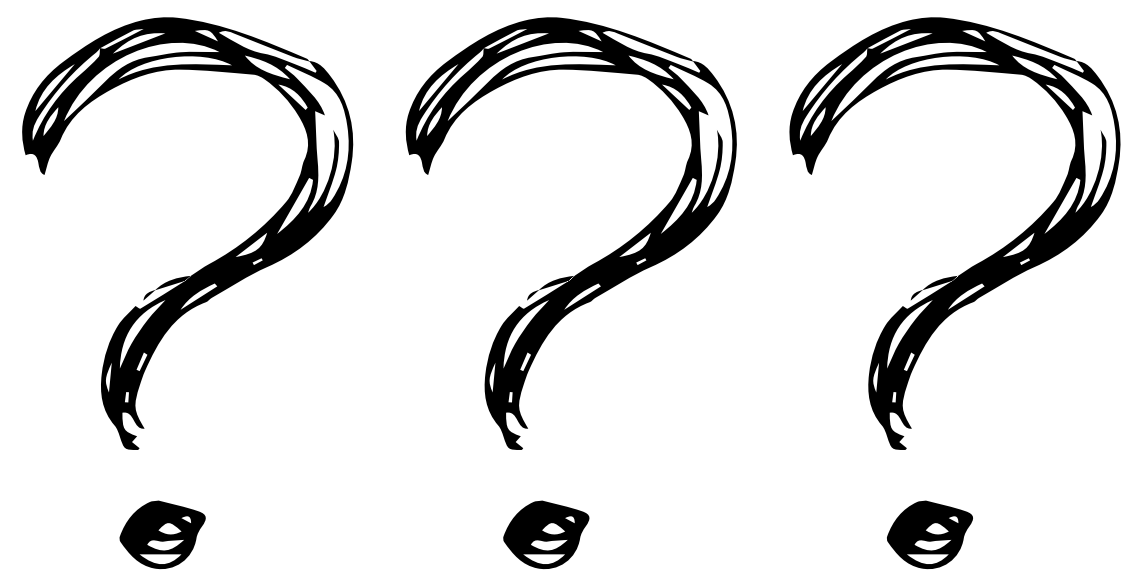
FOSTERS GROWTH:

- Skill development (critical thinking, analytical skills, communication, active listening)
- Curiosity (inquiry and exploration of critical questions)
- Relationship building and connection
- Creativity, imagination, and innovation
- Ways of knowing (expanding ways of understanding the world)

At times, faculty and staff have raised concerns that they don't have time to integrate anything more into their courses or student experiences. However, to effectively integrate reflection into work with college students doesn't require more from us, it requires us to think differently about our work.

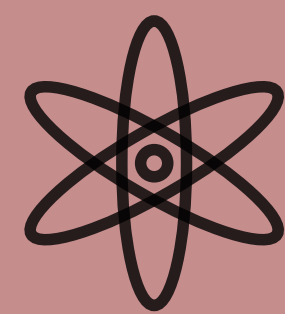
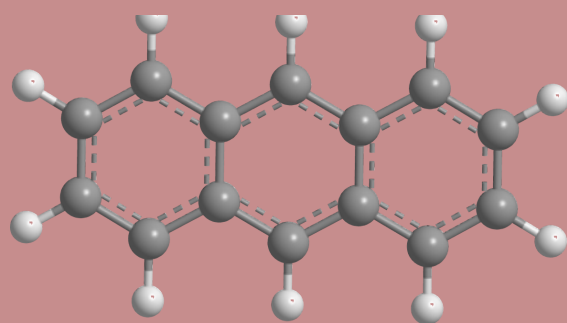


WHAT? SO WHAT? WHAT NOW?



1. What? Without judgement or interpretation, invite participants to describe what happened. Questions might include “what happened? What did you observe?”
2. So what? Ask students about their learning or reactions (i.e., thoughts, feelings, questions). Questions may center on feelings and/or analysis and may be considered from multiple perspectives.
3. Now what? Direct participants to think about the implications of the experience. This is an opportunity to apply learning. Example questions could include: “What are you still curious about? How can you apply your learning from today? What would you do differently if you could do this activity again?”

While this model may not always be appropriate, it is a tool that can be utilized in a variety of reflective settings (e.g., classroom, co-curricular).



REFLECTIVE WRITING

- Written in the first person
- Analytical
- Subjective
- Challenging assumptions
- Free flowing



Steps to creating a strong reflection:

1. Describe the experience – what happened?
2. Interpret the experience – what did you learn from the experience? Why?
3. Evaluate the experience – how valuable was the experience to you individually and to those you interacted with?
4. Application – how will you apply what you learned as you go forward?

Writing reflectively involves critically analyzing an experience, recording how it has impacted you, and describing what you plan to do with your new knowledge. The process of crafting reflections can help students to gain a deeper level of understanding as the act of sharing their experience can help to process what they have learned. The key to reflective writing is that it is analytical rather than descriptive. A student engaging in reflection should always ask why and how rather than just describing what happened during an experience (source: University of Cambridge). Writing could be in the form of a five-minute free-write, an ongoing journal, an essay, or literally any other creative style of writing.

BEYOND REFLECTIVE WRITING

While journaling and other types of reflective writing are effective, there are a multitude of ways to engage students in reflection. The list below is a sample of creative activities you could introduce into a course or experience.

Check-in: Invite each participant to share briefly during a class or meeting. The focus of the check-in should be specific (i.e., what are you learning about X right now? What are you curious about? What questions do you have?). Sometimes it is helpful to provide time for 2-3 minutes of free-writing before doing a check-in. This can be done in a pair, small group, or large group.

The Image: Prior to an activity or the exploration of a topic, ask each person to draw their ideas about what they will be doing, the subject matter, and their feelings about the project. For example, a student in a leadership class might be invited to draw a depiction of leadership at the start of the semester. At the end of the term, they could again draw a depiction of leadership and compare the two drawings. Discussion could focus on the differences and similarities in the pictures.

Senses: For immersive experiences, before entering a clinical site, school placement, or internship for the first time, ask participants to share what they expect to hear, smell, see, touch and taste. After being in the environment, students could share what they actually experienced.

Pictionary: Play a Pictionary game about an experience, inviting participants to comment on what they noticed, insights, and feelings. Talk about it as a group.

Parables, Stories, Poetry: Read a piece of pertinent literature and have participants respond and draw correlations to an experience or course concept.

Letter to Self: At the start of the semester or prior to a particular project/activity, have participants write a letter to themselves about their learning and personal goals, feelings, questions, or worries regarding the project/activity. Place it in a sealed envelope and hand it out again later in the semester/year.

All on the Wall: Put a large piece of paper up on one wall or all the way around the room. Invite students to write/draw their feelings, thoughts, and learnings on the paper. Lead discussion based on writings.

Object Share: Ask each student to bring in an object and share how the object is like them or the project they just did (pick a specific one). Examples include: "what I contributed to the team, how I felt about this project, what I learned, etc." The object can be something found in nature, a type of food, a book, etc. (pick one!)

Song, Collage, Sculpture, Skit: Invite students to create something artistic as a large group, or individually and then integrated together, to express what happened, how it felt, or what the experience meant to them. It could incorporate what was learned, accomplished, challenges overcome along the way.

Video: Ask students to create a video about the process of creating a project they have worked on individually or in a team.

Display/Mural: Create a group display/mural which chronicles something (i.e., a project, the semester, their learning, etc.).

Think of reflection questions as wading into a body of water. Many of us don't like to jump in over our heads, as we need to ease in. This is often true for reflection. The What? So what? Now what? model is useful in developing reflection questions, as it guides us to start with the what happened, sharing interpretations of what happened, and then exploring the impact of what happened and what was learned as a result.