Advice for Writing Reflection Prompts

The reflection prompt should:
- Be clear, concise and ask the student to think critically.
- Be relevant and meaningful to student and course learning goals.
- Allow the student to give responses that move beyond simple description of the experience to an analysis of how the experience contributed to the student understanding of self, others, and/or course concepts.
- Guide the student to demonstrate connections between the experience and material from other courses; past experience; and/or personal goals.
- Challenge the student to question their own biases, stereotypes, preconceptions, and/or assumptions and define new modes of thinking as a result.

Adapted from Steven Jones, Coordinator, Office of Service Learning, IUPUI

Examples of Reflection Prompts

Pre-Experience:
- What brought you to this particular engagement experience and why is it a good fit for you?
- Beyond building friendships or networking, what do you personally hope to learn through this engagement experience?
- How might your past experiences enhance this experience?
- What concerns do you have regarding your ability to succeed in this engagement experience?
- How might this experience relate to your career path?

During Experience:
- What connections, if any, are you seeing between this engagement experience and your career path?
- Which part of the engagement experience is your favorite at this point?
- Which part of the engagement experience are you finding the most challenging?
- How is this engagement experience impacting your overall university experience?
- How have you applied skills or abilities gained from previous experiences to solve problems or explore issues in this engagement experience?
- What opportunities can you act upon within your engagement experience to maximize your learning?

Post-Experience:
- Describe the experience (what did you hear, see, read, or do?).
- How has the engagement experience enabled you to apply or transfer your learning to a new setting or circumstance?
- In what ways has this engagement experience increased your curiosity or awareness about new content or issues?
- How do you see yourself now compared to who you were at the beginning of this engagement experience?
- What did you learn about yourself and/or others as a result of participating in this engagement experience?
- How has this engagement experience built upon what you have learned from your educational experiences in the classroom?
- What aspect of the engagement experience contributed most to your learning and why?
- What new insights did you develop regarding your career plans as a result of this engagement experience?
- How would you describe this engaged learning experience to a potential employer in a way that synthesizes knowledge and skills gained?
- Do you feel that you will stay connected with this experience and why?

Tools for Capturing Student Reflection

There are a number of tools that can be used to capture student reflection. Methods for capturing student reflection should be just as engaging as the experience itself. They should not be considered mutually exclusive of one another.   The right tools for engaging students in reflection can foster a student's ability to self-author and make meaning of their experience.

Methods for Engaging Student Reflection	Description of Method
E-Portfolio	Digital portfolios or multimedia collections of students' work.
Photos	Students documenting their experiences through photography, which may include captioning of photos to explain what the picture represents about student learning, photo journaling, etc.
Videos	Students documenting their experiences through video, using video to process and synthesis their own learning
Blogging	Method of online journaling where students can process their learning, post pictures, address prompts provided by staff/faculty, etc.
Tweeting	Pithy insights can be gathered under a common hashtag. A tool such as https://storify.com can allow students to collect text and media from around the web and organize that content to tell their story in a unique and relevant way.
Closed Facebook groups	Provides an online space for students who are sharing a common experience to process, reflect, test out new thoughts and ideas, and engage in interpersonal dialogue
Voice thread	Provides an online space, most often via a learning management system (i.e., D2L, Blackboard, etc.), for students who are sharing a common experience to process, reflect, test out new thoughts and ideas, and engage in interpersonal dialogue
Journaling	Journaling in notepads, which may be more conducive to students who are traveling as part of their engagement experience or are in an un-networked area, whereby students can process their experience using guided prompts
Podcast	Audio option for students who prefer to externally process information using guided prompts
Website	Students can have creative expression in designing a website that portrays their experience
Case Study	Students are asked to write a case study on a dilemma they confronted during their experience, including context of experience, individuals involved, and the dilemma itself. Group discussions can be facilitated to reflect on this experience. Preferable to experiences that allow for exploration of differing views and perspectives.

Technology-based Reflection Tools	Description	
	Students can use iMovie to create digital stories using pictures, video clips, and narration to serve as a visual product of their reflection.	www.apple.com/ios/imovie
iBooks Author	Students can use iBooks Author to create and publish their own online book. They can add text, graphics, movies, and more to capture and process learning.	www.apple.com/ibooks-author
WORDPRESS	Students can blog or build a website to synthesize and make connections between experiences.	www.wordpress.com
T	TouchCast is a platform for a new class of video apps that combine the look and feel of TV graphics with the interactivity of the web	www.touchcast.com/product
Canva	Easily turn ideas into stunning visual designs so students can make meaning of their experiences. Students can create designs for web or print, including blog graphics, presentations, Facebook covers, flyers, posters, etc.	www.canva.com/about
word SWAG	Students can graphically design presentations to communicate impact and outcomes of learning.	www.wordswag.co
	Students use Cowbird to keep a designed audiovisual diary of your life with tagged stories that connects with the stories of others.	www.cowbird.com
Storify	Find, collect, and share what people are saying over the web to create a story.	www.storify.com

E-Portfolio Student Reflection Tools
Discover E- portfolio website providers here: https://www.goshen.edu/careerserv/eportfolio-free-websites/
Students create an online website to reflect, synthesize, and develop their 100% Engagement outcome.

Assessing Student Reflection

Now that your students have engaged, synthesized, translated, and made sense of the competencies and skills they gained from their engagement experience, you need to assess the extent to which they learned and applied their learning. Tools used for assessing reflection should be shared with students in advance to ensure that expectations are clear.

Visit http://ose.arizona.edu/assessing-application-and-reflection for tools and examples.