EXL Scholars Program
Critical Reflective Thinking

EXL (Experiential Learning)

- Begins with a hands-on experience (practical application of course content or service learning)
- Ends with a critical reflection
The Two Required SLOs for all EXL Courses

Students will:

1. Develop an experience-based knowledge of their disciplines

2. Engage in systematic critical reflection

Value of Reflection

“We do not learn from experience... we learn from reflecting on experience.”

— John Dewey

NSEE Eight Principles of Good Practice for All Experiential Learning Activities

4. Reflection: Reflection is the element that transforms simple experience to a learning experience. For knowledge to be discovered and internalized the learner must test assumptions and hypotheses about the outcomes of decisions and actions taken, then weigh the outcomes against past learning and future implications. This reflective process is integral to all phases of experiential learning, from identifying intention and choosing the experience, to considering preconceptions and observing how they change as the experience unfolds. Reflection is also an essential tool for adjusting the experience and measuring outcomes.
Reflective learning is a process used to make sense of new experiences in relation to the individual, his or her environment, and a continuum of previous and subsequent experiences.

Connect to Learning Project

- Connects experiences in a course
- Connects experiences across courses, semesters, and disciplines
- Builds connection among academic, co-curricular, and lived experiences

Goals of Reflection

- Connects experiences in a course
- Connects experiences across courses, semesters, and disciplines
- Builds connection among academic, co-curricular, and lived experiences

Carol Rodgers Reflective Cycle

SUNY Albany
Kolb Reflective Cycle

- Concrete Experience (doing/having an experience)
- Active Experimentation (planning/trying out what you have learned)
- Reflective Observation (inspecting/reflecting on the experience)
- Abstract Conceptualization (generalizing/learning from the experience)

Borton/Driscoll Model of Reflection

What?
Now What?
So What?
What?

Reflection Rubric

Students will engage in systematic reflection and demonstrate the ability to critically examine their experiences and to create connections between those experiences and disciplinary knowledge.

- Engages in systematic reflection
- Demonstrates ability to critically examine experiences
- Creates connections between those experiences and disciplinary knowledge
Sample EXL 4000 ePortfolio

Final EXL Program Reflection

Students review documents from their entire college education and write a final reflection that highlights the connections between experiences, what they have gained as a result of those experiences and how they will apply what they've learned to new situations in the future.
The Experiential Learning program has made my duration of studying at Middle Tennessee State University feel very worthwhile. I feel very prepared for the transition from classroom into the work force. The type of work EXL courses require develops not only skills that are extremely applicable to any real-life situation, but students are taught how to directly apply them in their environment of choice.
I learned a great deal both academically and personally through the Experiential Learning program. I knew I had a passion for working with people, but EXL helped me to confirm this passion. The majority of EXL courses I took were through the Organizational Communication major, which focuses on communication within an organization. I was able to perform service and accumulate work experience with various non-profit organizations in positions I would consider for my future. This allows me to see what aspects I enjoy and dislike in a non-profit setting, ultimately aiding in determining the path for my future.

These experiences have prepared me for my future in many ways. I now know what working for a non-profit looks and feels like, what it will require of me, and what types of skills are necessary to excel in that field. Taking concepts learned in a classroom setting, then directly applying them in a work environment has shown me how to adapt theoretical knowledge and turn it into action. I have already been presented with opportunities that have stemmed from work I completed because of this program. I am confident that those opportunities will only grow, and propel me to be successful in whatever career I choose.

Questions ???

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