

Learning journal roadmap

Facilitate and guide transformative learning:

Why is reflecting on experience so important?

International experiences offer great potential for student learning and transformation, and may lead to increased intercultural competence, global citizenship and development of professional identity. For students who choose to face disorienting experiences, challenges to values and confront past attitudes they can encounter transformational learning (Jones, 2010). Immersion into an international student exchange without critically reflecting on what is observed, felt and experienced can mean that subconsciously held beliefs are reinforced, like western-held values and beliefs, especially around power and professional imperialism. Being able to engage in learning that is transformative involves creating safe spaces for students to critically reflect on their assumptions, values and beliefs (Jones, 2010).

A note for the traveller

This journal roadmap is designed for you to engage more deeply with your international learning experience. It provides a suggested roadmap to explore your thinking, values, and beliefs to reflect on before, during and after your experience. Critical reflection of your experiences will help you apply your learning to professional practice.

This roadmap is an opportunity for you to engage in critical reflection. Critical reflection is about critically appraising our thinking, values and assumptions. It is about using our reflections to achieve active change (Trevithick, 2011). It is strengthened through the integration of theories, knowledge and the input of others (Trevithick, 2011).

For each topic you can either choose to write a journal entry, record an audio or video presentation, design an image, mind map or diagram to record your critical reflections on the issue or question.

You are asked to integrate literature and understandings from other sources in your reflections and seek feedback from a significant other person. A significant other person could be your lecturer, a mentor, support person, or peer. The final task for each journal is to then critically reflect on or engage with the feedback given by your selected support person.

Beginning the journey

An international student exchange is a fantastic opportunity for learning. But first, it is important to know who you are as a person, what guides your professional practice and what you know about the journey ahead and learning about other cultures and how practice looks in other contexts.

Taking stock of what's important to you

Ask yourself:

Who am I as a person?

What values are important to me?

What do I know about myself when exposed to new environments?

What do I know about my destination?

What am I keen to learn?

What motivates my practice?

What are my intentions and expectations of the journey ahead?

What do I think I know?

What don't I know?

How do I learn best?

What supports do I need in this new environment?

How do I respond and feel when receiving feedback?

How do I engage with challenges and opportunities?

Who's feedback would I trust?

I will ask..... to give me feedback

Feedback:

My engagement with the feedback is:

My first thoughts:

My feelings overall:

Are there situations that I can think about differently?

Do I need to explore something further? Can I gain further information to develop my understanding?

What is my action plan?

Being on the journey

It is suggested that you write, draw or record a series of journal entries, audio/video, or creative expressions during your international exchange.

Start with a brief description of the event, situation or thought and then address all the questions that are relevant to you, but at a minimum those that are highlighted.

1. Brief description of an event, an observation or feeling that my reflection below refers to:

2. Some questions to help you explore the event or situation

Why is this significant to me?

What am I thinking and feeling?

Am I challenged here? Is my practice challenged? How?

How can I deal with this?

Would this experience have been different at home? How do I feel about this difference?

Would doing something different be useful?

What am I learning here?

What other perspective, information or knowledge may be useful to explore?

What influenced the feelings and thoughts I had? Was the perspective influenced by gender, culture, age or experience?

3. Action plan (if the event or situation arose again what would I do?)

Feedback from.....

My engagement with the feedback is:

My first thoughts:

My feelings overall:

Are there situations that I can think about differently?

Do I need to reflect further? Can I gain further information to develop more understanding?

What is my action plan?

Reflections when finishing the journey

Who am I as a person?

What values are important to me?

Have my values changed along the journey?

What have I learned through the international experience?

Was there unexpected learning?

What facilitated my learning and how can I use this for my professional practice?

How do I learn best?

What supports do I need in place for my future practice?

How did I engage with feedback, challenges and opportunities?

What further learning would be useful now?

How will this impact on my future practice?

Feedback from.....

My engagement with the feedback is:

My first thoughts:

My feelings overall:

Are there situations that I can think about differently?

Do I need to reflect further? Can I gain further information to develop more understanding?

What is my action plan?

References

Jones, P. (2010) 'Responding to the ecological crisis: Transformative pathways for social work education. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 46 (1), 91-105.

Trevithick, P. (2011). *Social work skills and knowledge: A practice handbook*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).