Introduction

The GloBaltimore Interprofessional Global Grant Program coordinated by the UMB Center for Global Engagement (CGE) offers already-established field sites abroad and curricula into which faculty and students can integrate reflective writing practice.

For the 2019-2020 grant cycle, I proposed an online/digital and in-person set of instructional modules designed to be embedded in these initiatives to encourage students to engage in reflection-in-presentation as part of their core work abroad during the summer.

Rationale

U.S. universities continue to shift to a more globalized understanding of education, “internationalizing their curricula, increasing their foreign language offerings, and multiplying their study abroad programs” in order to prepare their students for life and work in globalized professions and, more broadly, societies (Lape, 2013). The recent curriculum and program scan at the University of Maryland, Baltimore (UMB), as part of a partnership with the American Council on Education Internationalization Lab, revealed data aligned on our campus with these trends.

While curricular, clinical, and pedagogical differences exist among these efforts at UMB, most attempt to address global and local contexts for learning, encouraging students to critically reflect on their positions and identities in light of linguistic and cultural difference; consider multiple ways of knowing as professionals-in-training; question their own and others’ assumptions about difference; and negotiate and problem-solve collaboratively across professions and identities. Important questions emerge from this work: Why should students engage in this kind of reflective practice? How can students actually learn “to engage reflectively [in writing], mapping what they understand” and “to explicate tacit knowledge” embedded in such wide-ranging “intersections of self, experience, and the world” (Yancey, 2016)?

Yancey (2016) explains that the “primary function of reflection is to make a kind of meaning and a kind of knowledge, one animated by attending, one located at the intersection of the personal and the intellectual.” She goes on to clarify the outcomes of such meaning-making:

- helps students transfer writing knowledge and practice from one site [e.g., class and/or clinical setting] to another
• provides students with a mechanism, in print and other media, for documenting learning
• makes available to reviewers [e.g., faculty and even broader professional audiences] a unique source of data for understanding how a student’s learning has proceeded and progressed.

Faculty and students collaborate in this process, making more visible the critical turns and important questions raised by internationalized classroom learning and experiences in globalized sites of professional practice where our students train. More directly, reflective writing makes the relationship among “knowing, learning, and the personal…more salient and thus it works toward greater learning—which is the point of education in the first place” (Yancey, 1998).

In turn, critical self-reflective writing in the context of UMB’s seven graduate and professional schools raises conversations among students and their professors; classes and their imagined or actual patients or clients; and communities of contact about how their relationships “are related to stories of health and illness” (Charon, 2006; Frank, 1995; Sharf, 2009; qtd in Bloom, 2014). By approaching reflection narratively and considering their own stories as intertwined with those of their professional colleagues, research experiences, and patients or clients, students recognize the complexity and impact of their assumptions and ideological positions in relation to the experiences of others around them, whose journeys of health, justice, and healing are bound up with their own.

Moreover, students are encouraged not only to critically analyze and interpret these complexities but to consider how broader social, cultural, and professional narratives “direct [students] toward particular choices and provide [them] with reasons for acting [as professionals]” (Harter, 2009; qtd in Bloom, 2014). In short, we choose our narratives, often uncritically, and students as soon-to-be professionals must learn strategies for unpacking and questioning their roles in current systems and processes that “influence which stories are heard and taken seriously…especially in transnational contexts” (Bloom, 2014).

Sites of globalized, transnational, and translingual or multilingual health and human services practice offer opportunities to enact and perform reflection-in-presentation both on location—through ethnographic fieldwork (e.g., critical observation, fieldnote taking, initial reflection on fieldnotes and situation, etc.)—and upon returning to U.S. universities, where the students study—through refining of reflection, drafting of reflective writing, peer-reviewing one another’s work, and revising reflection for publication.

**Module Description**

The module serves as a pedagogical, academic, and professional tool for enhancing application and transfer of student learning developed through didactic instruction,
Module 1

- Monica Bradik, CGE Global Program Specialist, introduces the reflective writing assignment/project to student participants via email
- Via email, Bradik sends instructional material to student participants and provides instructions for reading and applying the following written guidance designed by Wright: “Stepping In, Stepping Out of Cultures: Reading Yourself Abroad” and “Reflection as Professional Practice.” These supports offer step-by-step (scaffolding) clarification of the fieldworking process, as well as the purpose and benefits of critically self-reflective writing for students in health, law, and human services fields.
- Students, who are already abroad and in field, begin observing, taking fieldnotes, and drafting initial responses and reactions to the data their recording.

Module 2

- Upon students’ return to the United States, Bradik and Wright offer a series of instructional videos, titled “Stepping In, Stepping Out of Cultures: Drafting Critical Self-Reflection,” guiding students on strategies for translating their fieldnotes and initial responses/reactions into more deliberate and critical reflection. Sessions include
  - “Introduction to drafting critically self-reflective prose”
  - “Interpreting and Synthesizing Your Experience in the Field”
  - “Moving from Fieldnotes and Freewriting to Reflection-in-Presentation”
  - “Writing Reflection-in-Presentation: “Moves” to Make”
- Over a two-week period, students watch the videos, consult with Wright/Writing Center on drafting approaches, and complete and submit a rough draft of a critically reflective essay.

Module 3

- Students are assigned 3-4 of their peers’ rough drafts and complete a full peer-review of each essay, drawing on rigorous guidelines outlined in the “Reflective Essay Peer Review Guide.”
- Students submit completed peer-review guide to each peer whose essay their reviewed.
- Students engage in another round of revision, drawing on feedback from their peers. Revisions must be substantial and involve careful consideration of this feedback.

Module 4
• Students submit this second draft to Bradik (CGE) and Wright (Writing Center).
• Students who want to revise further for publication submission sign up for and attend a workshop on polishing the work for public/professional audiences and on determining appropriate venues for publication.
• Students complete an end-of-program survey designed around the reflection assignment’s goals and objectives.

Modules: Theoretical Grounds

These modules are informed by the following research- and evidence-based theories:
• critical self-reflective writing practice (Yancey, 1998; 2016)
• critical language awareness (Pennycook, 2010)
• culturally sustaining pedagogies (Paris & Alim, 2017)
• translanguaging (Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Canagarajah, 2011; Garcia & Wei, 2013)
• translingual literacy (Canagarajah, 2013)
• Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC, 2020)
• Ethical mentorship for graduate student writers (CCCC “Statement of Professional Guidance for Mentoring Graduate Students,” 2019; Sinanan, 2016; Micciche with Carr, 2011; Brooks-Gillies et al., 2015)

Module Design and Implementation Collaborations/Partnerships

• Center for Global Education Initiatives: Virginia Rowthorn; Bonnie Bisonnette; Monica Bradik
  For global learning resources and support
• Writing Center: Peer writing consultants
  For writing support (e.g., consultations and peer review)

Student Learning Outcomes

Students will
• narrate, analyze, and interpret a learning experience—in a clinic, classroom, research project, or other academic or professional context—for self and outside, globalized, and/or international audience(s)
• explain multiple connections among this learning experience and content from courses, past learning, life experiences and/or international and interprofessional contexts
• critically observe culture, recognizing similarities without devaluing difference or neglecting systemic inequities based in difference, in order to practice cultural responsiveness and humility
• negotiate strategies for translating culturally influenced behavior, customs, and other aspects of cultures—both their own and those of which they are not a part—for specific audiences

• critically explore and demonstrate awareness of the individual as a part of and distinct from a culture of origin

• develop and practice recursive strategies of talking, composing, peer reviewing, revising, and editing to produce confident, clear, convincing final drafts of written texts that meet academic expectations and allow students to become more effective self-editors

• question notions of deficiency (e.g. remedial, developmental, etc.) and monolingual expectations in light of larger, always-changing multiracial, multicultural, and multilingual realities in which they, as students, live and work.

Assessment and Results

Assessment of this initial pilot were to include the following tools:

• qualitative analysis of student texts across drafts
• end-of-program progress assessment survey for students
• post-program focus group conversations with participating faculty and students.

While Bradik and Wright were able to begin collaborating on review and coding of the student drafts (pre- and post-peer review drafts), the COVID-19 outbreak has complicated and slowed the process. Initial reading of the drafts and the peer review materials indicates substantial interaction among peers in the drafting process. Students texts show extensive evidence of revision based on peers’ critiques, suggesting that peer review impacted student revision of texts. As predicted by the design of the peer review guidesheet, most of the initial revisions reflect awareness of and response to critiques addressing issues of rhetoric, theory, practice, reflexiveness, and cultural humility, rather than sentence-level editorial concerns.

Further review will determine nuances of student writers’ choices, examine evidence of thinking around intersectionality and positionality, and highlight the pedagogical possibilities of peer-to-peer, interprofessional collaboration on critically reflective writing, especially related to social justice-based professional competencies focused on transnational communication and practice.

The end-of-program assessment survey yielded qualitative, self-assessment data regarding students’ work with the module. Though the response rate was low (3 of 17), respondents overwhelming indicated that the reflective writing component of the summer CGE program improved their academic skills; increased their level of thinking and problem solving; promoted in them a deeper understanding of their own capacities; enhanced their self-awareness and sense of community; offered opportunities to
examine and question their beliefs, opinions, and values; facilitated their interpretation of experiences; and helped them articulate their experiences for future employers.

Student respondents also valued learning and practicing the reflective writing process. In particular, one student stated:

*The reflective writing process forced me to make time to reflect on my experience and the time we spent with the communities overseas. I know reflection is very beneficial, but it's hard to make time for it; so having to write this essay was great!*

Of the peer review element of the program, one student noted that they “didn't get that detailed feedback,” but the other two respondents were more approving, claiming that peer review improved their drafts. In fact, one student commented in detail:

*The peer review helped me understand how others were receiving what I wrote, so it helped me know how to improve the essay.*

Lastly, the student respondents were overwhelmingly satisfied with the quality of instruction and assistance from Wright and Bradik during the entire process, one student writing that “James and Monica were absolutely great!”

**Conclusion**

Initial data suggest that the program may have raised student participant metacognitive awareness of the reflective writing process and its role in academic and professional practices of reflexivity and interprofessionalism. Specifically, the data provide potential insight into student understanding of, facility with, and deliberate engagement with ethnographic and discursive practices involving positionality, intersectionality, and cultural humility in professional, academic, and personal contexts, thus indicating demonstrable alignment of learning performances with the module learning outcomes, UMB Core Values, UMB Strategic Plan, and various professional organizations’ competencies related to transnational and pluricultural contexts of patient rights and outcomes in 21st century health and human services research and clinical practice. More analysis is needed of the 17 original student drafts, the peer review materials, and the final 17 student drafts to understand the nuances of these initial findings. Also, a subsequent IRB-approved study of the next summer cohort might offer more comprehensive insight to the impact of the program on students’ attitudes and facility with self-reflective writing practices. Lastly, revision to the module depends upon additional conversations with faculty across the campus regarding the nature and implications of ethnographic and critical self-reflective writing practices for distinct academic and clinical purposes and contexts, as well as collaborative development of strategies for implementation across academic and clinical programs.
References


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