Reflection and the Sophomore Year: Stepping Up the Second-Year Experience

Chelsea Black
Rebecca Kapusta
Objectives

• Provide an overview of the Second-year Transformational Experience Program (STEP)

• Explore theory and research that is relevant to reflection in the second year

• Describe ways reflection is incorporated into STEP and how it contributes to students’ self-discovery

• Identify future directions for reflection enhancement
Why STEP?

- Comprehensive living experience
- Intensive engagement with faculty
- Academic achievement
- Life and leadership skill development
- Self-awareness
STEP Overview

**Autumn Semester**
- Weekly cohort meetings with STEP Faculty Mentor
- 3 Professional Development Co-Curricular (PDCs) programs
- 2-part financial wellness component
- STEP Expo attendance
- Develop personal statement

**Spring Semester**
- One-on-one meetings with STEP Faculty Mentor
- Create STEP Signature Project Proposal and Budget
- Complete Pre-Reflection Document (PRD)
- Funding (up to $2000) to support STEP Signature Project

**Post-Signature Project**
- Reflection
- Receipts
- Report Back
Reflection: A Key Component

- Second-years are going through a transition and questioning their life’s purpose (Bolvin, Fountain, & Baylis, 2000; Schaller, 2005, 2010a, 2010b; Tobolowsky, 2008)
- Grappling with their identity (Bolvin et al., 2000; Sanchez-Leguelinel, 2008; Tobolowsky, 2008)
- Varying stages of development (Schaller, 2005):
  - Random Exploration
  - Focused Exploration
  - Tentative Choices
  - Commitment
- Second-years benefit from opportunities to reflect and self-assess (Tobolowsky, 2008)
Student Learning Outcomes

1. To build a relationship with faculty mentors and cohort members
2. To build community within the cohort
3. To foster personal identity exploration
4. To explore the 6 STEP Signature Project Categories
5. To develop a personal statement
6. To develop critical reflection processes
7. To network with career and industry partners
8. To engage in a formal proposal writing experience
9. To develop budgeting skills
10. To enrich the student college experience
Integration of Reflection in STEP

- Fall Semester Curriculum
  - VIA Character Strengths
  - Opening/Closing of each cohort meeting
  - Weekly journaling
- PDCs
  - What was something new that you learned?
  - How does this impact your professional and personal goals?
- Personal Statement
  - Personal Values
  - Contribution to the greater community
  - Connection to personal, professional, and academic goals
Integration of Reflection in STEP

• Pre-Reflection Document (PRD)
  • What do you anticipate changing?
  • How do you hope the experience will be valuable to you after graduation?
  • Signature Project Consultant

• Post-Project Reflection
  • Written reflection on Ohio State website platform (u.osu.edu)
    • What changed?
    • What events, interactions, relationships, and/or activities led to the change?
    • Why is this change significant to your life?

• Reporting Back
  • STEP Expo (poster forum)
  • Pecha Kucha
Assessment

Top STEP Benefits According to Students

- A sense of future goals: 64%
- A sense of personal values: 54%
- Knowledge of personal strengths and weaknesses: 54%
- A sense of community with STEP cohort and faculty mentor: 50%
Assessment

“I think one of the big things our STEP cohort focused on was discovering our own values...My STEP mentor really took a lot of time to make sure that we knew what it was that we valued in life.”

“It was a lot of work going through STEP, but that being said, I did find out a lot about myself, and it definitely challenged me in ways that I didn’t think were possible.”

(CSSL, 2017)
Future Directions

• Creative and Artistic Symposium
• Reflection Series for leadership and service-learning projects
• Exploring opportunity to integrate video reflection
• Additional support for faculty mentors to integrate reflection during the fall semester
References

2016-2017 STEP Interview Report. (2017a). The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.


Questions?
step@osu.edu
614-247-7837