



Audience and Purpose

The primary audience for your essay is YOU. This is not a report on what you did, but rather an opportunity for you to **reflect on what you have learned**, make connections between different parts of your BDP experience, and think about how your experience affects your goals. This essay is a piece of reflective writing through which you should come to a more sophisticated understanding of what your experience has taught you.

BDP advisors read every reflection essay and provide feedback for you. In addition, the BDP faculty panel may also choose to read your essay. **Please keep this audience in mind. We expect you to turn in a clear, thoughtful, well-written, and proofread essay.**

Format

Your essay should be 3-5 pages, typed and double-spaced. **Please be sure to include your name, BDP, strand (if applicable), and the semester of your experience on your essay.** Reflection essays must be submitted online on the BDP website. Go to the *Reflection Essay Submission* page under [Quick Links & Forms](#).

Guidelines for Writing Your Reflection Essay

Your essay should address each of the following themes, which are central to placing your Connecting Experience within the context of your BDP as a learning experience. You should address your BDP work, major, and educational and professional goals. The questions within each theme are designed to help you think more deeply about your experience. Be as specific as possible, and **give examples** to illustrate **what you have learned** from the experience.

- Disciplinary awareness.** Your essay should refer to disciplines relevant to your Connecting Experience, discussing questions or issues that might be addressed through a particular discipline and demonstrating your understanding of those disciplinary perspectives, tools, or methods:
 - What kinds of disciplinary perspectives are relevant to your Connecting Experience?
 - How did these perspectives affect or shape the way you approached a problem or topic within your Connecting Experience?
 - What specific disciplinary tools or methods have you encountered in your Connecting Experience? (Relevant observations might include research methods, acceptable forms of data, standards of professional communication, or “hot topics” in a particular field, for example.)

- Interdisciplinary awareness and ability to think comparatively across disciplines.** Your essay should bring together the perspectives offered by more than one discipline relevant to your Connecting Experience, and you should reflect on the ways in which the disciplines you discovered in your connecting experience are similar or different:
 - What are you able to understand about your Connecting Experience by applying an interdisciplinary perspective that you would not be able to understand through only one disciplinary lens?



Interdisciplinary awareness, continued

- Think about your courses and experiences in other disciplines. What differences and similarities did you observe in terms of research methods, professional communication, topics, key questions, etc. in these different disciplines?

Transfer of knowledge and skills from one context to another. Your essay should articulate how knowledge you have gained in one context has affected your understanding in another:

- What theories, skills, or practices from previous experiences were useful in this Connecting Experience? How were they useful? Please give examples to illustrate.
- How did your past coursework inform any of your work during the Connecting Experience?
- What new ideas and approaches did you encounter through this experience?
- Were there any theories, assumptions, or practices that you questioned or reevaluated as you gained more experience and/or encountered new ideas?

Self-reflection. Your essay should reflect on how your interests and goals have developed through your Connecting Experience:

- What did you learn from the positive aspects of your experience and from any challenges you encountered?
- What have you discovered about yourself—your strengths, your weaknesses, your interests?
- How has this experience affected your educational or professional goals? Have you identified or ruled out a possible career path? Have you been able to refine a goal you already had?

Understanding of the BDP subject. Your essay should discuss how your Connecting Experience enhanced your understanding of your BDP topic and (if applicable) strand:

- What did you learn about your BDP subject or strand topic through this Connecting Experience?

Remember: Be as specific as possible, and give examples to illustrate what you've learned.

Questions?

Please contact our office at bdp@austin.utexas.edu or 512-232-7564.