

# Reflecting on Culture in an Immersion Experience: How to Prepare Students for the Unexpected

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### Abstract:

Experiential learning is increasingly recognized as a high-impact educational practice, and reflection is an essential piece of consolidating learning from experiences, as many models of service learning and other experiential learning note. This paper addresses the mechanics of assigning reflection, with an emphasis on assignment structure. The prompt should be open-ended enough to allow students to bring elements of their experience that they may think don't pertain to the subject at hand -- precisely because those moments are often where the greatest learning takes place. Drawing from years of experience with the Immersion Experience component of the Pavlis Honors College curriculum, this paper analyzes student reflections and offers suggestions about the structure of reflective assignments and their placement in curricula.

Experiential learning is increasingly recognized as a high-impact educational practice, and reflection is an essential piece of consolidating learning from experiences, as many models of service learning and other experiential learning note [1-5]. This paper addresses the mechanics of assigning reflection, with an emphasis on assignment structure. Some degree of structure pushes a student to examine parts of their experience that may be messy or uncomfortable: precisely the types of learning that reflection highlights. But too much structure may curtail some of the necessary messiness of reflection. The prompt should be open-ended enough to allow students to bring elements of their experience that they may think don't pertain to the subject at hand -- precisely because those moments are often where the greatest learning takes place.

The Pavlis Honors College at Michigan Technological University (PHC) uses reflection as a curricular spine in a unique experiential program that completely eschews GPA [6-9]. Although our program is open to all students on campus, the campus population has an overwhelming number of engineers, and our honors enrollment reflects that preponderance. Students complete three required seminars and four extra-curricular components, reflecting multiple times in every element of the curriculum. Our program is grounded in the theory of self-authorship, as articulated by Marcia Baxter Magolda, based on Robert Kegan's theory of adult development [10-14]. Our goal is to move students into the crossroads between the "following formulas" stage and the "self-authored" stage, a step that usually occurs after college if at all. Part of this process entails helping students see the frame of references that they use to interpret the world. We want to encourage students to question these frames, even if they do not ultimately change them. In other words, we want students to see the cultural landscape in which they live, learn, and work, including some of the variation that exists and some of the possibilities that the students themselves might bring into being.

This paper explains the history behind the Immersion Experience prompt and its development, describes the ways in which groundwork is laid for the Immersion Experience in the first required seminar, and analyzes reflections from four students written from 2018 to 2020. In these reflections, students grapple with experiences that challenge their views of themselves and their world. As we have demonstrated in previous papers, students report that the frequency and consistent structure of reflection throughout our curriculum prompts habits of reflection that become habits of mind [6, 9]. The immersion reflections are designed to build on their pre-existing practice of reflection, typically established by one semester of reflection in a classroom environment. Our previous analyses of reflections have focused on work produced in our seminars, formal coursework, with an emphasis on HON 2150, the first required seminar, and HON 4150, the final required seminar [6, 7, 9]. For many students, the Immersion Experience constitutes a leap forward in their reflective practice as the balance of practice to reflection shifts (in other words, as the learning becomes more experiential). Students in the ETS-IMPRESS cohort, who are required to join the Pavlis Honors College as part of their scholarship, do not show marked difference from the general Pavlis population in their responses to the immersion reflection prompts. In the Immersion Experience, students draw on their experiences in HON 2150 and take their reflections in more independent directions, benefiting from the open-ended nature of the prompt.

### The Immersion Experience: History and Prompt

This paper focuses on the Immersion Experience. In the ideal curricular flow, this experience occurs immediately after the first required seminar, HON 2150 (there is an optional foundational seminar for first-semester first-year students), and consists of the first of the experiential components. In practice, students often complete the Immersion later in their careers, after they have taken another seminar and/or other components. The metaphor of immersion is consciously chosen: the idea is for a student to allow themselves to absorb an experience in 360 degrees, to take it in, and to begin to process it, but with an emphasis on observation. In this way, it's most closely linked with the Honors Ability (our program learning outcomes) Embrace Ambiguity [8]. Later components, including the Honors Project and Leadership/Mentorship, engage the Act with Purpose Honors Ability, which is more about deliberate action.

Part of the origins of the Immersion Experience lay in international experiences. The honors program developed out of several experiential, interdisciplinary programs using high-impact practices. The Pavlis Institute for Global Leadership explicitly drew on international project work, conducted in student-led teams. As we broadened the specific international program into a customizable honors program, we decided to let students select experiences that aligned with the components (Academic Enhancement, Immersion Experience, Honors Project, and Leadership/Mentorship). At the time of writing, the Immersion Experience must consist of at least 50 hours, spread out over a several-week period, typically 5 weeks at a minimum. Some

students still select international experiences, such as study abroad or an international internship or design project, but others select domestic internships or even research at our home institution. By encouraging students to view these experiences as immersions, we ask them to analyze the culture of the lab or workplace almost as they would approach the culture of an unfamiliar country. In some ways, the shift is more difficult because it entails gaining some distance on cultural practices that students may already take for granted.

In 2017, we revised the immersion reflection protocol to be more open-ended. The primary re-writing of the prompt was conducted by faculty with disciplinary backgrounds in anthropology and literature/writing. We used the self-authorship interview as a model, which is the gold standard for assessing an individual's level of self-authorship [15]. One element that we incorporated fairly directly was an activity from the self-authorship interview in which interviewees are presented with cards with various terms on them and asked to associate. We incorporated that as "Briefly describe an experience from your immersion that comes to mind when you think about any or each of the following: anxious/nervous, anger, success, strong stand or conviction, sad, torn, moved/touched, lost something, change, important to me." [16, 17] The full prompt from this revision appears below as an appendix.

Part of the structure we incorporated into the revision was the rhythm of "What/So What/ Now What?" Around this time, we began using this as a structure for reflections throughout the curriculum, beginning in the first required seminar. This structure was inspired by the literature on reflection that emphasize movement to future action, or a cyclical process [2, 3]. Around 2000, we began also to use the acronym PAW, or "Present, Analyze, What's Next?", branded to our animal mascot [18].

From 2017 to 2020, we used the same prompt for all of the reflections, as shown below, and encouraged students to choose from a menu of sub-prompts for their own What, So What and Now What.

In 2020, of course the COVID-19 pandemic caused us to re-think our plans. Many of our students were no longer able to do the experiences they had planned for their summer immersions. Internships were canceled, study abroad was canceled, and many students were in lockdown. At the same time, the point of the Immersion Experience was to push students out of their comfort zones -- and that was being done for us, in all kinds of ways. Embrace Ambiguity, the Honors Ability that most students chose for their application essay describing the ability that was the hardest for them, became a daily task, a daily struggle. But also we all became more adept with videoconferencing tools that enabled us to connect over distances.

We adapted the Immersion Experience to include what we called "immerse in place." Students didn't have to select a particular experience, but could reflect on what was unfolding around

them. They could take into account their changing circumstances. Several students chose to reflect not only on the pandemic but on the murder of George Floyd and its regional and national aftereffects. Those reflections will be discussed in detail below. We also supplemented written reflections with Zoom meetings in which students discussed their experiences, led by a pair of faculty/staff facilitators. Cohorts of students who were completing their immersion experience each semester gathered together to discuss their individual experiences with their shared community. This was one way we were able to maintain “community” among their peer group. Albeit virtual, students appreciated the opportunities to connect and exchange with one another.

As more movement became possible, although the pandemic continues, we incorporated elements of the “immerse in place” model. During a revision of our component structure to accommodate a rise in enrollment, we changed the requirements to three written reflections and one mid-point Zoom reflection discussion. Throughout the versions, we have encouraged students to take near-daily notes during their immersion and given them frameworks for doing so. We’ve discussed ways to immerse in place, even though the intense comfort-zone shift is not quite as extreme, including students who choose to learn a new skill or embark on independent research or a course of readings. This has the advantage of enhancing the equity of our program: not all students can afford to study abroad or even to take some internships. Immersions in place may include a series of directed readings or immersing in a work experience: one student wrote compellingly about lessons learned working the night shift at Walmart.

### Preparation for Immersion in Seminar I

For some students, the HON2150 course is their first opportunity to reflect, especially about themselves, their present state, and their future. There are several strategies we leverage to introduce them to the community culture we aim to establish throughout the time in the PHC. One, is through Brave Space Sharing Environment. In this activity, we present the poem titled “An Invitation to Brave Space” [19]. After having a few minutes to read and reflect, we ask students to consider characteristics of a safe sharing environment they’ve previously experienced. In small groups they brainstorm brave space ground rules they believe are necessary for effective and respectful conversations/interactions. Thereafter, as a whole class we agree to navigate through the semester by frequently referring back to the agreed upon Brave Space community standards that were collectively designed. Another protocol that we address on the first day of class is the concept of “Engage-Reflect-Storytell.” This is an additional way that we introduce students to reflective practices. During each class, we engage the students with a concept or framework, students then have time to process and think about what they’ve learned. Processing may happen as an individual, in small groups, and/or with the entire class. Finally, they storytell, affording them an opportunity to share the story that the engagement/framework left them with, including physical, mental, and emotional responses. It is also a reflective opportunity for the students to articulate if and how it will inform their life and future. This

provides them with a repetitious opportunity to holistically apply what they are learning each week to multiple aspects of their life, not just who they are as students.

Since small group discussions and reflections are an integral aspect of the classroom experience, we hire upper-level students from our program as Learning Facilitators (LFs). We have found that the near-peer interactions are effective in establishing trust and engagement from all students. Each LF is assigned to a cohort of students that they remain with for the entire semester (another way to build trust and community). Integrating small group discussions in a cohort format allows for students who are not likely to speak in a whole class discussion to still have an opportunity to articulate their reflective thoughts. This format of engagement further solidifies a brave space community for everyone's voice to be heard. All of the LFs who are hired have completed the HON 2150 course and they have numerous opportunities to share their journey through the course material as well as the honors components. In addition to facilitating the small group discussions the LFs are responsible for managing their cohort's reflections in HON 2150. The LFs are trained and coached throughout the semester on how to engage and respond to students' written reflections. We do not start the semester grading any of the reflection assignments. Instead we "ungrade" them in an effort to encourage creativity and reflective practices that are not centered upon writing for a grade or based upon what they "think" that the teaching team wants them to write. Through "ungrading," we join the effort to reframe the educational system of measuring performance and academic success based on grades [20]. The ungrading protocol is a simple two-step process. Students receive a reflection prompt based upon frameworks that are introduced during the class sessions. They submit their reflections and LFs respond with additional questions for the students to explore, consider and think about. Students post a brief reflection response to the questions that are posed by their LF. The students are granted completion points for their original reflection (20 points) and reflection response (10 points). Students are given a grade of incomplete (no points) if the reflection is not submitted, submitted late (unexcused), or they blatantly didn't address any of the reflection prompts. However, we give students permission to not follow a prompt if they are having a challenging week (they simply need to let us know in advance that they are going to write a "present state" reflection. They can reflect on what they are going through, what they are struggling with, what they are processing through, etc. We still view this as an opportunity to cultivate and develop them in their reflective practices and continue to utilize the two-step ungrading protocol.

During the first few reflection assignments we heavily encourage the students to not write what they think instructors would like to hear, instead we want to hear their authentic voice. In the early stages of the semesters they are presented with a variety of reflective approaches and we allow them to have a few "free-form" reflection opportunities as a baseline and to also get them comfortable with various approaches to reflection i.e arts/drawing, vlog, written, etc. By week 4 of the semester we introduce the "What", "So What", "Now What" reflection protocol that they utilize for the duration of the honors experience. By the second half of the 14-week semester we

apply a multi-week reflection practice called odyssey planning [21]. Through a series of in-class engagements and homework assignments we encourage students to image 3 different future immersion experiences for themselves 1) The immersion they are planning to do today; 2) The immersion they would do if the first opportunity is suddenly gone; and 3) The immersion they would do if money and time were not an issue. After the planning stage the students put an aspect of one of their plans into action through prototyping. Prototyping is a quick and dirty way to investigate an immersion experience in an effort to determine whether they'd like to learn more in the future [21]. Students are encouraged to either have a prototype conversation with someone who can provide insight regarding a future immersion, or they can have a prototype experience that would provide insight regarding a future immersion. Odyssey planning provides the students the freedom to reflect about their future and map-out more than one approach to the immersion experience component. As a result of exploring multiple options and approaches, odyssey planning also lay the groundwork to encourage students to submit their immersion proposal within the next few semesters after completing the HON 2150 course.

After Odyssey planning, students are given an opportunity to assess their personal development in their reflective practices. During week 11 of the semester they are presented with a rubric that is designed for them to review and share whether they are beginning, developing, or proficient in their reflective practice. They share why they gave themselves this assessment and 1-2 ways they can further develop in their reflection.

Beginning	Developing	Proficient
Participates in reflection activities.	<b>Recognizes</b> the value of reflection and <b>engages</b> with the practice.	Has a <b>well-established reflective practice</b> .
Ways of talking about self largely remain <b>externally defined</b> .	Begins to ask <b>questions</b> about externally defined self.	When sense of self is challenged, has the capacity to <b>analyze the experience</b> and envision a way to put the new <b>self-learning</b> from analysis <b>into action</b> .
Sees self as <b>subject</b> to experiences.	Begins to demonstrate capacity for seeing self as an <b>object</b> that can be analyzed.	Reveals significantly <b>broader perspectives</b> about personal educational development.
Describes experiences in general or abstract terms, <b>without</b> indicating impact or <b>significance</b> on personal educational development.	Can <b>identify challenges</b> highlighted by the experience.	

This assessment approach encourages self-authorship and the beginning steps for students to take ownership of their reflective development over the course of the semester. Also, for the first time, LFs give students a point value assessment in addition to their written feedback (utilizing the same rubric) as an external evaluation of their reflective progress as we begin to conclude the semester. The final reflection assignment is a meta-reflection where we challenge the students to critically evaluate each of their previous reflections. They are encouraged to evaluate how they began their reflective practice this semester and how they are ending. They identify specific

moments of development, things that potentially enabled or hindered their development, and what their reflective trajectory tells them about their own learning and development. This is a capstone reflection that requires students to have several weeks to process, assess and write, thus the assignment is introduced week 12 and is graded as a 90 point assignment by the instructor.

All of the above-mentioned strategies are implemented to facilitate the progression of each individual student. This approach is meant to support a vision of learning as something powerful, personal, and never quite finished, and to allow students to own their learning. Over a 14-week semester our goal is to establish and develop students reflective practices through trust, empathy and support, with the goal to thrust them into their component experiences with a firm reflective foundation.

### Analysis of Student Reflections

The immersion experiences that students select vary widely, from study abroad to lab work on campus to work experiences locally and farther afield, as do students' styles of reflection. Sometimes these correlate: students who use international experiences as immersions often give a lot of detail in the "what" section and often include photographs. These reflections often end up resembling a travelog, and sometimes students find the "so what" and "now what" sections more of a challenge. Especially when an experience is so different from their own frame of reference, it can be a challenge to integrate the experience into their plans for their return -- and to go beyond some of the simpler narratives that circulate about international experiences. Conversely, when students reflect on their experiences doing lab work on campus, they often focus sharply on interpersonal relationships in the lab and on their own time management. We encourage students to focus on all 360 degrees of their "immersion" and to discuss elements of culture, even if they are literally in the same environment in which they spend most of their college experience. Many important insights occur outside the actual workplace, in liminal spaces, and quite a few begin with a disclaimer that the student is not completely sure whether they have strayed outside the bounds of the assignment.

An extreme example in the Immersion Experience of a student writing about an element of their life not directly related to their work activity occurred when Student A had an anaphylactic reaction to an insect sting, discovering a life-threatening allergy of which they had previously been unaware. The reflection on this topic appeared literally appended to a full-scale reflection on topics such as thinking about how traffic was different in the urban area vs. the rural area that the student was used to (this was related to the student's major, civil engineering). After a two-page reflection, the student quoted a long Facebook post describing the incident, then reflected for another page about the effect this incident might have on their life and on the long-distance trip they were preparing for. The Facebook post was dated the same day as the submission and



recounts the incident as occurring the night before. Part of the reflection details Student A's continuing injuries and continued elevated heartbeat. Toward the end of the reflection, Student A explicitly uses the language of the prompt: "Now what. I am accepting that my life and the way I lived my life before my episode with the wasp will change. I will need to carry a purse which isn't always something I do out of convenience it's easy just to have a light wallet in my pocket. I will forever be more careful around flying stinging things. **BUT I WILL NOT LET THIS STOP ME FROM ENJOYING THE OUTDOORS.**" Student A's use of all-caps emphasis indicates their defiance in the face of this life-changing incident. If part of the goal of this program is to help students find their values, this student clearly and emphatically indicates that "enjoying the outdoors" is important to them.

In Summer 2020, Student B opened a reflection with the written version of a wordless vocalization: "Ahhhhhhhhhh." Earlier that day, Student B had heard the news of George Floyd's murder, and the rest of the reflection begins to process the experience. A significant piece of this reaction describes how they felt unable to discuss the matter in other outlets. They also explore other imaginative possibilities, including thinking about how circumstances might have brought them to the streets of Minneapolis. The same written vocalization closes their first paragraph, and the refrain "I am scared" occurs throughout the second paragraph. Subsequent reflections by Student B were more contained, but the reflections continued to treat matters political and current, including a retrospective reflection on the closing of the dorms in March 2020.

Not all students in the Summer 2020 cohort chose to reflect on these matters explicitly. Student C, who was very involved in diversity organizations on campus, for instance, did not reflect on the racial tensions of the summer, instead focusing on a course of independently directed readings and progress in summer classes. The readings included material related to race, but the student largely describes procedural matters in their reflections, focusing on goal setting in relation to confidence building in their organizational standings and in their summer course work. Naturally, Student C must have found ways to react to the headlines, probably drawing on communities and listeners outside the honors program (or at least outside the official lines of reflection communication). In general, our goal for reflections is to allow students the opportunity to discuss personal matters but not to pressure them to do so.

Even without extreme external events in their personal lives or the fate of the nation, students can encounter extremely intense moments during their immersion experiences. Student D, who was considering a career in medicine, had a series of powerful reflections about an immersion experience working at a nursing facility, including a depiction of the difficulty of their first week:

As soon as I got out of the facility I got into my car and I sobbed. This was the first time that I cried after work but it was not the only time. I felt like such a child. I do not know if I have ever felt more overwhelmed then when I worked at the facility. I got home and

my roommate saw that I had been crying and she asked me what was wrong and the only thing that I managed to squeak out was, "there was just so much poop" [.]

Student D powerfully illustrates their difficulty but goes on to create a "so what" and "now what" (although she doesn't use this language explicitly): "The next morning I began to think about it, if my roommate could calm me down by just listening then maybe my residents just wanted someone to hear them. That started a new stage in my time at the facility." The reflection also describes the rhythm of reflection and planning as the student processed this experience prior to the writing of this reflection. This may be in part because Student D underwent the Immersion Experience later in their time in the honors curriculum. Student D's reflections continued to process the intensity of the nursing facility experience: one reflection focused on dealing with the death of patients. Despite the clear articulation of the struggles involved, including the role of staffing and administrative structures, Student D's final immersion reflection begins, "There is so much to say about this experience. It has completely changed my career trajectory. I am now planning on attending an accelerated BSN program instead of getting a MS. I am going to be working as a nurse instead of a researcher for the rest of my life. By getting actual experience in the field I was able to solidify that this was my passion." Building self-authorship doesn't necessarily mean getting students to change their minds, but often it can involve viewing a system from a variety of perspectives before settling on an interpretation or an interpretive framework. Student D chooses nursing despite an awareness of the structural difficulties.

Most of the reflections analyzed here are unusual in some way -- even Student C's lack of engagement with current events can be framed as surprising. But although not every student undergoes a life-changing experience during their immersion, several students suffered workplace-related accidents, for instance. In Summer 2020, many students reflected on the disruptions of the pandemic. Student D's experiences of evaluating a potential career path are very typical, although not all students reflect on life-or-death moments. Yet most student reflections are unusual in some way: students are coming to their own realizations and embracing ambiguity.

## Conclusion

The goal of the Immersion Experience is to help students reflect on all aspects of their experiences as they pursue a "prototype" of their future. Often the moments that most stand out to students lie on boundaries of their work/life experiences -- as in the moment one gets into the car to leave work -- or events that lie entirely outside of their work, such as a national news story or a sudden insect sting, that require integration into their personal and professional identity.

The structure of the Immersion Reflection with its repeating rhythm of "What/So What/Now What" can provide students with a helpful way of processing these experiences. This rhythm is

especially helpful when repeated over multiple semesters: as we have shown elsewhere, students report that reflection becomes a beneficial habit [6, 9]. The students quoted above occasionally make explicit reference to the structure, even in the midst of an emotional moment. But in a way the more subsumed structure is more telling, as when a student reports engaging in the cycle of reflection with a friend or when the student begins with an inarticulate vocalization and then moves through to analysis and planning.

One unanticipated consequence of the use of written reflections is the opportunity for students to practice the form of the personal essay. Seminar II, which falls in our ideal student path after the Immersion Experience, teaches the form of the personal essay explicitly in a move toward the Honors Project, which culminates in a story. These stories differ from reflections, and reflections do not have to be polished to be effective in helping students consolidate their experiences. However, the practice of writing their thoughts, particularly with an interlocutor giving comments and outside the structure of a course with its attendant grades, gives some students a greater creative scope (the reflections for the components are marked complete/incomplete, like the reflections in a course, but no grade is given for the components, unlike the courses). The extracts above show that some students' prose contains errors and serves mainly to help them gather their thoughts. But others, like Student D, use creative word choice and pacing to depict their experiences. All the students quoted above are STEM majors; reflective writing can serve as an outlet for creative expression as well as a metacognitive tool.

Now what? What might other members of the LE/ES division, or the educational community more broadly take away from this example? We've argued in previous work that our curriculum does its fullest work as a whole, over three seminar courses and four components [6, 9]. But the model of a single immersive experience with reflection, preceded by a course that teaches methods of reflection, may be easier to implement across different curricular models. Some of the samples above were drawn from students who had completed more of the curriculum, but even for students who only take one seminar and then the immersion, the reflections tend to be a moment of expansion.

Meanwhile, we as a program are moving away from the full prompt shown here, toward fewer reflections and more targeted prompts, including one about networking. This is partly a matter of practicality as we scale our program. We will see as the program develops whether we find significant changes in the depth of student reflection. Some of the storytelling aspect has also been re-directed to the Honors Project story, a component that appears later in the curriculum, following a seminar focused on storytelling. Our current Immersion Experience debriefs also rely more on verbal reflection through synchronous meetings. The ability to reflect in informal conversation among small groups of peers may end up being more actively transferable to students' futures than the ability to produce written reflections. The practice of reflection, in a variety of modes, sets students up to be able to step back and see the larger view of a situation in

which they find themselves. Just as their experiential learning prototypes their future, so too does their guided reflection prototype a lifetime of processing their experiences to build self-authorship.

Reflection can be incorporated into a variety of curricular and co-curricular activities, and it can serve a variety of purposes. Our reflective curriculum is designed to foster students' self-authorship, specifically to help them see the ways in which their thinking is influenced by cultural factors, and it is designed to help make students' longitudinal development more visible to themselves and to us (we also use analysis of reflection for program assessment, which is a story for another day). Moreover, reflection can be enjoyable for students to write and for faculty to read. Even when the feelings being processed are intense, as in the examples above, sharing the experiences with an instructor can help students build in the cognitive, interpersonal, and interpersonal dimensions of self-authorship. However, it is key to allow students choice in how personal to make their reflections. An open-ended prompt allows a range of responses, from time management to matters of life and death.

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## Appendix

Appendix 1: Immersion reflection, as used from 2017 to 2020

### Immersion Reflection

**Write five responses, at least 1 ½ single-spaced pages each**

**Submitted throughout your immersion experience** (discuss timing expectations with your advisor)

As you engage with your immersion experience, we'd like you to pause and reflect on your experiences. This is an opportunity to process your day-to-day activities. Consider keeping a field journal to jot down notes and observations as events occur.

**In each reflection**, respond to a prompt from three categories: "What?" "So what?" and "Now what?" The "**What?**" section asks you to relate concrete details of what you've been seeing, hearing, thinking, feeling, saying, and doing. You may describe a single incident or throw a bunch of stuff out there quickly. The "**So what?**" section asks you to delve more deeply into the experience(s) you describe in the "What?" section, to analyze them, think about why they occurred or why they provoked a reaction in you. The "**Now what?**" section asks you to think about your plans for the future in light of what you've written so far. Will you approach future events differently? Is there something you still don't understand that you want to think about more?

You may choose the same prompts in subsequent reflections or change it up. These questions are intended as jumping-off points: don't worry if you haven't fully answered the question or answered every sub-question. If you wish, you can find other ways to get at the essential question ("What?" / "So what?" / "Now what?"), including responding to a question your advisor has asked about a previous reflection. You are welcome to include images or other media along with your written reflection if you wish.

**What we're after:** There's no single right way to approach this assignment, no "right" or "wrong" answers. We want to see your authentic voice, what you're working through, learning, and wrestling with. Ideally, the immersion should present you with challenges, even conflict. We give you permission to express here what you authentically feel. In terms of format, make sure what you write is comprehensible to your advisor, but don't worry about making your writing formal. We want to see your thought process. Think of this as a conversation.

**For your final reflection**, look back over what you've written for your previous four reflections and talk about how your thinking has changed. Your "What?" for this reflection could be a set of observations you make as you read through your previous reflections. The "Now what?" section of this final response will probably be longer and more developed: this is your opportunity to think about how you'll emerge from this immersion and what you'll be bringing with you.

What?

- Briefly describe an experience from your immersion that comes to mind when you think about any or each of the following: anxious/nervous, anger, success, strong stand or conviction, sad, torn, moved/touched, lost something, change, important to me.
- What was your best experience so far? Your worst? What's a challenge or dilemma you're encountering? A situation in which you're not sure what's right? What's your support system? What conflicts or pressures are you encountering? Tell us about an interaction with a person who's different from you.
- What have you found most surprising? Challenging?
- Briefly transcribe some quick notes from your field journal.
- Think about your expectations going into this immersion (or this segment of the immersion). Tell us about an experience that challenged these expectations.

So what?

- Delve more deeply into one of the experiences or ideas listed above. Explain why it made you feel the way it did. What factors contributed to things playing out the way they did?
- Focus on an interaction (from what you've said above) that has to do with a behavior you find surprising. Tell us more about this behavior. What contributes to it? Why do you think it has the effect (on you, on others) that it does?
- Talk about how things might have gone differently.
- Write a letter to a specific, named person that explains one of the items above in detail.

Now what?

- What might you do differently in the future, based on what you've said above?
- What questions do you have going forward?
- As a result of this experience, have you changed your mind about anything?

Is there anything else you'd like to say? Any questions for your advisor?