

ESP+I: Experience, Struggles, Puzzles plus Insights

A routine for reflecting on actions

After completing an extended task, project, experiment, inquiry or course of action, use this framework to reflect on the experience

- Experience: What were some of the key actions or activities in this endeavor that moved your thinking and learning ahead?
- Struggles: What were some of the things you struggled with or found challenging that you had to overcome?
- Puzzles: What new questions arose for you along the way about your topic or area of focus?
- + Insights: At this point, what new insights do you have on the topic or process?

Purpose: What kind of thinking does this routine encourage?

This routine asks students to reflect on their learning process by identify key areas that moved their learning and understanding forward as well as the questions and struggles that remain.

Application: When and where can it be used?

This routine can be used to structure and enhance reflection after an extended process of inquiry or investigation. It is specifically designed for reflection over an extended course of action that would include multiple steps, revisions, and adjustments over time rather than a short-term investigation

Launch? What are some tips for starting and using this routine?

After the class has engaged in a common long-term project, you might introduce the routine as a way of collaboratively reflecting on that experience. In this way, the group completes the routine together while learning its structure. You might divide the white board into 4 sections or use chart paper to record each of the 4 different phases. The first phase, experience, is designed to identify those major actions that moved the work ahead. Note: this differs from just listing “what we did.” You might tell the class, “We know what we did in this project. What I would you like for you to think about though is what were the things we did that you felt were really helpful in changing your thinking or deepening your understanding?” For younger students you might want to list everything that was done first, and then ask this question to help them prioritize. The second phase, struggles, asks students to identify the challenges. Here you might want to stress how those struggles were overcome. The third phase, puzzles, asks students to identify those questions that emerged after the initial inquiry began. This helps students to see that inquiry isn’t always a linear process but may shift and change as new information is attained. Finally, insights, asks students to think about what was learned, either about the process of inquiry or about the topic of inquiry