**Purpose**
To develop the ability to articulate your learning in a real world context and better communicate the skills you developed. The skills below have been shown to be critically important for graduates whether they wish to continue their education in post-graduate professional or graduate schools or they wish to move immediately into a career environment. As KSU students, you will also find these skills very important in classes throughout your degree.

Skills:
- Communicate clearly to convey meaning to peer groups
- Make connections between your experiences and education
- Transfer your knowledge to new and novel experiences
- Reflect on yourselves and your learning in ways that allow you to develop and respond to new and challenging situations

**Task**
Your job is to reflect on your experiences at KSU in a medium that allows you to best articulate your learning while at KSU. This does not reflect a semester-by-semester account of your time at KSU; instead, this is intended for you to summarize your most important experiences. Those experiences should revolve around the high-impact practices (see Appendix) in courses that you’ve taken during your time at KSU.

You should build an outline that defines who you are, your experiences a KSU, and how that has transformed you. Remember this is a complete picture of your experiences, and you need a beginning and an end and all the parts need to flow together to create a single, coherent story. This is about at least two high impact experiences, however it is not a simple description of those to experiences, so find a way to make them both meaningful and continuous. Think about the details that someone would need to know to understand your experiences and how you interacted with them.

When you’re trying to build this story, think about answering these questions:
- How did your experiences in this HIP impact your worldview or sense of self?
- How did your experiences impact you personally and professionally?
- How did these experiences make you feel and how did you reconcile those feelings?
- How did expected or unexpected challenges frame your experience?
- How would you take what you’ve done and what you know and use that in future spaces?

This is not an exhaustive list of the stuff for a reflection and you are not expected to necessarily answer all of these questions, but you should be thinking about them in your answers. **Make sure that you take the time to actually sit and think this through and write it out before you produce your final reflection, regardless of your chosen medium.**
Hints and Suggestions:
- Recognize that it might be difficult to do this all in one sitting – you may need to take a break and re-think everything, refresh a bit.
- Be cautious about making this about separate experiences without showing how they’re connected. Recognize that disparate elements can be connected by the way they impact you.
- Remember you’re writing to someone who may not even be in your field, but be cautious about getting lost in details that are not important.

Criterion for Success
Successfully building this reflection is very much a key milestone for evaluating your transformative learning experiences at KSU. We do expect that you will hit some key components during your reflections and those are described below.

1. Connections to Experience – Makes meaningful connections among HIPs and your experiences outside of the classroom that deepen your understanding and broaden your point of view.
2. Connections to Discipline – Draws conclusions by combining examples, facts, and theories from more than one field of study or perspective.
3. Transfer -- Applies theories, skills, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations.
4. Reflection & Prior Learning – Reviews prior learning to reveal significantly changed perspectives about your personal and professional life.
5. Reflection & Self-Assessment – Identifies how one changed over time and how your future may be impacted by these changes.

While your ability to receive the Transformative Learning recognition is not dependent on a particular performance metric, recognize that your essay will be scored by teams of faculty in your college. The rubric these faculty will be using to score your essay is included at the end.

Annotated Examples:
You are welcome to submit your reflection in whatever medium you find most suited to telling your transformative tale. Probably the most straightforward would be a reflective essay and below you will find 2 good examples of this, annotated to get you thinking about your own work and how to craft it.

Example 1
I am a biology major at Kennesaw State University with an interest in pursuing a marine biology career after graduation. Over the last couple of years, I have participated in an undergraduate research program looking at the natural changes that happen on a coral reef along with the potential ramifications of human impact. This program required me to travel to Cozumel, Mexico for 2-weeks every year and live with the local populations in San Miguel while collecting data in the nearby
Caribbean Sea. I can honestly say that this experience transformed me in ways that were completely unexpected when I started here at KSU.

As a biology major, I had taken several classes that taught me how to think about the natural world. My Zoology course gave me a broad look at animals, my Botany course did the same for plants, and my Ecology class helped me put them together to think about how they interacted with the world around us. While my coursework seemed to prepare me for life as a biologist, it was not until I was in the water staring at the diversity of a coral reef that I realized how inadequate my knowledge was in making sense of this space. I had the words of various organisms in my head, and I could recognize the biological processes that existed in a generic sense, but I struggled to put them together in a way that made the coral reef explainable. Because the diversity and structural complexity were so dramatic, it became overwhelming and I was lost, but this is where the importance of the research experience really shined. What my professor did was to help us break the system down into sub-questions and to think about how we would go about answering each of these smaller sets. We spent time just thinking through what it meant for a hard coral and a soft coral to be in the same space, what were the things we would need to know in order to figure out why, and who was better in what space.

This time spent breaking the system down allowed me to disentangle myself from the overwhelming whole and focus my knowledge on the things we could answer. Then I was able to apply the information I gleaned from my coursework to these smaller question sets and develop meaningful ways to answer them with what I knew being used to inform the experiments we created to explore the unknown questions that are the hallmark of science. Once these questions were developed and a plan was devised to answer them, we set out to do the hard work of collecting the necessary data. One of the surprising things about these experiences that really stuck with me, was the sheer amount of work that must go into answering what are fairly straight-forward questions. Intellectually, developing the questions took a lot more of my brain power and focus than any course work I had done to that point,
but it was a relatively short total time and little physical labor. Collecting the data to answer those
questions, however, took hours of active work each day; diving for hours in the hot sun with a minimum
of 10 other researchers just to gather enough data to make a start on the answers.

More surprising to me, is the amount of time and energy that went into answering the
questions after we left. The trip to Mexico over the last couple of years is really just the beginning of the
process. We then had to spend the rest of the semester and into parts of the each summer taking
the data we collected and trying to make sense of it and explain what we saw to answer the questions
we started with. We spent time condensing numbers, building visuals, and discussing the results to
capture a complete picture of what we were looking at. We tested our original hypotheses and when we
found them to be problematic we created new ones. The investment in time and energy in this phase
dwarfed what we actually did while on site in Mexico. Like a real scientist, we built as deep an
explanation of our data as we could and then we took our explanation to the community of scientists
and asked them to help us improve it. We presented our work at 3 different regional and national
conferences and everywhere we went, real scientists engaged with us in discussions about our data and
the way we were looking at it. Each of these interactions changed how we looked at the data and
changed how we thought about the questions and it was inspiring to talk to scientists outside of our
university who treated us as peers rather than simply as students. I will say that this experience really
solidified my interest in being a biologist, though I will say I’m not sure that I’m still interested in marine
science.

While the transformations that I made as a scientist were important, I think the transformations
I made as a person were significant as well. For this, I need to explain a bit more background. I’m
originally from Wisconsin and I grew up in a small town that was all white (we had one African American
kid in town, he was the adopted son of one of the preachers), so I had little experience with diverse
cultures. In addition, the research team I worked with was composed solely of white people, from the
professor to my fellow undergraduate peers. We had a diversity of thought processes when talking about the data that helped us all think in different ways and that was important, but it was all based on a very similar cultural background. In that space, we were very environmentally conscious and were incensed that people could do things to decimate the marine systems we were interested in. Before doing this research, we studied how many cultures were destroying their reefs in the interests of commercialization and ‘ecotourism’ and I was easily upset about this turn of affairs and really had a view of the local people that was colored by this naïve view.

While collecting data in Mexico, we lived with the local populations, not really in the tourist area of Cozumel. That put me in direct contact with Mexican folk who were trying to raise families, and experience a life, same as I was, though from a different background and economic state. In addition, I had been taking Spanish classes at KSU for the 2 years and I could talk with them, in the cab to and from the research site, in the hotel we used as a base-camp, and in the streets we walked where their houses often had dirt floors and kids played soccer in the dusty streets with dogs that had seen some rough days. In these conversations, I realized that these people weren’t really corporate stooges looking to get rich by raping their precious environment. They were poor people trying to find a way to keep food on the table and live a decent life. Some of them crippled themselves just to earn a living (black coral is a deep-water coral and the free-divers who collect it often end up getting the bends and are forever crippled from the process) and they didn’t see the coral reef as a beautiful natural thing to be preserved, but as a vital resource to support themselves and their families. They did not see themselves as destroying it, but only using it the way they had done since long before I had even known what a coral reef was. Yes, their activity was damaging the reef, but they couldn’t see that and it was easy for me to explain it to them, but their next question was beyond my biology-background to answer: ‘Alright, you don’t want me to collect the coral, what would I do to support my wife and children then?’ There, in that conversation, had with dozens of locals over my 2 trips to Mexico, I came to realize that my
understanding of the world was deeply flawed by my own economic position and that, while I still really wanted to preserve the natural environment, it wasn’t enough for me to simply proclaim the ‘wrongness’ of what they were doing, I had to help them find a different way; if I couldn’t do that, then I had to shut my mouth. This change was dramatic for me and I think it will follow me long after I graduate from KSU and go on to a graduate degree in biology.

My experiences in research at KSU will become the foundation for my career as a biologist. While my course work was essential for trying to make sense of the world around me, it was insufficient for releasing the scientific mind in me. It was the experience I had doing research that transformed me into a committed and excited biologist. It was also these experiences with people far from my native culture that transformed the way I understood the work I was interested in and the responsibilities I had to the society around me. I will complete my biology degree at KSU and move on to a graduate program, ultimately obtaining my Ph.D. in biology, but the experiences doing research at KSU will ground me in the importance of science and keep me strongly invested in ensuring my work is culturally relevant and respectful.

Commented [A7]: This part of the tale really focuses on the personal transformations brought about by the experiences at KSU. This was a deeply personal growth and the student did a really good job of bringing the reader to the why and how of the transformation, detailing the key moments that were a part of the KSU experience that helped them in that transition.

Commented [A8]: And now we have brought all of the HIP experiences at KSU together and wrapped it up in a way that really captures the pieces detailed above. The essay had a beginning, well-reflected details, and now a good end that leaves us really understanding their transformation while at KSU and how it will impact them moving forward.
Example 2

As a KSU student, I have been fortunate enough to have several transformative experiences that have broadened both my thinking and my worldview. These experiences are directly tied to courses that utilized high impact practices (HIPS) and I believe this approach is very valuable to students in terms of their learning and internalizing new knowledge that can be applied in the future.

My transformative experiences occurred in both my HPE senior research project and in my student teaching experience. These experiences occurred in a real world context and helped me to understand and apply my learning to my future career as a physical educator. The HPE senior research project allowed me to participate in undergraduate research and my student teaching experience was a combination internship and capstone. My senior research project involved using heart rate monitors with members of the cross-country team to determine if heart rate training at certain percentages of max heart rate is possible without visual stimuli or confirmation. This experience helped me to learn how to work with others in a research setting as well as apply the knowledge I was gaining through the project. In working with the cross-country team members, I was able to use the results of my study to help them self-regulate their level of cardiorespiratory effort to achieve better results.

Similarly, my student teaching experience afforded me an even more significant opportunity to use the feedback I obtained from my students to adjust my teaching to meet their needs. This ability to assess student progress and adjust my lessons accordingly, often while in the middle of a lesson, will be valuable to me in my profession as a physical education teacher and coach. Making meaning of students’ current skill and knowledge level is critical to planning successful lessons where all students are appropriately engaged at a developmentally appropriate level. I felt reasonably well prepared to start my student teaching experience because of all of the in-school opportunities I had in my courses leading up to student teaching. These “micro teaching” opportunities helped me to become more
comfortable teaching in front of students, and dealing with issues that would arise in these micro
teaching lessons (i.e. student discipline, varying skill levels, lack of appropriate space due to weather
and/or school events, etc.). While I felt reasonably prepared to engage with and teach students at the
beginning of my student teaching, I gained confidence in my teaching, and relating to students, each day
during my student teaching. I now feel confident that I can be a successful teacher in any setting (urban,
suburban, large school, small school, etc.).

One of the greatest challenges I faced in student teaching was developing the ability to
differentiate instruction among my students. Meeting the needs of diverse learners, whether it is
diverse motor skill levels, English language learners, students with special needs, etc. is probably the
greatest challenge I have faced. However, my time at KSU, and with the guidance of my professors, I
have definitely improved in my ability to handle the many various needs of all of my students. I know I
will continue to grow in this area with additional teaching experience, but I also know that I have
improved at meeting student needs during my time at KSU. Without the student teaching internship
experience, I know I would not have improved my teaching skills, nor would I feel as comfortable in
front of students. This experience has transformed the way in which I approach my teaching and
interact with my students.

My undergraduate research project was also enlightening, but in a different way than my
student teaching internship experience. The heart rate regulation experiment that I conducted with the
cross-country team helped me to better understand how to use research, and appropriate research
methods, to conduct an investigation and answer a unique question. One thing that really struck me
during the research project was the importance of telling the team the “why” of the research. While
they were participating because their coach told them they had to, the level of buy-in and interest in the
project increased greatly once I explained to the team why I was conducting this research and the

Commented [A11]: At this point in our essay, this student has done a good job of describing the two experiences and
given us enough detail to really understand what they entailed. They have not, as of yet, really integrated the
experiences into a coherent story, they are still just 2 experiences being described. Again, this is alright, as long as
we bring it all together later in the reflection.

Commented [A12]: The student does a wonderful job of thinking about the challenges inherent in this experience. They have also talked about ways that this experience has prepared them for a career. This would, however, benefit from a deeper reflection on the student’s personal growth
during the experience. How did addressing those challenges make you feel and what do you see yourself doing in the
future to address them? How did this change your understanding of the situation?
question I hoped to answer. I see now that explaining the “why” is important no matter the arena (research, teaching, etc.).

The research project and scientific inquiry process also made me more self-aware of the skills that I have not developed fully and am not as comfortable with as a new teaching professional. I was very confident in my abilities to work with the cross country team with the heart rate telemetry (heart rate monitors) and in instructing them into how to properly wear the monitors during their workouts. I was also confident in my personal use of the heart rate monitors in downloading the data and collecting the data into useable data in Excel for later analysis. Essentially, working with the athletes and the technology came easily to me. The challenging part of this project was analyzing and interpreting the data obtained from the heart rate monitors over the weeks of data collection. I am not as proficient with statistical analysis as I am with working with athletes and engaging the appropriate technology for answering the research question posed.

While participating in my measurement and evaluation class, we manipulated data and conducted analyses on data sets that were already existing. This was helpful in terms of being able to work with data and conduct analyses, but it was very different than analyzing and examining a “real” data set that had to be cleaned up and interpreted to make meaning within the project and my own research question. The knowledge gained from my measurement and evaluation class was very helpful in terms of conducting this research project from start to finish. Although I am not yet completely comfortable with selecting the appropriate analysis to answer the research question, I am confident that I can narrow the analysis options to reasonable procedures that could answer the question. Working on this research project from start to finish showed me, in a way that a class never could, what it is like to conduct research with human subjects. From the IRB process, to obtaining permission of the cross-country coach, to working with the individual athletes, to the data collection, this was a comprehensive study from start to finish. Our examples in the measurement and evaluation class do not allow for the
same start to finish process that this project provided, however, without my coursework in measurement and evaluation (HPE 4252 and HPE 4254) I would not have been able to start, or finish the project at all. Even though I had questions during different phases of the research project, I at least had a solid base of knowledge that allowed me to begin the project and collect the data needed to answer my research question. My most significant questions and need for guidance definitely occurred in the data analysis part of the project.

I know now that I can conduct a research project in my own classroom/gym in order to answer a question that I may have in the future. I am confident enough in my research skills to critically read and understand research in my area (i.e. articles from *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*) as well as conduct a project of my own with my students, or participate in a larger school-wide research project if ever presented with the opportunity.

Both of these experiences (senior research project and student teaching internship) contributed to significant learning and transformation for me while a KSU student. Without the senior research project, I would not have felt nearly as capable about participating in and/or leading a data collection and analysis. In addition, through the project, I was able to see that conducting research is not limited to the actual data collection and attempt to answer a research question. The research process involves much more of a human element than I anticipated and, interaction with the individuals involved in the study is equally as important as quantitative aspect of the study. This is a realization that only occurred through the project and was not realized in my measurement and evaluation courses as we were simply manipulating data and analyses in our coursework.

The student teaching internship was even more impactful than the senior research project because it encompassed every aspect of my future as a physical educator and coach. While mini-teaching units throughout my coursework at KSU helped me to become more comfortable in front of
children (students), and helped me hone my skills as a teacher, nothing prepared me for the day-to-day world of teaching physical education (and coaching) like my student teaching internship. From the seemingly small details of adjusting to the routine of starting and finishing your day at school (bus duty, before school duty, after school duty, clocking in, turning in lesson plans, etc.) to the larger issues of adjusting lessons and instructional units to meet the needs of all learners, the student teaching internship was the single most transformational experience for me during my time at KSU. In fact, I wonder how some of my friends in other majors who do not have any kind of internship experience will fare once they are out in the “real world.” I feel like I have the skills and knowledge necessary to be successful as a first year teacher. Although I know that I still have much to learn, and I will improve my teaching skills over time, I at least feel prepared to accept my first job as a physical educator and make a contribution to my school and to my students. Without the student teaching internship, I cannot imagine how I would possibly be prepared to begin my career as a new teacher.

KSU also ingrained in me that learning is for a lifetime and that at no point in my career should I stop learning. As a teacher, I know that I will be required to complete professional development credits on a yearly basis. While I know that my learning and my improving as a teacher will continue over time, I do believe these two experiences (senior research project and student teaching internship) have fundamentally changed who I am as an education professional. Without these opportunities, I know I would not be nearly as prepared to accept my first job and be successful with my students on day one.
Appendix: high-impact experiences at KSU

- Internships
- Undergraduate Research
- First-Year Seminar
- Learning Communities
- Study Abroad
- Capstone Course
## Appendix: the scoring rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Capstone</strong></th>
<th><strong>Milestones</strong></th>
<th><strong>Benchmark</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Connections to Experience</strong></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connects relevant experience and academic knowledge (CE)</td>
<td>Meaningfully synthesizes connections among experiences outside of the formal classroom (including life experiences and academic experiences such as internships and travel abroad) to deepen understanding of fields of study and to broaden own points of view.</td>
<td>Effectively selects and develops examples of life experiences, drawn from a variety of contexts (e.g., family life, artistic participation, civic involvement, work experience), to illuminate concepts/theories/frameworks of fields of study.</td>
<td>Compares life experiences and academic knowledge to infer differences, as well as similarities, and acknowledge perspectives other than own.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Connections to Discipline</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes connections among disciplines, perspectives (CD)</td>
<td>Creates wholes out of multiple parts (synthesizes) or draws conclusions by combining examples, facts, or theories from more than one field of study or perspective.</td>
<td>Connects examples, facts, or theories from more than one field of study or perspective.</td>
<td>Presents examples, facts, or theories from more than one field of study or perspective.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transfer</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapts and applies skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new professional, personal, and civic situations (T)</td>
<td>Adapts and applies skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations to solve difficult problems or explore issues.</td>
<td>Uses skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to contribute to understanding of problems or issues.</td>
<td>Uses, in a basic way, skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation in a new situation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection and Self-Assessment</td>
<td>Envisions a future self (and possibly makes plans that build on past experiences) that have occurred across multiple and diverse contexts.</td>
<td>Evaluates changes in own learning over time, recognizing complex contextual factors (e.g., works with ambiguity and risk, deals with frustration, considers ethical frameworks).</td>
<td>Articulates strengths and challenges (within specific performances or events) to increase effectiveness in different contexts (through increased self-awareness).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection and Prior Learning</td>
<td>Builds on prior experiences to respond to new and challenging contexts (RP)</td>
<td>Reviews prior learning (past experiences inside and outside of the classroom) in depth to reveal significantly changed perspectives about educational and life experiences, which provide foundation for expanded knowledge, growth, and maturity over time.</td>
<td>Reviews prior learning (past experiences inside and outside of the classroom) in depth, revealing fully clarified meanings or indicating broader perspectives about educational or life events.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>