The D.E.A.L. model is useful for viewing reflection as a means for learning throughout an educational opportunity, as opposed to a task to complete following the experience (Clayton & Ash, 2004).

The three steps of the D.E.A.L. model are detailed below:

1. **Description** of learning experiences that is as objective and comprehensive as possible. Ash and Clayton (2009) suggest that learners be prompted to consider simple but important aspects of an experience, such as who was involved in the experience, where the experience occurred and the details of what happened throughout the experience.

2. **Examination** of learning opportunities with respect to previously identified learning goals or expected outcomes. During this step, learners should be encouraged to personalize the learning experience in order to avoid simply summarizing it (Ash & Clayton, 2004).

3. **Articulation of Learning** involves recognizing the learning experience that has occurred and creating goals intended for future action. These new learning goals are generated to enhance and refine practice moving forward (Ash & Clayton, 2009).

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**Reflection Questions for Students:**

**The D.E.A.L. Model for Critical Reflection**

**Describe:**
- What took place?
- When and where did the experience in question take place?
- Who was and was not present?
- What did you and others do/not do?
- What did you see, hear, etc.?

**Evaluate:**
- In what ways did you succeed or do well?
- In what ways were you challenged?
- How did this experience make me feel (positively and/or negatively)?
- How has your perspective/thoughts changed in light of your experience?

**Articulate Learning:**
- What did you learn?
- How did you learn it?
- Why does it matter?
- What will I do in light of it?

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**Success Story**

**University of Toronto Mississauga**

Critical reflection has long been an important component of WIL programmes in relation to integrating theory and practice and broadening students’ thinking about their experiences and how they may change their approach, perspective or actions in future contexts. Reflective journals provide an opportunity for students to express how they see themselves as young professionals, and the trial and error processes they often engage in within the workplace. One of the most effective models for critical reflective journaling is Ash and Clayton’s D.E.A.L. (Describe, Examine and Articulate Learning) model, which includes articulating learning. The model calls for a structured approach that can be modified even further by applying D.E.A.L. to specific critical incidents in which students are confronted with a challenge and possible change to their thinking. Students’ reflective journals can be used to develop a broader understanding of the impact of the work experience on their learning outcomes, personal growth and professional identity development, relationship building, knowledge transfer, skill building and autonomy (self-directedness), among other things.

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