What is Journaling & Reflecting?

Learning theorists point to the conclusion that practical experience followed by reflection is necessary for completion of the cycle of learning. A journal and an experience/reflection paper are the reflective tools used in this Field Study experience. The following provides a framework for the reflection part of your experience.

Agency:

Describe what agency you are working with. Identify its mission, vision, values, goals, etc. Describe the culture of the organization (dress, level of formality, physical structure of offices and how they are assigned, staff meeting style, the hierarchy, work input in decision-making, values, reward system, etc.).

Describe the purpose of the organization and/or what specific population or social issue it serves.

Describe the agency’s structure and your role in it. What do you do as a volunteer, what do other employees/volunteers do. How does your position and/or the other employees/volunteers contribute to the overall mission of the organization? Comment on your perception of its strengths and weaknesses.

Learning Objectives/Action Plan:

What were your initial learning objectives? Did these change throughout the experience? If so, please describe how. Describe what you had hoped to gain from this experience and how you planed on accomplishing it.

Specify if you learned new skills and knowledge, personal development, specific project development, new responsibilities, career exploration, or major/field exploration.

Please describe the connection to the academic components to your course work, or any hands-on application of knowledge/skills learned in the classroom.

Personal Development:

How did this experience intersect with your major, interest areas, career choice? Describe any specific overlap with academic programs, course experiences, etc.
How did the agency or community benefit from your service? How did you benefit? In what ways did you learn through this service experience—observation, hands on, research, etc. Please describe each of the ways you learned as well as what you learned.

How are you different when you left the service location, compared to when you entered? What have you learned about yourself? What have you learned about a specific community or societal issue? Is there anything you would do differently in the future because of this experience?

Experience Evaluation:

Evaluate your service experience in a summary paragraph. Relate back to your initial expectations and perceptions. Were you able to accomplish what you had hoped to accomplish? Did you learn what you had hoped to learn? Were you able to observe, participate in, or research anything that was valuable to your experience? Any other thoughts, etc?