REAL REFLECTION

REFLECTIVE LEARNING COMMUNITIES (RLC)

A HANDBOOK FOR FACILITATING CRITICAL REFLECTION IN THE CLASSROOM AND BEYOND

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VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY

This handbook is designed to be used by higher education faculty and staff to aid in facilitation of critical reflection by students in both traditional and non-traditional learning environments. This handbook was created for initial use with three Reflective Learning Communities (RLCs) at Virginia Commonwealth University as part of a partnership between the Division of Community Engagement and REAL (Relevant, Experiential, Applied Learning). The learning communities were grouped as Curricular RLC, Co-Curricular RLC, and Medical professional RLC. The materials in this handbook have been adapted from several leading sources, including *Engaging All Partners in Reflection: Designing and Implementing Integrative Reflection Opportunities* by Dr. Kathleen Rice (K.L. Rice Consulting, Oakland, CA), The University of Edinburgh's *Reflection Toolkit* (2018), and Georgetown University Volunteer and Public Service Center's *Facilitating Reflection Manual for Leaders and Educators* (1995), as well as expertise provided from additional reflection resources and scholars (as cited throughout). When using these materials, please make sure to cite accordingly.

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Hall, A. (2019). REAL Reflection Reflective Learning Communities: A Handbook for Facilitating Critical Reflection in the Classroom and Beyond. Virginia Commonwealth University: Richmond, VA.

(VCU DCE FLICKR)

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REFLECTION:

"Reflection is a process of seeking clarity about truth…truth in experience, thought, beliefs, instincts and relationships. Reflection can be accomplished independently or as a collective endeavor. Yet, however done, reflection demands consideration of one's internal state (beliefs, feelings, assumptions) and external circumstances (actions, relationships, power dynamics, obstacles). Reflection also demands a self-honesty and humility that will hold its own against affront from any quarter."

Tony Chambers, Associate Vice President, University of Toronto, and the Kellogg Forum on Higher Education for the Public Good

Reflection can provide an opportunity for transformative learning to emerge from experience. *"Transformative learning is a process of getting beyond mere knowledge acquisition to becoming changed in some meaningful way by what you have learned."* The reflective process provides opportunities to integrate what might be disparate experiences into preparation for life.

Glenn A. Bowen, Director of Service Learning, Western Carolina University

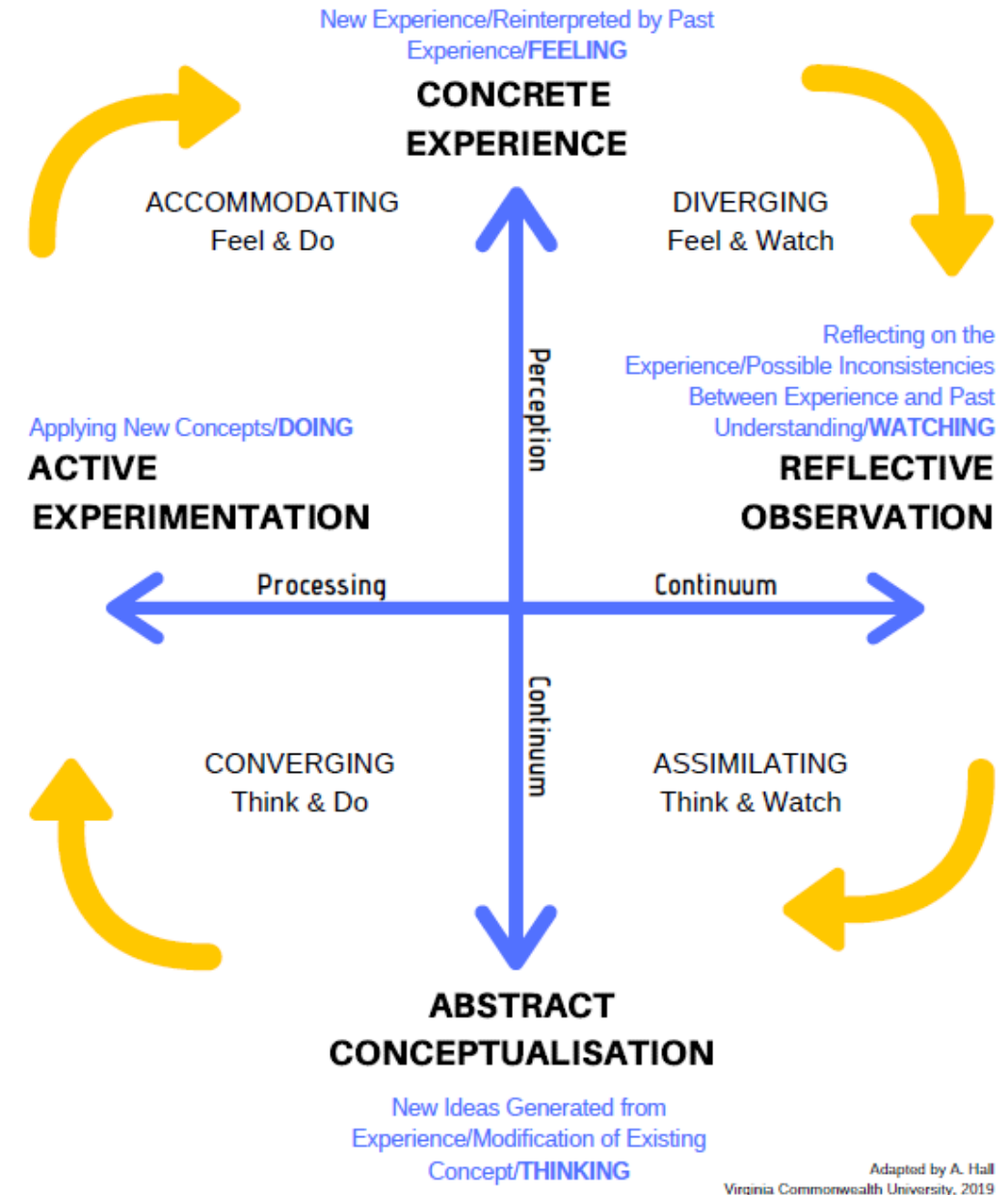*"Each of us guards a gate of change that can only be unlocked from the inside. We cannot open the gate of another, either by argument or by emotional appeal."*

Marilyn Ferguson, Educator and Writer

Paulo Freire advocated for "*reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it…Reflection without action is verbalism, action without reflection is activism.*"

Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1970)

Kolb's Model of Experiential Learning

New Experience/Reinterpreted by Past
Experience/**FEELING**

CONCRETE EXPERIENCE

ACCOMMODATING
Feel & Do

DIVERGING
Feel & Watch

Reflecting on the
Experience/Possible Inconsistencies
Between Experience and Past
Understanding/**WATCHING**

Applying New Concepts/**DOING**

ACTIVE EXPERIMENTATION

REFLECTIVE OBSERVATION

Perception

Processing   Continuum

Continuum

CONVERGING
Think & Do

ASSIMILATING
Think & Watch

ABSTRACT CONCEPTUALISATION

New Ideas Generated from
Experience/Modification of Existing
Concept/**THINKING**

Adapted by A. Hall
Virginia Commonwealth University, 2019

**"Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created
through the transformation of experience"**

(Kolb, 1984, p. 38)

Graphic adapted by A. Hall from: McLeod, S. A. (2017, Oct 24). *Kolb - learning styles*. Retrieved from
https://www.simplypsychology.org/learning-kolb.html

WHAT IS CRITICAL REFLECTION?

As Jack Mezirow (1991) wrote in [Transformative Dimensions of Adult Learning](https://www.gviusa.com/blog/defining-critical-reflection/), "through reflection we see through the habitual way that we have interpreted the experience of everyday life, in order to reassess rationally the implicit claim of validity made by a previously unquestioned meaning scheme or perspective."

Critical reflection contributes to students becoming more conscious about their motivations, and the concept of 'doing no harm' to the communities and partners with which they serve. So how can we deconstruct this broad term to better fit within our methods of learning and teaching?

Below are four key characteristics of reflection that can aid us both in better understanding and facilitating it.

1. Reflection is personal

It primarily relates to the self and is self-learning and self-growth. The process of engaging students in critical reflection is then a process of self-knowledge and questioning. As practitioners, we can use critical reflection to engage our students in a learning process that examines relations of culture, power, hegemony, ideology, and existing institutional or governmental arrangements.

2. Reflection is active

It is experiential learning at its best. As John Dewey (1916) has described, learning must be connected to activity and analysis if it is to truly be considered learning: "mere activity does not constitute experience…experience involves change, but change is a meaningless transition unless it is consciously connected with the return wave of consequences which flow from it." The process of reflection can be practiced through an array of classroom activities that engage and challenge students to expand their own worldview.

3. Reflection is intentional

It is an integrated understanding and intentional analyses of complex processes that will better inform how students engage with life, other people, and other cultures. It is a method of gaining intercultural competence and an understanding of cultural diversity.

4. Reflection is a process

It is a cycle whereby we look at an experience, frame it, and derive meaning from it. Critical thinking is integral to this process and demonstrates student ability to evaluate relevant information and opinions gathered in a systematic, purposeful, and efficient manner.

Critical analysis, **problem-solving**, and **deep interpretation** of this kind will provide students with greater access to leadership capacities as well as transformative knowledge.

Reflection, when practiced through a critical lens, is a tool that will create more engaged students and more meaningful experiences.

BENEFITS of CRITICAL REFLECTION
(K. Rice)

Well-integrated and constructed reflection can result in the following benefits to students, faculty, and community partners:

- Deeper, more sustainable learning of curricular and/or co-curricular content
- Increased consciousness of what is learned
- Expanded capacity to notice and understanding feelings
- Skill development
- Increased understanding of self, others, community, and planet
- Increased capacity for authentic relationships
- Increased quality of community contributions
- Deeper recognition of assets, interests, and needs of self, others and community
- Increased capacity to listen to self and others in new ways
- Ability to hold selves accountable for mistakes
- Forgiveness of self and others for mistakes
- Celebration of successes – ability to move from a deficit approach to an asset approach
- Capacity to see all partners in the process more holistically
- Community teaching is shared with the educational institution
- Faculty teaching is shared with the community
- Curriculum is more relevant
- Deeper capacity for action that results in social justice and personal transformation
- Power can be redistributed when all partners reflect, teach, and learn together

What are some additional benefits of critical reflection?

SKILLS DEVELOPED THROUGH REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

(K. Rice)

SKILLS	GUIDING QUESTION	DESCRIPTION
Knowledge	What do I know?	"Facts" about the site and its programs, the larger social issues, data, the who/what/where/when…
Comprehension	What do I understand?	Why does community address issues in the way they do? Compare/contrast, summarize, explain
Analysis	How can theory help me understand what I see and experience?	Examining my experience in relation to curricular/co-curricular content. How do my experience and the theory, data, etc. inform each other? How are they contradictory? What patterns am I noticing? What are the root causes of the "need" for this service? What inequities are at play?
Application	How can I use this knowledge?	How does this issue impact my life? How does my life impact this issue? How will I concretely use what I have learned?
Synthesis	How do the pieces fit together?	Generalizing. Connecting knowledge from several areas. Looking at issues on the individual, relationship, group and societal/institutional levels
Evaluation	How well did I do it? What can I do now?	Of my own capacity to contribute. What would I do differently next time? If students are asked to identify recommendations for a site, agreement with community partners on this is important. Encourage students to recognize the often limited experience they have had in framing their recommendations
Description	What do I see and hear?	Separating skills in description from skills in analysis and application.
Critical Thinking	How do I question what I think I have learned, and what others say about this issue?	Building the capacity to look at issues from multiple perspectives, and to question. Moving from dichotomous thinking to more complex thinking.
Naming Feelings	What am I feeling and how does it impact my perspective?	Recognizing, acknowledging, naming feelings as a compass for learning.

Career Development	How does this experience shape my career goals?	Examining the role of community in careers. How do these skills transfer to a profession?
Personal Growth	How am I changing as a person?	Exploring how I am different after this experience. How are my relationships different?
Identity Development	How am I becoming clearer about who I am?	How have I become more aware of my values, perspectives, cultural identities…?
Leadership	How can I make a difference?	What leadership skills have I learned and developed?
Social Change	How can I affect change?	What knowledge and tools do I now have to contribute to change?

(VCU School of Education)

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR FOSTERING REFLECTION
EYLER AND GILES 4 C'S OF REFLECTION (1999)

Core Element	Description
Continuous	The reflective process is implemented and maintained continuously before, during, and after learning opportunities. Reflection happens in many locations, in solitude, and with others…
Connected	The learning outcomes of the reflection activities are directly connected to the learning outcomes of the course or activity. Reflection activities allow for "synthesizing action and thought."
Challenging	Learners are challenged to move from surface learning to deeper, critical thinking through the use of thought provoking strategies by the instructor, advisor, student leader, or community facilitator.
Contextualized	Reflection is contextualized when it "corresponds" to the course content, topics, and experience in a meaningful way. *Reflection activities recognize the often short-term context in which students are working, and does not ask them to develop pre-mature solutions to complex challenges.*

Additional Elements added by K. Rice

Mutually Beneficial	Learning partners/co-educators agree on the content and process of reflection activities and assignments. They create reflection activities that mutually benefit the student, the community partner, and the faculty member.
Culturally Relevant/ Multi-Leveled	Reflection activities draw on multiple ways of knowing, learning, and expression. Learning from the head, heart, gut, hands, and body are honored. Students are asked to examine issues on multiple levels: personal, relationship, group/cultural, institutional/societal.
Supportive	Since learning partners may encounter uncomfortable feelings, it is important that they feel they are in a supportive and mutually respectful atmosphere where they can express their opinions, ideas and thoughts, become more aware of the impact of their perspectives on others, hear others' opinions, and be open to challenging their own perspectives.
Modeled by All Partners	Faculty, community partners, and students model, participate in, and benefit from the reflection process.
Internally Focused	Partners reflect on their own cultural identities in relation to each other and the impact of those identities have on their experiences and their perspectives. Participants reflect on the impact of their experience on their view of themselves as community members and as collaborative leaders in creating social change.
Clear	Clear instructions, expectations, guidelines, and criteria for assessment and evaluation are provided.

(VCU H.Hill)

REFLECTION FRAMEWORKS

(A. Hall adapted from K. Rice)

These frameworks can be used as guides for developing reflection questions that can be used in written, oral or artistic/creative activities.

OBJECTIVE	What, So What, Now What? (Borton, 1970; Driscoll, 1994; Rolfe, 2001)	ORID (Spencer, 1989; Stanfield, 2000)	DIGA (Gibbs, 1988)	DEAL (Ash & Clayton, 2004/2009)
COGNITIVE DESCRIPTION	What?	Objective	Describe	Describe
AFFECTIVE EXPRESSION		Reflective	Interpret (Feelings/ Evaluation)	
ANALYSIS	So What?	Interpretive	Generalize (Analysis/ Conclusion)	Examine
APPLICATION	Now What?	Decisional	Apply	Articulate Learning

(VCU DCE FLICKR)

The DEAL Model for Critical Reflection – Describe, Examine, and Articulate Learning

Accessed and adapted from Duke Service-Learning at
https://servicelearning.duke.edu/sites/servicelearning.duke.edu/files/file-attachments/deal-reflection-questions.original.pdf.   The DEAL model was developed by Ash & Clayton (2004, 2009) of North Carolina State University and can be referenced here.

(Ash & Clayton, 2009)
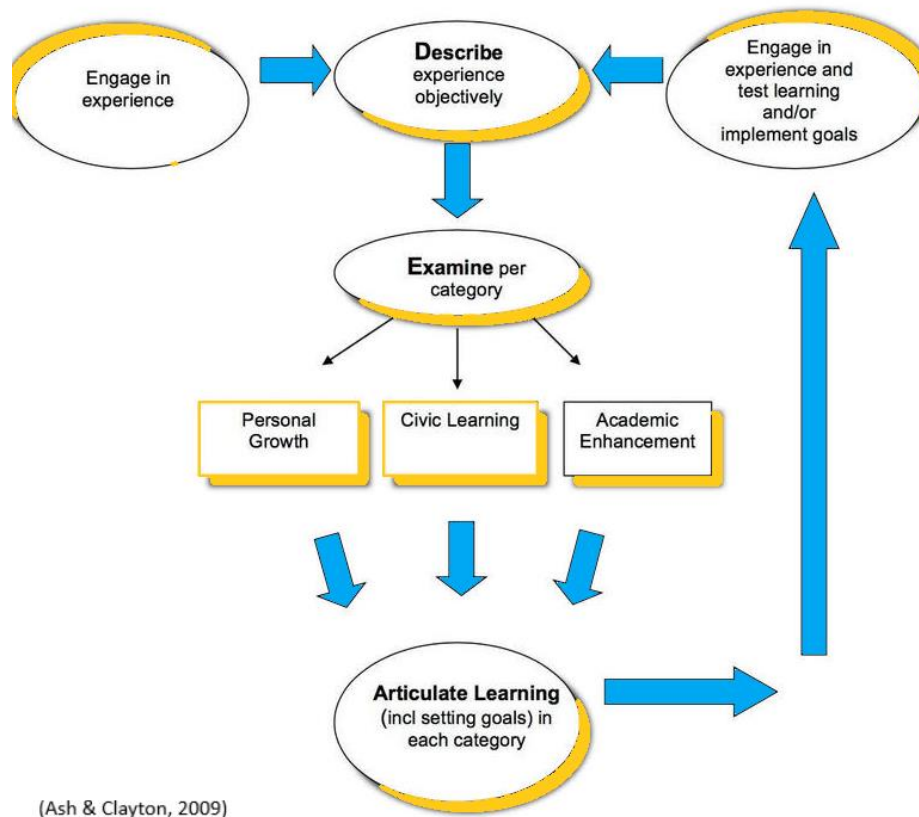
Describe Experience(s) Objectively

Part I: Overview of "big picture" – what have I done since the last reflection session?
Part II: Home in on 2 or 3 key experiences to focus the reflection on - What were the most significant or reflection-worthy experiences?

- Where was I?
- Who else was there?
- When did this experience take place?
- What was said?
- What did I/others do?
- Why were we there? (NOTE: Be careful here. "Why" can be an objective question, as in "we were having this conversation because the Director had scheduled a meeting of the entire group

and had invited both me and Mr. Smith" but it can also open the door to interpretation, as in "we were having this conversation because the Director wanted me and Mr. Smith to advise her")

Assess Progress Since Last Reflection
- What were my goals as articulated at the end of the previous reflection session and/or in my articulated learnings from the previous reflection session? What specific conclusions did I intend to enact or test based on my previous articulated learnings?
- What specific steps did I take in order to attain these goals?
- What obstacles—internal and external—hindered me? What factors made me more effective?
- In what ways did my attempts to attain goals or to enact or test conclusions proceed as expected, based on my earlier understanding, and in what ways was I surprised?
- What do my attempts to enact or test previous conclusions tell me about the validity of those conclusions? In what specific ways is my understanding of those conclusions changing yet again?
- How can I change my behavior or mentality in order to make better progress toward my goals? What specific steps do I need to take in order to continue refining my understanding?

Examine Experience from a Personal Perspective
- How did this experience make me feel (positively and/or negatively)? How did I handle my emotional reactions? Do I believe I should have felt differently than I did?
- What assumptions or expectations did I bring to the situation (including my assumptions about other persons involved) and how did they affect my actions? To what extent did they prove true? If they did not prove true, why was there a discrepancy?
- How have past experiences influenced the manner in which I acted or responded to this situation? Am I comfortable with the influence past experiences has on me?
- What personal strengths / weaknesses of mine did the situation reveal? In what ways did they affect the situation, positively and negatively? What might I do to build on strengths/ overcome weaknesses?
- Why did I, or did I not, experience difficulty working/interacting with other people? What might I do differently next time to minimize such difficulties?
- What personal skills did I draw on in handling this situation? What personal skills would I like to have had in order to have handled it better and how might I develop them?
- How did this situation reveal my own attitudes or biases, toward other people, toward the organization in question, etc.? Do I need to make any changes?

Examine Experience from a Civic Perspective
- What was I / someone else trying to accomplish? In taking the actions I / they did, was the focus on symptoms of problems or causes of problems? Was the focus (symptom or cause) appropriate to the situation? How might I / they focus more on underlying causes in the future?
- What roles did each person / group / organization involved in the situation play and why? What alternative roles could each have played?
- Did I / other individuals act unilaterally or collaboratively and why? Should I / they have worked with others in a different way?
- Did I reinforce or challenge an assumption or social system by the way I acted? How does this experience highlight the relationship between and larger systems?
- How else could I have handled the situation? Identify both the paths of least resistance and the paths of greater resistance. Why did I / others follow the path I / they did?
- What agendas did I and others bring to the situation? Are these agendas appropriate? Are they understandable? Are they shared? How are these agendas related to larger social or cultural

issues?

- In what ways did power differentials emerge in this experience? What are the sources of power in this situation and who benefits and is harmed? In what ways might any dependencies be eliminated?
- What privilege did I/others bring to this situation? What are the sources of such privilege? How am I, or others, disempowered by lack of privilege?
- How did leadership emerge in this situation, on my part and/or on the part of others?
- What is in the interest of the common good in this situation? In what ways is the individual good (mine or that of other people) linked to and/or contrary to the common good? What tradeoffs between them are involved?
- In what way did any other tradeoffs (long-term / short-term; justice / efficiency; etc.) emerge in this situation? Were the trade-offs made appropriate or inappropriate and why?
- What changes does this experience suggest are needed: within my group, within the organization, within our society more generally? How can these changes be accomplished: with individual action or collective action / working within the system or challenging the system / etc.?
- How does this experience help me to better understand the organization's vision, mission, and goals? What does it reveal to me about the relationship between the organization and those it serves? What does it suggest about how this relationship might be improved?

Examine Experience from an Academic Perspective

- What specific elements of our course materials relate to this experience?
- How was I able to apply a skill, perspective, or concept related to our academic material?
- What similarities and differences are there between the perspective on the situation offered by our academic material, and the situation as it in fact unfolded?
- How does this experience enhance my knowledge of a specific reading, theory, or concept? Does it challenge or reinforce my prior understanding?
- Based on analysis of the experience in light of course material, is the material (or my prior understanding of it) adequate? What reasons might there be for any differences or inadequacies? What questions should I ask to put myself in a better position to judge the adequacy of the material?

Articulate Learning

1) What did I learn?

2) How, specifically, did I learn it?

3) Why does this learning matter, why is it important?

4) In what ways will I use this learning

5) What goals shall I set in accordance with what I have learned in order to improve myself and / or the quality of my learning and / or the quality of my future?

ORID Model for Critical Reflection – Objective, Reflective, Interpretive, Decisional

Spencer, L. (1989). Winning Through Participation. Institute of Cultural Affairs.
Stanfield, B. (2000). The Art of Focused Conversation. New Society Publishers.

Accessed and adapted from: Beever, G. (2017). The ORID Method (Objective, Reflective, Interpretive and Decisional). *AgriFutures Australia.* https://extensionaus.com.au/extension-practice/the-orid-method-objective-reflective-interpretive-and-decisional/

Objective - This first sets the scene. Provides the context. Establishes the facts and introduces any data sources that are behind the subject. It provides the basis for all parties to "get on the same page". Using the method you ask questions that relate to establishing people's knowledge and understanding of the subject area in question.

Helpful Questions

- Imagine you were a video camera recording what you saw happening that day. What actions, words, phrases, objects, and scenes are recorded on your tape? Let's get everything out so we all have a full picture of what happened.
- What has happened since?

Reflective - During this phase participants are helped to identify or context their own situation to the subject, objectives or learning outcomes in questions. It gets out their reactions and feelings towards the subject. Providing key questions, analogies, practical examples or benchmarks are useful in helping participants reflect. By having first established the facts and understanding of the situation by objective questioning; reflexive questioning commences a learning journey in relation to the topic.

Helpful Questions:

- What shocked you?
- What was most frightening?
- What made you want to escape?
- How else did you find yourself reacting? Were you disappointed? Angry? Sad?
- Any place you wanted to cheer?

Interpretive - In this phase assistance is provided with additional information or the opportunity for further questioning that helps participants to learn further about the subject and identify what it is that may be important to them in respect to it. Using the context provided in the objective and reflexive phase, the interpretive phase is used to delve deeper into the subject area and develop a greater understanding.

Helpful Questions:

- What are all the things you think lead up to this event?

- What might have been some other contributing factors?
- What impact does it have on you?
- How are you different now?
- How might we be different a year from now?
- What can we learn from this?

Decisional - This is the final stage that helps draw conclusions and documents what future actions may be taken by people; given the discussion that has already taken place in the first three phases.
Helpful Questions:
- What can we do to prevent this from happening again?
- Who else do you need to see or talk with?
- What can we do to help each other now?
- What can we do to symbolize how we changed or what we have learned?

As the ORID process is based on Kolb's experiential learning model, the suggested elements to check your process against are:

Review/Reflect – To what degree are the participants able to identify their current level of ability in respect to the subject area and/or how well are the participants able to identify the importance of the content to themselves and their own circumstances?
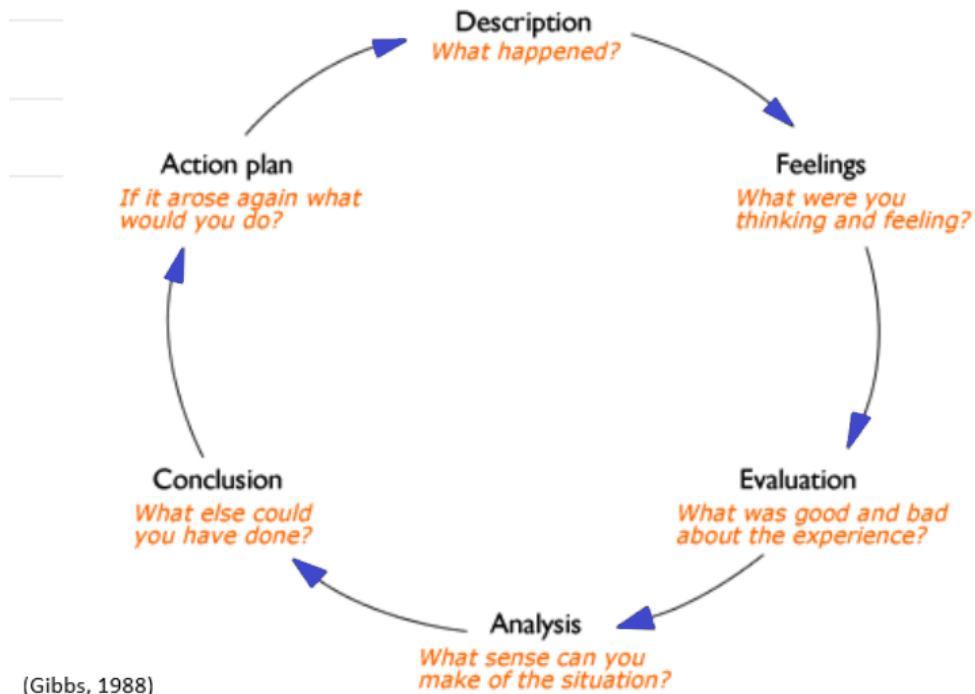
Context/Interpret/Make sense of – To what degree are the participants able to interpret the information you provide against their own personal situation(s)?

Plan – To what degree are the participants able to identify what they should do that may be important to them, in relation to the objectives you set for the activity?

Act – As a result of the use of ORID, to what degree are the participants able to identify actions that will assist them in achieving the outcomes set for the activity or subject area?

DIGA Model for Critical Reflection – Describe, Interpret, Generalize, Apply

Gibbs, G (1988). Learning by Doing: A guide to teaching and learning methods. Further Education Unit. Oxford Polytechnic: Oxford. Accessed and Adapted from University of Edinburgh, Reflection Toolkit, https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/reflectors-toolkit/reflecting-on-experience/gibbs-reflective-cycle

(Gibbs, 1988)
Accessed from Oxford Brookes University, 2019

Description of the experience

Feelings and thoughts about the experience

Interpret

Evaluation of the experience, both good and bad

Analysis to make sense of the situation

Generalize

Conclusion about what you learned and what you could have done differently

Action plan for how you would deal with similar situations in the future, or general changes you might find appropriate.

This model is a good way to work through an experience. This can be either a stand-alone experience or a situation you go through frequently, for example meetings with a team you have to collaborate with. Gibbs originally advocated its use in repeated situations, but the stages and principles apply equally well for single experiences too. If done with a stand-alone experience, the action plan may become more general and look at how you can apply your conclusions in the future.

Description

Here you have a chance to describe the situation in detail. The main points to include here concern what happened. Your feelings and conclusions will come later.

Helpful Questions:

- What happened?
- When and where did it happen?
- Who was present?
- What did you and the other people do?
- What was the outcome of the situation?
- Why were you there?
- What did you want to happen?

Interpret

I.   Feelings

Here you can explore any feelings or thoughts that you had during the experience and how they may have impacted the experience.

- What were you feeling during the situation?
- What were you feeling before and after the situation?
- What do you think other people were feeling about the situation?
- What do you think other people feel about the situation now?
- What were you thinking during the situation?
- What do you think about the situation now?

II.   Evaluation

Here you have a chance to evaluate what worked and what didn't work in the situation. Try to be as objective and honest as possible. To get the most out of your reflection focus on both the positive and the negative aspects of the situation, even if it was primarily one or the other.

Helpful Questions:

- What was good and bad about the experience?
- What went well?
- What didn't go so well?
- What did you and other people contribute to the situation (positively or negatively)?

Generalize

I.   Analysis

The analysis step is where you have a chance to make sense of what happened. Up until now you have focused on details around what happened in the situation. Now you have a chance to extract meaning from it. You want to target the different aspects that went well or poorly and ask yourself why. If you are looking to include academic literature, this is the natural place to include it.

Helpful Questions:

- Why did things go well?
- Why didn't it go well?
- What sense can I make of the situation?
- What knowledge – my own or others (for example academic literature) can help me understand the situation?

II.   Conclusions

In this section you can make conclusions about what happened. This is where you summarize your learning and highlight what changes to your actions could improve the outcome in the future. It should be a natural response to the previous sections.

Helpful Questions:

- What did I learn from this situation?
- How could this have been a more positive situation for everyone involved?
- What skills do I need to develop for me to handle a situation like this better?
- What else could I have done?

Action

At this step you plan for what you would do differently in a similar or related situation in the future. It can also be extremely helpful to think about how you will help yourself to act differently – such that you don't only plan what you will do differently, but also how you will make sure it happens. Sometimes just the realization is enough, but other times reminders might be helpful.

Helpful Questions:

- If I had to do the same thing again, what would I do differently?
- How will I develop the required skills I need?
- How can I make sure that I can act differently next time?

What?, So What?, Now What? Model for Critical Reflection

Borton. T. (1970). Reach Touch and Teach: Student Concerns and Process Education. McGraw-Hill, New York.

Driscoll J. (1994). Reflective practice for practice. Senior Nurse, 13, 47 -50.

Rolfe, G., Freshwater, D., Jasper, M. (2001). Critical reflection in nursing and the helping professions: a user's guide. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Accessed and Adapted from University of Edinburgh, Reflection Toolkit, https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection/reflectors-toolkit/reflecting-on-experience/reflective-support

What?
Patterns do you notice now?
Patterns do you want?

So What?
Do these patterns mean to our collective work?

Now What?
Are YOU going to do?
Are WE going to do?

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The simplicity of this model is both a great strength and a possible limitation. It is very easy to remember and can be applied to any field or experience. However, there is a possibility that by just answering the three main questions the reflection does not achieve a meaningful and critical depth.

To ensure that you have depth and breadth it can be helpful to work through the question prompts outlined below for each stage. You don't have to answer all of them, but they can guide you to what sort of things make sense to include in that stage. You might have others questions that work better for you.

What? - The experience of the situation

Helpful Questions:

What ...

- is the context?
- is the problem/situation/difficulty/reason for being stuck/reason for success?
- was I/we/others trying to achieve?
- was the outcome of the situation?
- was my role in the situation?
- was the role of other people in the situation (if others were involved)?
- feelings did the situation evoke in me? And in others (to the extent you know)?
- were the consequences for me? And for others?
- was good/bad about the experience?

So what? - The implications of the situation

You might want to supplement your own knowledge and thoughts with other people's ideas, references, and theories. This can be to show what helped shape your thoughts and further explore them. This comes down to how much you are looking to formalize your reflections. This can especially be important if the reflection is assessed.

Helpful Questions:

So what...

- does this tell me/teach me/imply about the situation/my attitude/my practice/the problem?
- was going through my mind in the situation?
- did I base my decisions/actions on?
- other information/theories/models/literature can I use to help understand the situation?
- could I have done differently to get a more desirable outcome?
- is my new understanding of the situation?
- does this experience tell me about the way I work?

Now what? - The action plan

Ensure that you are concrete in your action plan and not only saying generic comments such as 'I will do things differently/better'. The more concrete you can be regarding what you want to do, how you will do it, and how you will remind yourself, the easier and more likely it will be to implement.

Helpful Questions:

Now what...

- do I need to do in the future to do better/fix a similar situation/stop being stuck?
- might be the consequences of this new action?
- considerations do I need about me/others/the situation to make sure this plan is successful?
- do I need to do to ensure that I will follow my plan?
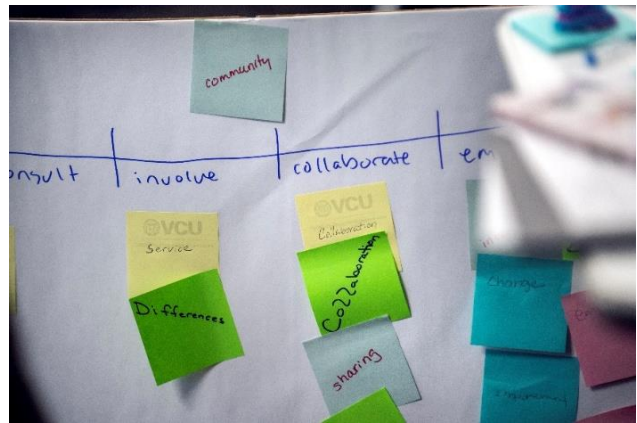
(VCU DCE FLICKR)

LEARNING CATEGORIES AND OBJECTIVES

The following tables accessed from: Ash, S. and Clayton, P. (2009). Generating, deepening, and documenting learning: The power of critical reflection in applied learning. Journal of Applied Learning, 1: 25-48.

Table 1: Bloom's Taxonomy and Associated Learning Behaviors

Bloom's Classification	Examples of Learning-Related Behaviors
Knowledge	Identify, define, order
Comprehension	Explain describe, restate
Application	Apply, solve, choose
Analysis	Analyze, compare, contrast
Synthesis	Synthesize, develop, propose
Evaluation	Evaluate, assess, judge, critique

Table 2: Using Bloom's Taxonomy to Move from General Categories of Learning to Specific Learning Goals to Assessable Learning Objectives (service-learning example)

	Category: Personal Growth	Category: Civic Learning	Category: Academic Enhancement
Learning Objective Level	Learning Goal: Students will consider ways to refine their skills	Learning Goal: Students will become more effective change agents	Learning Goal: Students will understand the Stages of Change model
LO 1: Identify	Identify a particular skill of yours that you need to develop further.	Identify the collective objectives at stake and the approach you or others took toward meeting them.	Identify the Stages of Change model.
LO 2: Explain	Explain the skill so that someone who does not know you can understand it.	Explain the objectives and the approach you and / or others took toward meeting them so that someone not involved can understand.	Explain the Stages of Change model so that someone not in the course can understand it.
LO 3: Apply	Apply your understanding of this skill in the context of your service-learning experience and (as applicable) in other areas of your life.	Apply your understanding of the approach in the context of the objectives at stake.	Apply your understanding of the Stages of Change model in the context of the experience.
LO 4: Analyze	Analyze the sources of this skill in your life.	Analyze the approach in light of alternatives.	Analyze the similarities and differences between the Stages of Change model as presented in the text and as it emerged in the community.
LO 5: Synthesize	Develop the steps necessary to improve upon this skill in the short term, in your service-learning activities and (as applicable) in other areas of your life.	Develop the steps necessary to make any needed improvements in your / their approaches (and/or in the objectives) in the short term.	Develop an enhanced understanding of the Stages of Change model in light of the experience.
LO 6: Evaluate	Evaluate your strategies for refining your skills over the long term.	Evaluate your / their approaches in terms of the prospects for long-term, sustainable, and/or systemic change.	Evaluate the completeness of your understanding of the Stages of Change model and of its use in the community.

Table 3: Questions to Guide the Design of Reflection Strategies and Mechanisms

Reflection Strategies

When and how often will reflection occur?
     Before, during, and after the experience?
     Will students reflect iteratively such that reflection builds on itself over time?

Where will reflection occur?   In or outside the classroom?
Who will facilitate and/or particpate in reflection?   Instructors, members of the community or workplace, peers?

How will feedback be provided and/or reflection products graded?
     What is the relationship between amount of feedback and level of expected outcomes?
     What is the relationship between the reflection products and the overall grade?

Reflection Mechanisms
Toward what *specific learning goals and objectives* will the particular activity be guided?
What *medium* will be used for the activity: written assignments, worksheets, spectrum activities, photographs, videos, games, drawings, online forums, in-class discussion, out-of-class reflection sessions, concept maps, etc.?
What *prompts* will be used to guide the activity?

What *products* will demonstrate the learning the activity generates: essays, PowerPoint or poster presentations, oral exams, etc.?
     Note that in a critical reflection process, the products used to demonstrate learning are in
     many cases the same as the medium used to generate it

What *criteria* will be used to assess the learning so demonstrated ?

Table 4: Characteristics of High Quality Reflection

	High Quality Reflection ...
Eyler et al. (1996)	is continuous (ongoing)
	is connected (with assignments and activities related to and building on one another and including explicit integration with learning goals and academic material)
	is challenging (including in terms of the expectation that students take responsibility for their own learning)
	is contextualized (to the community setting and broader public issues and to the students' own particular roles)
Bringle & Hatcher (1999)	links experience to learning
	is guided
	occurs regularly
	involves feedback to the learner to enhance the learning
	helps clarify values
Zlotkowski & Clayton (2005)	is oriented toward specific learning objectives
	is integrative
	is assessed in terms of critical thinking
	includes goal setting
	generates change in the learner's life

Table 5: Critical Thinking Standards

Critical Thinking Standard	Description	Associated Questions to Check your Thinking
Integration	Service experience clearly related to the learning.	• Have I clearly shown the connection between my experience and my learning?
Clarity	Expands on ideas, express ideas in another way, provides examples or illustrations where appropriate.	• Did I give an example? • Is it clear what I mean by this? • Could I elaborate further?
Accuracy	All statements are factually correct and/or supported with evidence.	• How do I know this? • Is this true? • How could I check on this or verify it?
Precision	Statements contain specific information.	• Can I be more specific? • Have I provided sufficient detail?
Relevance	All statements are relevant to the question at hand; all statements connect to the central point.	• How does this relate to the issue being discussed? • How does this help us/me deal with the issue being discussed?
Depth	Explains the reasons behind conclusions and anticipates and answers the questions that the reasoning raises and/or acknowledges the complexity of the issue.	• Why is this so? • What are some of the complexities here? • What would it take for this to happen? • Would this be easy to do?
Breadth	Considers alternative points of view or how someone else might have interpreted the situation.	• Would this look the same from the perspective of....? • Is there another way to interpret what this means?
Logic	The line of reasoning makes sense and follows from the facts and/or what has been said.	• Does what I said at the beginning fit with what I concluded at the end? • Do my conclusions match the evidence that I have presented?
Significance	The conclusions or goals represent a (the) major issue raised by the reflection on experience.	• Is this the most important issue to focus on? • Is this most significant problem to consider?
Fairness	Other points of view are represented with integrity (without bias or distortion).	• Have I represented this viewpoint in such a way that the person who holds it would agree with my characterization?

Modified source: Paul, R.P. & Elder, L. 2001. The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking. The Foundation for Critical Thinking. Santa Rosa, CA. www.criticalthinking.org

FACILITATING REFLECTION

What is Facilitation?

(VCU DCE FLICKR)

The Difference between leading and facilitating

Understanding facilitation begins with an awareness of the *difference between facilitating and leading*. It has been said that leadership is something you do to a group, while facilitation is something you do *with* a group.

Although many leaders can (and should) be effective facilitators, the facilitator differs from a leader in that the former is cognizant about the use of power, authority, or control and places limitations on uses of it. A facilitator should be "a neutral mediator whose job is to provide information and accommodate the exchange of dialogue among ... participants" (from Catalyst).

Facilitators assist groups as they work together toward achieving group goals, and in most instances *do not interject their own personal opinions or agenda*. By expressing their opinions to the group, facilitators risk discouraging others with differing opinions from speaking. They remain alert to group dynamics and encourage challenging reflection while maintaining respect and safety within the group. Although facilitators may help guide a discussion, they also recognize and *foster the groups own ability to lead itself*. Thus unlike authoritative leaders, good facilitators relinquish control to the group and promote open, democratic dialogue among group members.

Effective reflection requires that facilitators demonstrate an open-minded attitude, communicate appropriately, manage group dynamics, incorporate diversity, and provide closure. Developing skill in each of these areas involves learning and becoming comfortable with numerous facilitation practices. An explanation of practices pertaining to each area follows. Also refer to the "Activities" section of this manual for ideas about promoting certain behaviors in the group.

Attitude

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens
can change the world: indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.
-- Margaret Mead, Anthropologist

* **Be honest:** Effective facilitation requires that he facilitator be honest with him/herself and with the group. This includes being honest about the limits of one's own abilities and knowledge. If the facilitator doesn't know the answer to the group's questions, s/he should admit it and work on finding the answer. Honest facilitators gain the trust of the group and model the importance of honesty from all participants. However, facilitators should be careful not to stray from preventing a neutral stance while maintaining honesty.

* **Managing dual roles:** There is some disagreement among expert, facilitators as to whether a facilitator should always maintain a neutral stance, particularly if the facilitator is, an active member of the group and a decision making is taking place. A skilled facilitator will calculate the potential impact of his or her interjections into the group and determine if it will result in a misuse of power. Sometimes, a skilled facilitator will state that s/he wants to suspend his or her role as facilitator for the sake of making an opinion or perspective heard. These instances should be handled with extreme caution and some forethought.

* **The facilitator is not an expert:** Facilitators must keep in mind that their role in the reflection is to moderate and guide communication, not make personal contributions to it, or push their own agenda. By controlling the group, facilitators threaten the open sharing of thoughts and feelings, and may close themselves off from the group's feedback. Instead facilitators should remain flexible and responsive to the group, and encourage evaluation of the, process. The facilitator's neutrality throughout the process is crucial. An effective way for facilitators to avoid voicing their personal opinion is to reflect question back to the group. For example, when asked whether s/he supports the death penalty, a facilitator may say "The death penalty is, a controversial topic. What do you think are the main issues for and against it?" By responding in this way the facilitator has remained neutral and encouraged further reflection by the group.

* **Everyone can learn:** Facilitators should view reflection as a learning opportunity and should communicate this attitude to the group. This means that facilitators themselves remain open to learning from others, and that everyone's contributions are treated as credible and educational. This serves to validate group members and helps to avoid arguments between them.

Other qualities of an open-minded attitude include:

- Somewhat informal
- Be empathetic
- Maintain a sense of humor
- Stay interested in group discussion
- Be, real, direct, and genuine

Communication

If I do not speak in a language that can be understood there is
little chance for a dialogue.
-- bell hooks, Writer and Educator

* Set ground rules: Ground rules establish a foundation upon which the group's communication will occur. They help to create a safe environment in which participants can communicate openly, without fear of being criticized by others. Ground rules that have been arrive at by all members are the most useful and can be repeated if tension rises during reflection. Sample ground rules follow.

- Be honest
- Listen, even if you disagree
- Avoid prejudicial comments
- Criticize the idea, not the person
- Pass if you're not comfortable
- Use "I" statements
- Don't interrupt
- Be brief
- Everything is confidential
- Agree to disagree

* Use "vibes watchers": In order to monitor ground rules the facilitator may choose to identify one or more "vibes watchers". The vibes watcher observes the reflection and takes not of group dynamics that are potentially problematic (for example, one person dominating the discussion, a participant's ideas being attacked, etc.). S/he can interrupt the discussion if the situation is particularly problematic, and explain, in a non-accusatory tone, what s/he observed. The facilitator can decide if all participants should be encouraged to voice such concerns during the session. At the conclusion of the session the facilitator should ask for a report from the vibes watcher, so that future session may be improved. Participants should not be forced to vibes watchers, but should volunteer. Ideally, all members of the group will become sensitive to group dynamics, and, in a sense, monitor themselves.

* Promote "active listening": Staying quiet and considering others remarks can be challenging when controversial topics are discussed, but is crucial to respectful communication. Facilitators should discourage participants from professing their opinions without considering and responding to others' comments. Instead, facilitators should model communication in the form of a dialogue, in which participants listen and respond to each other. The type of communication used (whether "polite conversation" is favored over informal or slang conversation) can very, and should be determined according to such factors as the group's cultural background, familiarity with each other, goals for reflection, etc.

* Encourage participation by all: Facilitators should clearly communicate that reflection is an egalitarian process in which everyone has a right to speak, or to choose not to speak. Group members who have not spoken should be encouraged to do so, if they wish. This can be accomplished by creating a space for more introverted group members to speak. This can be accomplished by stating something like, "Let's give an opportunity to hear from some people who haven't spoken yet..."

* Use "stacking": In order to promote full participation, the facilitator should guide the allocation of speaking time by "stacking" (or "queuing"). This involves the facilitator identifying and placing in some order those individuals who wish to speak. One example of this technique is to list the names of the four people who have raised their hands, invite them to speak in order, and then indicate that you will recognize others who wish to speak after the four people have finished. Another technique is to simply give a nod to a person who wants to speak, acknowledging that they have been noticed and will be called upon soon. Additional strategies for inclusion can be found in the "Activities" section of this manual.

Other practices for effective communication include:

DO:

- use open-ended questions (not "Should the welfare system be reformed?", but "What aspects of the welfare system would you change?")
- ask for specifics and examples
- paraphrase and summarize ("So what you're concerned about is who defines what's best for the se communities?)
- acknowledge contributions
- redirect questions to group ("Rehabilitation may not be occurring in our prisons, should that be the goal of the criminal justice system?")
- be creative
- take some risks by posing provocative questions

DON'T:

- refute people's ideas
- put people on the spot
- downplay thoughts, feelings
- force people to speak

Group Dynamics

Each of us guards a gate of change that can only be unlocked from the inside. We cannot open the gate of another, either by argument or by emotional appeal.
-- Marilyn Ferguson, Educator and Writer

* Create a safe space: The key to open and honest reflection is an environment in which participants feel safe and comfortable. In order for group members to express their thoughts and opinions they must feel that they can do so without fear of attack or condemnation. It is the facilitator's job to create such an environment, to monitor participant's comfort levels, and to take the necessary steps to maintain safety. This includes understanding and planning for individual differences in needs, abilities, fears, and apprehensions. Participants who feel safe are more likely to

make honest and genuine contributions and to feel camaraderie and respect towards other group members.

* Manage disagreements: It has been said that "whatever resists will persist." Facilitators must be adept at recognizing tension building in the group, and respond to it immediately. Among the most useful strategies is to repeat the ground rules established by the group, including a reminder that criticism should pertain to ideas not to people. In addition, facilitators should not permit any disrespect or insults and should clarify misinformation. It is important that negative behavior be handled immediately so that participants do not get the impression that the behavior is condoned by the facilitator.

* Promote equality: As indicated, effective reflection is not designed around the leadership of one person. Equality of participants should be communicated and modeled by the facilitator. Again, the facilitator must be an alert observer, identifying signs of a developing hierarchy, or of divisive factions within the group. S/he should not permit arguing up against any group member(s), and should not take sides in any developing debate. Such situations can be counteracted by recognizing all members, and encouraging their participation equally.

* Be mindful of power, and who has it: All groups have opinion leaders or people who most others look up to. Often, these opinion leaders will set the tone for a discussion, thereby limiting active involvement of the more reserved members. Identify who these opinion leaders are and if it appears as though their power and authority is dominating the discussion, ask them, politely, to entertain other opinions.

Other keys to managing group dynamics include:

- know the group
- keep the group on track
- don't avoid topics
- reflect responsibility back on group
- be prepared for disagreements
- encourage challenging issues

* Build in diversity: In order to appropriately handle diversity issues in reflection sessions, facilitators must begin by recognizing their own attitudes, stereotypes, and expectations and must open their minds to understanding the limits these prejudices place on their perspective. The facilitator will be the example to which the group looks, and should therefore model the values of multiculturalism. It is important that diversity be integrated throughout the reflection programming, rather than compartmentalized into special multicultural segments.

Monitoring communication for expressions of bias requires the facilitators attention and sensitivity. Facilitators should be aware that some language and behavior has questionable, different or offensive meaning to some people, and they should encourage them to share their perspectives and information. Specifically, facilitators should watch out for statements or situations that generalize groups, or that identify race, sex, age unnecessarily (for example, just as it is inappropriate to say "Bob Dole, White presidential candidate," it is also inappropriate to say "Colin Powell, Black

political hopeful"). When qualifiers are used that reinforce stereotypes by suggesting exceptions to the rule, facilitators should ask for clarification. For example when a participant describes his/her experience working with a "respectable gay resident" of a shelter, the facilitator should ask the participant why he/she included the word "respectable." Is this a statement about gay people's respectability? About shelter residents? Is this based on his/her experience with specific populations of one shelter, or a generalization about all such people? Helping participants identify the assumptions inherent in their statements fosters greater understanding and sensitivity.

Most importantly, while expressions of prejudice should be interrupted, the person who spoke should not be publicly attacked. Placing guilt on the speaker is likely to increase the tension and stifle further exploration of the topic. The Building Bridges Coalition suggests the following appropriate ways to respond:

- *Express empathy and compassion*. (example: "You must have been disappointed about not getting the job you thought you were qualified for.")
- *Ask for more information*. (example: "Please tell me more about why you think a person in a wheel chair can't do that job?")
- *Paraphrase the feelings you hear expressed*. (example: "it sounds like you aren't conformable working around gay people.")
- *Give information* (new information may alter their attitude). (example: "Did you know that Ms. Jones has a college degree?")

It is important that responses to prejudice to be nonjudgmental and non-confrontation, and that you express genuine concern and interest.

* Closure and Evaluation: As a challenging and meaningful reflection session draws to an end, participants may feel that their intended objectives have not been met, that questions have not all been answered, or that a plan of action has not been finalized. Nonetheless, the group needs to recognize that progress has been made and that he process must continue. It is the job of the facilitator to initiate this sense of resolution, and to invite feedback so that the process may foster as it continues. Suggestions for accomplishing this include:

- Request a closing statement from each participant about what they learned, what they plant to do next, etc.
- Review the session with the group, recognizing participants; contributions and the necessity of further reflection.
- Provide participants with resources, such as written material and upcoming events, to encourage their continued involvement.
- Request written and verbal evaluations so that participants may voice those concerns and ideas that have been left unsaid, and so that facilitators may understand the strengths and weaknesses of their skills.

As with any skill, the ability to facilitate effectively will develop through experience, feedback, observation, and reflection. Using the tools described in this and future sections of this manual you are equipped to begin refining your facilitation skills.

Trouble Shooting for Facilitators

Given the non-authoritative and flexible nature of facilitation, it is not unusual for situations to arise that can compromise the effectiveness of the reflection. Facilitators need to stay alert to these possibilities, and be prepared to deal with them. Following are suggestions for handling such situations, (taken from <u>Catalyst</u>):

1. **One person dominates the discussion or continually interrupts it.**
   Make it clear that you want input from everyone: "Can I hear from someone that hasn't spoken yet?" "I've noticed that no women have said anything about this issue. Would any of the women like to say something about this?"
   Use activities that require everyone's participation, i.e., gathering questions and ideas. If a person consistently talks for long periods of time, without singling out that person specify that you would like everyone to be brief.
   If someone continually interrupts, don't become defensive or ignore the person, instead, acknowledge the value of their input. Point out that in the interest of the group, interruptions should be kept to a minimum. Offer to speak to them at length at the break or after the session.
   If someone keeps their hand in the air while others are talking, explain that when you hand is up for you mind is processing what you will say so that you are not listening to the person talking. Keep track of people who wish to speak by "stacking" (verbally list names of people who have raise their hands, indicating the order in which people will speak).

2. **Several people refuse to talk or participate.**
   If some people refuse to participate in the large group, you might try dividing the group into pairs, threes, or fours. People who will not speak up in front of the full group will sometimes feel more comfortable sharing in a small group.
   Distribute index cards and ask participants to respond to a question on the card. This is more comfortable for those who are shy in groups; you can shuffle the cards and have each person read someone else's response. In this way, everyone participates, but no one has to know who wrote what.

3. **The group becomes distracted and loses its focuses.**
   In refocusing a group it sometimes means interrupting someone or interrupting a two-way argument that is going nowhere. Although you may be hesitant about this, remind the participants of the original topic and put the tangent on hold, at least until the first topic is resolved.

4. **An offensive comment (e.g., pertaining to race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.) from a participant evokes angry reaction or shocked silence from the group.**
   If anyone makes an offensive comment, expect conflict. Your job is to control the processing of what happened and allow the workshop to continue. You can ask people to vent, but without argument. (refer to the previous section on diversity for specific suggestions.)

5. **Someone asks you if you're prejudiced, against who, and tries to test you.**
   The best response is honesty. Acknowledging that you - like everyone else - have learned prejudice and are working against it, will establish respect and lack of pretense in the group.

6. **Someone verbally attacks your leadership and completely throws you off.**
   Usually they are very upset and are to blame. DO NOT TAKE THE ATTACK PERSONALLY. Explain your rationale. Discuss it with the person privately during a break. If you actually erred, apologize and continue.

7. **Someone presents inaccurate information or strays away from the focus of discussion.**
   Allow participants to point this out and/or reject the comment. You should invite other participants to correct the misinformation; if they don't, correct it yourself. If you don't know the answer, acknowledge and commit to looking into it. Don't leave the group with any misinformation.

8. **Group participant states: "It's all hopeless anyway; you can't change people's attitudes. Why even try?"**
   Acknowledge their feelings. Point out the hopelessness, without buying into it yourself. Point out the hopefulness of the training itself, and that you have seen attitudes change and grow by doing this work. Don't get into a debate about whether the work makes a difference - you wouldn't be doing it if it didn't.

9. **You find yourself disliking a participant.**
   Remember that you are a human being and entitled to your own personal likes and dislikes. However, you must also keep in mind that as a facilitator, your neutrality is essential to the success of a workshop. Acknowledge your feelings to yourself, and move on.

It is helpful to practice responding to challenging situations by role playing them with others. As you gain experience as a facilitator you will discover additional responses to these and other situations and will develop your own style.

(VCU DCE FLICKR)

CIVIL DISCOURSE & SAFE SPACES
(A. Hall, M. Rackett, E. Burke-Brown)

Civil discourse is engagement in discourse intended to enhance understanding. In *Social Construction in Context*, Gergen (2001) describes civil discourse as "the language of dispassionate objectivity", and suggests that it requires respect of the other participants, such as the reader. It neither diminishes the other's moral worth, nor questions their good judgment; it avoids hostility, direct antagonism, or excessive persuasion; it requires modesty and an appreciation for the other participant's experiences.

LISTENING Leads to Civil Discourse

Competitive/Combative Listening
- Listener may be more interested in promoting their point of view than in considering the speaker's thoughts.
- Listener looks for breaks in conversation to deliver their own point of view
- **Listener may only be pretending to pay attention to speaker while actually formulating what to say next.**

Passive/Attentive Listening
- Listener is sincerely interested in both hearing and understanding the speaker's message.
- Listener, however, fails to take any action (i.e., does not verify to the speaker all that has been told), and therefore the listening is passive.

Active/Reflective Listening
- Listener is genuinely interested in the speaker's message.
- Listener wants to know what the speaker thinks, how the speaker feels, and what the speaker wants.
- Listener actively confirms with the speaker that he/she has understood before reacting to the speaker's message.
- Listener confirms back to the speaker both the meaning and the emotional content of the speaker's message.

7 KEY ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS

1. Be attentive.
2. Ask open-ended questions.
3. Ask probing questions.
4. Request clarification.
5. Paraphrase.
6. Be attuned to and reflect feelings.
7. Summarize.

Center for Creative Leadership

What are some ways you promote civil discourse with students in the classroom, the field, etc?

MOVING BEYOND THE DEBATE

Holman, Devane, & Cady (2007), *The Change Handbook*

Dialogue and Deliberation	Debate
Finding common ground is the goal	Winning is the goal
Participants listen to increase understanding and find meaning	Participants listen to find flaws
Participants are open to being wrong, and open to change	Participants are determined to be right
Participant's point of view is enlarged and possibly changed	Participant's point of view is affirmed
The atmosphere is one of safety; facilitators propose, get agreement on, and enforce clear ground rules to enhance safety and promote respectful exchange	The atmosphere is threatening; attacks and interruptions are expected by participants and are usually permitted by moderators
Assumptions are revealed for reevaluation	Assumptions are defended as truth
There is the possibility of reaching a better solution than any existing solutions	One's own positions are defended as the best solution; other solutions are excluded, and new solutions are not considered
Hold that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they can put them into a workable solution	Holds that there is a right answer and that someone has it

Table 1. Dialogue and Deliberation Versus Debate

Cultivating Dialogue: Five tips for creating civil discourse in an era of polarization (Charles C. Camosy)

- Humility
- Solidarity with our conversation partner
- Avoiding binary thinking
- Avoiding fence-building and dismissive words and phrases
- Leading with what you are "for", instead of what you are against

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TIPS FOR GETTING STARTED WITH REFLECTION

In order to be most effective, facilitators should be purposeful in planning the reflection component of the learning experience.

1. **Setting Goals:** Reflection has many possible outcomes, including increased awareness of social issues, values clarification, and even program evaluation. Before initiating reflection the facilitator must consider which outcomes are possible and desirable. Reflection goals will be related to the group's goals, and possibly to the type of service in which students are participating. In addition, goals should be considered for participants as well as for the group as a whole. The goals can be broad, rather than specific, allowing for their further development throughout reflection. The facilitator should be flexible, recognizing that reflection evolves and goals may change.

2. **Knowing Your Audience:** Consider who will be participating in the reflection. Are they new to service? If not, what is the extent of their previous experience? How long have they been at college? What academic subjects are they most interested in? What strengths do they bring to the reflection sessions? What might be potential tension points? Be prepared to encourage each individual's participation and to recognize their contributions. Choose activities and approaches that foster this.

3. **Making Time:** The reflection component should be built into the service experience, rather than being an "extra" or "add-on" activity. The program or course's literature should indicate this and it should be clearly articulated to service participants. The amount of time allotted for reflection will depend, in part, on the issues that are being addressed (for example, racism) and the intensity of the service experience (for example, alternative spring break programs should schedule daily reflection sessions). Make certain that participants are aware of the time responsibilities for reflection and that the sessions are schedule at convenient times for participants.

4. **Choosing a Method:** The form of reflection that you choose will depend not only on the goals and issue previously identified, but also on the location and time for the session and the number for people involved. Sample methods include pot luck dinners, journals, discussions, and group activities. Outside speakers can also be useful, but should not exceed 50% of the total reflection time (Morton, 1989).
    When choosing methods for reflection be certain to keep the following points in mind:

    - Be creative and include a variety of activities. Reflection should be appropriate for different learning styles, and should be enjoyable for the participants.

- Choose activities in which participants will be comfortable expressing themselves and will feel safe doing so. Group activities should also promote cohesion while allowing for diverse opinions. This is accomplished not only by the activity that is chosen, but by the way in which that activity is facilitated.

5. **Resources:** Facilitators should identify other resources pertaining to service and reflection that can provide information and support. This may include people on campus, in the community and in national service organizations, as well as relevant materials such as literature, research, and activity guides.

6. **Skills:** Reflection programming is only as successful as its facilitation. Facilitators, whether students, staff, or faculty, should be trained in proper facilitation techniques in order to create an atmosphere that is safe yet challenging, and in which all participants can be involved. Facilitators should be knowledgeable of group dynamics and able to respond appropriately to conflicts during reflection. In addition, facilitators should be familiar with the experience on which the reflection is based and with the issues being addressed. Facilitators can call upon other resources if their knowledge of the issues is limited.

7. **Evaluation:** The reflection process should be evaluated by participants periodically throughout its duration, and at its conclusion. This allows facilitators to understand what is most beneficial about the reflection sessions and to make modifications when necessary. In addition, by evaluating the reflection sessions, students consider what they have learned through reflection, thereby enhancing the value of reflection.

Other points to remember:

* **Demonstrate the importance of reflection:** Emphasize the value of reflection by making it a regularly scheduled part of the learning experience. Make sure that everyone participates, including group leaders and others who were in attendance (faculty, available community members, etc.) in situations in which facilitators should not engage in the reflection (for example, when they are guiding the discussion), they should reflect in some other way, such as by journaling. The importance of reflection can also be demonstrated by including it in literature and presentations about the group's activities.

* **Capitalize on "teachable moments":** Be prepared to facilitate reflection when situations arise involving significant issues or experiences (for example, death of a shelter resident at a service site placement). This involves training in facilitation and familiarity with the resources available on a variety of topics. Naturally it helps the facilitator to have experience with the situation, or to otherwise be accessible to the group in order to learn about it.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER IN DESIGNING CRITICAL REFLECTION ACTIVITIES

(K. Rice)

FACTORS	QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER (For the Facilitator)
Who are you?	• What are your strengths, challenges, skills, and comfort level for facilitating reflection? • What is your knowledge of the curricular or co-curricular content you want students to learn? • What is your understanding of the community context and experience students are having? • How does social conditioning related to your cultural identities (age, class, disabilities, gender, language, race, religious affiliation, sexual identity) influence your teaching, facilitation and reflection styles? • What is your paradigm of the faculty/student affairs professional role (as knower, as learner, teacher, student/lifelong learner, partner…)? • What do YOU want to learn from the reflection process (about students, about the community, about yourself?)?
Nature of Community Partnership (Learning Stakeholders/Co-Educators)	• Are students in your class working with the same community partner or different partners? • What is the nature of the students' work with the community (what are they doing, how much time are they working with the organization)? • What stage are they in with their partnership (e.g. Forming, Norming, Storming, Performing…)? • Is anything in particular happening at the site, on campus, in the neighborhood, state, nation, world…
Learning Outcomes	• How can reflection help students reach course learning outcomes?

Goals for Each Reflection Activity	What do you want to accomplish with a reflection activity? For example, do you want them to: • **Identify** lessons learned from past experience that they can draw from as they prepare for this community experience? • **Explore** how their community experience illuminates or challenges curricular or co-curricular content? • **Build skills** (e.g. communication, analysis, questioning)? • **Describe** how they applied academic concepts o their work in the community? • **Examine** civic, social justice, leadership, or social responsibility applications for their community work? • **Increase their awareness** of their own perspectives and world view?
Who are the students?	• What are their individual and collective strengths and challenges? • Where are they developmentally (cognitive, identity, moral development, etc.)? • What are their learning styles? • Who are they as cultural beings (age, class, disability status, ethnicity, gender, language, national identity, race, sexual identity, etc.), and where are they in their identity development? • How do they feel about the service experience? What is their past experience with service, service learning, or community engagement? • What kinds of activities do they have the capacity to engage in?
Timing	• Would this reflection activity be used before, during, or after engaging in service? • How much time can you devote to the activity?
Methods	• Verbal/Small Group/Large Group Discussion • Artistic/Creative • Written • Structured/Unstructured • Simulations • Case Studies
Location	• In the classroom • In the community • Other locations
With whom?	• Alone • In pairs, in small groups • Large group/Full class/Full student organization • With peers, community partners, with faculty?

Assessment Strategy	• Who assesses (self, peer, community partner/community member, faculty, student affairs professional) the learning the students demonstrate through reflection? • What are the criteria? • What role does grading play? • How will you provide feedback to the student that both supports and challenges them?

REFLECTION METHODS/STRATEGIES
(K. Rice)

WRITTEN	*ORAL*

• Journals (not the same as a log)
  – Free form or structured/directed
  -Individual or team
  – Critical Incident (event that changed your perspective, describe, analyze, explain your role and impact on you)
  – Key-phrase
  – Double entry (Description and feelings/interpretations/links to readings)
  – 3 Part (Description, Analysis, Application)
  – Highlighted entries (highlight course related content)
  – Dialogue (student-faculty; student-community partner; student-student, uses prompts)
 • Letters
 • Editorials
 • Diagrams
 • Personal Web pages/Blogs
 • Powerpoint/CD's/Short Movies
 • Guide for future service learners
 • Essays
 • Free-write/1 minute papers
 • Electronic reflection/Discussion boards
 • Student-written questions
 • Reflective Narratives
 • Create a legacy for service learners who come after you
 • Case studies
	• Directed and non-directed discussion
	 • Bring in a quote from a reading on a card, exchange, read and respond
	 • Fictitious journal entry that helps students identify how to make journals effective
	 • Pair sharing
	 • Small groups
	 • Case studies
	 • Audio Recordings
	 • Storytelling/self in third person
	 • Book Clubs
	 • Peer Interviews
	 • Focus Groups
	 • Poetry Slam
	 • Fish Bowls (2 concentric circles – inside circle discusses an issue, outside circle replaces someone on inside to join conversation or outside circle can be given different topic to discuss when they are on the inside).
	 • Presentations
	 • Mini-teach sessions/Directed Reading – show how class content relates to community experience
	 • Conference with faculty
	 • Teach content to peers or others
	 • Group brainstorm (e.g. community assets, then identify categories or themes)
	 • Role plays (recommendation is to have student play themselves, not take on someone else's role as stereotypes can, often unintentionally, shape the role they play)

CREATIVE
*Draw/Paint   *Sculpture (paper, clay…) *Collage   *Song list
*Video   *Music   *Dance/Movement   *Group Skits
*Scrapbooks   *Create a game show *Web pages, computer generated images…
*Thought and feeling "bubbles" (like in a comic strip, to give voice to thoughts and feelings)

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Adapted from: Reflection in Service-Learning Classes. University of Minnesota: Center for Community-Engaged Learning. http://www.servicelearning.umn.edu/info/reflection.html by Dr. Amanda Hall for Virginia Commonwealth University, Office of Service-Learning 2018.

- **Journals:** Writing in journals is widely used to promote reflection. They're most meaningful when instructors pose key questions for analysis.
- **Ethnographies:** Students capture their community/learning experience through field notes.
- **Case Studies:** Students analyze an organizational issue and write a case study that identifies a decision that needs to be made.
- **Multimedia Class Presentations:** Students create a video or photo documentary on the community/learning experience.
- **Theory Application Papers:** Students select a major theory covered in the course and analyze its application to the experience in the community.
- **Agency Analysis Papers:** Students identify organizational structure, culture and mission.
- **Presentations to Community Organizations:** Students present work to community organization staff, board members, and participants.
- **Speakers:** Invite community members or organization staff to present in class on their issue area.
- **Group Discussion:** Through guided discussion questions, have students critically think about their service experiences.
- **Community Events:** Identify community events that students can attend to learn more about issues.
- **Mapping:** Create a visual map that shows how the learning experience connects to larger issues at the state/national/global level.
- **Videos/Photography:** View a video or documentary to elicit discussion about critical issues that relate to their service experiences OR have students use the SHOWED method of photo elicitation to foster critical reflection and/or discussion around the interpretation of a photo relating to some aspect of their service/learning experience (tangible or abstract).
- **Letters-to-the Editor:** Students write a letter-to-the-editor or to government officials that address issues important to the community where they are going to school/working/serving.
- **Creative Projects:** Students make a collage or write a poem or song to express an experience. *In a digital world, the sky is the limit with this one!!!
- **Blog:** Create a course blog where students can post comments on their experiences.
- **Reflective Reading:** Find articles, poems, stories or songs that relate to the service/learning students are doing and have students create discussion questions.

REFLECTION STATIONS – ACTIVITY EXAMPLES

(K. Rice)

Provide instructions and supplies at each station. Students spend about 10 minutes at each station then rotate. Another option is to give them a set amount of time and invite them to visit as many or as few stations as they want/can. Ask them to share the reflections they want to, in small groups (important they know they can keep some reflections private if they choose). If the class or group is small, you can invite students to share one reflection with the whole class if they wish.

CREATIVE ASSETS STATION

Station Supplies: art supplies such as clay, felt, scissors, glue, color pencils or markers, stickers.

Identify one asset your service experience helped you discover you have. Draw or make a sculpture to symbolize this asset and its value to your community. OR for pre-service reflection – identify one strength you hope to offer to the community, create something that represents that strength.

MOVIES, BOOKS, MUSIC STATION

Station Supplies: Paper, pens, laptop with internet access and I-Tunes to people can look up lyrics, song titles, etc.

Identify a movie, song, or book title that you think describes thing you are learning from the community. Write a description of why that represents your learning.

METAPHORS OF CHANGE STATION

Station Supplies: A pile of objects such as office supplies, kitchen utensils, etc., paper and pens.

Choose one item from this pile of objects that represents a turning point for you in your community experience where you were different afterwards. Write a description of the turning point, your role in the experience, and how you were different as a result.

POST CARD STATION

Station Supplies: Post cards of inspiration such as those from syracuseculturalworkers.com/.

Choose a post card and write to someone at your community site who has taught you something valuable. Describe what they taught you, how that has impacted you, and how you will use what you learned. It is your choice whether you mail the post card or just write it for this reflection activity.

LEARNING FLOW CHART

Station Supplies: Paper, pens, paper cuts outs of various shapes such as circles, squares, arrows, etc.

Design a flow chart that links key things you learned from the classroom, to key experiences you had in the community and vice versa.

LETTER WRITING STATION

Station Supplies: Paper, pens.

Reflecting on some of the root causes you became aware of this semester, are there some things you think someone needs to be more aware of? Who would you like to make a strategic request of? Is there a governmental official, funder, community member, or campus administrator you want to make a request of? What do you more people need to be aware of, how has your experience taught you this, and why from the perspective of the person you are writing to, could it be in their best interest to address this issue? Draft a letter you may or may not eventually send.

GRAFFITI WALL

Station Supplies: Sticky wall, dry erase board or wall with chart paper taped up, markers with different areas identified "I'd like to see more of…" "I'd like to see less of…"

What is one thing you would like to see more of in your community? What is one thing you would like to see less of?

CREATIVE QUOTABLE QUOTES

Station Supplies: art supplies such as clay, felt, scissors, glue, color pencils or markers, stickers.

Identify 1-3 key thoughts, experiences, or feelings from this course you want to hold onto. Recall phrases or quotes from things you have read, or things you or others have said. Use the arts and crafts supplies to create something to keep as a reminder of those key learnings you want to retain.

PHOTOGRAPH AND GREETING CARD ACTIVITY

Station Supplies: Assortment of diverse photographs and cards. Paper and pens.

Select a picture or greeting card that reflects the core or essence of the work you are doing with the community and why you are doing it. Jot some of your thoughts and feelings down about your work and how this picture reflects them. Bring the card and your reflective writing back to the group.

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http://www.compact.org/disciplines/reflection/

Facilitating Reflection: A Manual for Leaders and Educators.
http://www.uvm.edu/~dewey/reflection_manual/

Reflection Toolkit. The University of Edinburgh. https://www.ed.ac.uk/reflection