

Leading Reflection

An Overview and Techniques

The Bonner Community Engagement Curriculum

BWBR Description: *Bonner Curriculum workshop teaches participants how to lead service-based reflection, building their facilitation and project management skills.*

Overview: This workshop provides an overview to participants about reflection and its function, approach, and philosophy. By providing a framework and model, it teaches participants a way to incorporate reflection into any kind of activity, be it service, activism, organizing, etc. It also covers an array of facilitation tips, tools, methods, and activities for reflection.

Category: Reflection; communication and facilitation; service; advocacy

Level: Suitable for students at levels of project coordination or emerging leadership



**geared for
site leaders
or project
coordinator
training**

**Recommended
Bonner Sequence:**

This training is recommended for Bonner students during the junior year, especially in conjunction with project coordinator training or roles. It helps prepare students to effectively lead reflection incorporated into service projects. It is also effective for seniors who may be involved in capstone-type projects on campus or within the community.

Learning Outcomes:

- Support participants to develop reflection and critical thinking skills
- Help participants connect the importance of reflection to their service and community engagement and its quality
- Provide participants with an opportunity to engage reflection, and debrief in a way that explains a theoretical framework and model

Materials:

- Flip Chart
- Markers
- Attached handouts

How to Prepare:

Familiarize yourself with the trainer guide. Come up with your own examples for your presentation and/or interactive pieces. Identify which methods and tools you want to illustrate through modeling. Make handouts and flip charts.

Brief Outline:

The outline for a 90-minute workshop, good for part of site leader or project coordinator training, has the following parts:

1) Warm-up Activity	suggested time 10 minutes
2) What is Reflection	suggested time 10 minutes
3) Reflection Theories	suggested time 10 minutes
4) Principles of Reflection	suggested time 10 minutes
5) Facilitation Tools for Reflection	suggested time 20 minutes
6) Methods of Reflection	suggested time 10 minutes
7) Group Brainstorm/Application	suggested time 10 minutes
8) Wrap Up	suggested time 10 minutes

Part 1) Warm Up Activity

Suggested time 10 minutes

Divide the group into two smaller groups. Give each of the groups a paper (from attachments) with either the A or B description (not both).

Tell the participants to review the descriptions and write down responses to:

- 1) Was the day described an effective service day? Why or why not?
- 2) Make a list of the things happened or didn't happen, in terms of orientation, education, and reflection, that contributed to how the day went?
- 3) How do you think volunteers felt about the day's experience? What will they likely take away?

Group A

Your team is painting two classrooms at the local school. Your group arrives and the principal, who is acting as the site coordinator and project leader, cannot be found. A teacher has stepped in and she seems flustered and distracted. The student team leader seems more interested in her cell phone than letting volunteers know what to do. There are a few cans of paint and some tools – brushes, drop cloths, masking tape – but not enough to go around for the volunteers. People are eager to get to work and without an orientation they dive in. Since people are new, they don't know each other so they mainly stick to their cliques. There is one soft-spoken man that no one knows; he seems like a hard worker trying to clean up any messes that are being made, so people leave him alone. The preparation work is done shabbily. Volunteers fail to resolve how to use the drop cloths, and paint spatters on the classroom floors. They work around the few buckets in the room, which are catching rainwater from a leaky ceiling. Some of the teenage students show up and a few of the volunteers, lacking any direction, assume these students are not where they are supposed to be and don't make any introductions. They end of leaving in frustration. People keep working though, and somehow the rooms get finished. The clean up, however, is almost a disaster. Not only is there paint to clean off the floor, but the windows weren't taped and now working with some razors to remove the stuff is needed. Finally, the principal shows up towards the end of the day. He apologizes, explaining that he had been called away due to an accident and emergency involving some students. He asks how the day has gone, grimacing a bit at the volunteers scraping paint from the windows and floors. The student leader finally facilitates a group game with some introductions, the group learns that no one except the soft-spoken man lives in the neighborhood, who is actually a parent volunteering as part of the school's parental involvement initiative. The game mostly turns into a series of private jokes. Finally, the group breaks. On the way back to campus on the bus, people talk in pairs about how happy they are they didn't go to a school in such disrepair. "What was the point," one person asks, "of painting a room with a leaky ceiling?" This brings on a longer conversation about how service is such a band-aid effort, and so uninspiring.

Group B

Your team is painting two classrooms at the local school. Your group arrives to learn that the principal, who is acting as the site coordinator and project leader, has been called away due to an accident and emergency with a few students. A teacher has stepped in and while she seems flustered and distracted by the news, she talks about the history of the school, which is a charter with a more holistic approach to education. Students are involved in service within the school, volunteers learn, and a few may stop by to help. In addition, parents are called on to be involved as well, through volunteerism and even policy making initiatives. It's a non-profit, under-funded, but the school has already shown some great promise in its first year, according to tests and assessment. The student team leader knows that she'll need to step up to assist in the principal's absence, especially with managing the project. She asks questions about the school's student body, the neighborhood, and the funding. From the teacher's answers, the group gets a sense that their work, while just a drop in the bucket, will make a big difference to sustaining the morale of the students and teachers. There are a few cans of paint and some tools – brushes, drop cloths, masking tape – but not enough to go around for the volunteers. People are eager to get to work and the student leader harnesses that energy by getting the team to talk first about their plan of attack, given the tool shortage. The team decides to divide up for half-an-hour while some find scrap newsprint to serve as drop cloths and others paint the windows. As people begin painting, the student leader notices that since people are new, they don't know each other so they mainly stick to their cliques. She interjects a fun game to mix things up. Through that, the group learns that the soft-spoken man following along is a parent and a hard worker volunteering with the school. While he doesn't speak English well, one of the volunteers actually speaks his language, Chinese, and they begin to bond. The preparation work is done well, tearing the drop cloths and supplementing them with newsprint and the windows are taped. Concerned about the few buckets in the room, which are catching rainwater from a leaky ceiling, the volunteers talk about connections they have to some hardware stores and getting some of their parents and others to come back and help with the ceilings. Some of the teenage students show up and the volunteers, excited, make some introductions and talk more about the school and the students' lives as they work. Learning that one of the student is a mural artist, volunteers encourage him to do some extra touches in the detail. Finally, the principal shows up towards the end of the day. He apologizes and looks around at the brilliant rooms, smiling. He asks how the day has gone, and volunteers respond with excitement about what they have learned about the school and hope their contribution is meaningful. The principal inspires the volunteers with a story of how the residents of the area are working hard to keep the school open, going to board and county meetings, holding fundraisers, and trying to persuade officials about its importance. The student leader facilitates a reflection activity and when the group learns that no one except the soft-spoken man lives in the neighborhood, the Chinese-speaking volunteer helps translate the man's thoughts about why this school is so important to the neighborhood. Volunteers feel a sense of pride to be a part of it. Finally, the group breaks. On the way back to campus on the bus, people talk in pairs about how happy they are to

have make a small difference and how much they want to figure out how to come back, fix the ceiling, and get more involved with the students and parents.

Part 2) What is Reflection?

Suggested time 10 minutes

Start by providing a definition:

REFLECTION: The process by which participants mentally and emotionally synthesize direct service and the learning components (orientation, education and training) OR a chance to think clearly about what you are doing and about the experience you are having

Ask, "Why is reflection an important part of service?"

Try to have participants explore the connection between reflection and high quality community service or service learning. For example, reflection helps people grapple with how their work is making an impact (or not). Reflection helps service and service learning to not merely be a "band aid" and is not just a curriculum-based event. Reflection is not an add-on to your community service project; it is essential. Anyone can facilitate reflection, including participating students and/or volunteers. And reflection can be informal. It can be just a discussion or it can be a planned activity.

Part 3) Reflection Theories

Suggested time 10 minutes

Give out the handout showing the five phases of the Experiential Learning Cycle.

Explain: The Experiential Learning Cycle consists of five major areas:

- **Experiencing**

- The activity phase**

- This is when group members gain a common experience, such as through doing a service project together. In the context of that work, learning happens, but IF THE PROCESS STOPS HERE LONG-LASTING LEARNING MAY NOT OCCUR!

- **Sharing**

- Exchanging reactions and observations**

- This is when learners share what happened and how they experience it. In this part, observations are shared, including how things felt, sounded, looked, and so on. In the context of sharing about service, participants may share stories or observations about what they did, interactions they had, and how those interactions affected them.

- **Processing**

- What happened and WHY did it happen**

- This is when learners try to make sense of or process what they experienced, what happened, and why did it (or does it) happen. In the context of service, for example, a participant who works at a homeless shelter may begin to process observations and questions about the nature and cause of homelessness, or what types of services seem most useful.

- **Generalizing**

- Relating experiences to everyday life**

- This is when learners begin to connect their experiences to everyday life, or to sift through their own mental models or constructions of the world around them. They may begin to generate insights about an issue, responses to the questions they raised through experience and observation.

- **Applying**

- Using experiences in everyday life**

- This is when learners begin to apply their experiences and insights into new actions and endeavors. They can be guided by asking, how will you use what you learned?

Then present Kolb's Model of Reflection, which is one of the most practical and memorable frameworks a person engaged in reflection can use in an ongoing way. It consists of only three parts:

- **What?**

- The Descriptive phase**

- **So What?**

- Interpretive and emotive phase**

- **Now What?**

The Active/Applying phase

Interactive piece:

When explaining these frameworks, try to draw out examples from your own experience or that of the group members. If the participants are all part of one type of program, try out the framework and model of reflection, using a relevant recent experience. If not, you may want to draw on an example experience, perhaps using a case study or scenario.

Part 4) Principles of Reflection

Suggested time 10 minutes

In this part, you want to cover some basic principles about reflection. These principles represent the best practices for reflection as part of service and service-learning. They can be presented as the 4 C's:

Continuous

- Reflection should be an ongoing part of the service performed
- This allows participants to continue seeing the world in new ways
- This fosters a commitment to long-term reflective action and a growing awareness that may lead to more complex service, activism, and social change efforts

Connected

- Reflection should be connected to the other quality components: orientation, training and education
- Used to illustrate (connect) theories to real life
- Fosters more effective service and more effective learning

Challenging

- Individuals ask and answer questions or statements which may be unfamiliar or uncomfortable
- This forces participants to think in new ways and question their perceptions of events and issues

Contextualized

- Reflection is a purposeful way to connect thought and action
- Reflection activities should be appropriate for the setting (level of formality)

Interactive piece:

Have participants think about their own service work, activism, or service learning and whether the reflection they are doing meets these 4 C's. Have them generate ideas of ways that reflection can be conducted to meet the 4C's. Have participants share in pairs or in the group.

Part 5) Facilitation Rules for Reflection

Suggested time 20 minutes

In this section, you want to focus on facilitation guidelines for reflection.

Distribute the two handouts: *Cooperative Learning Roles* and *Facilitating Reflection Tips*:

First, review the cooperative learning roles:

Cooperative learning has many different roles for team members during group activities. Suggestion: In groups of four, one person should take both the timekeeper and observer role. In groups of three, another person should take both the recorder and reporter roles. Make sure to assume a different role each time you work in a cooperative learning group. Group members should take turns, so everyone gets a chance to experience each role.

- **Facilitator** - the person responsible for organizing the reflection and work of the group, and being sure the group stays on task.
- **Recorder** - the person who takes notes, writes on newsprint as the group brainstorms, and/or prepares the newsprint.
- **Reporter** - the person who shares with other teams the work or conclusions of the team.
- **Timekeeper** - the person who assures that the team is able to devote appropriate time to each element of reflection/assigned task and complete all its tasks within the allotted time; this role is especially useful when the team has a tight deadline.
- **Observer** - the person who watches the interaction of the group members and reports on difficulties or successes in group interaction.

Then, present some DON'Ts for facilitating reflection (and in general), asking people why they think these tips make sense (or don't if they disagree):

- ☒ Downplaying people's ideas
- ☒ Pushing personal agendas and opinions as the "right" answer or opinion about an experience
- ☒ Dominating the group or doing all the talking
- ☒ Saying umm, ahhh
- ☒ Reading from a manuscript
- ☒ Telling inappropriate or offensive stories
- ☒ Allowing people to bully others in the group into adopting their point of view
- ☒ Taking a stance with one section of the group
- ☒ Telling too much about your personal experiences and life: keep a healthy balance- you are seen as the leader in the room
- ☒ Assuming the demographics, opinions, or perspectives of your group

Then, present these basic tips:

- Establish Group Norms (such as with the roles)
- Watch the Time
- Validate Everyone's Opinions
- Be Challenging
- Be Neutral

Finally, explain some samples of ways that facilitation tools can be used to move through various parts of the cycle or model. You could model one or more depending on time and identifying a single example focus:

- **Yarn Toss:** Use a ball of yarn that is passed as people "weave a web" of their reflections
- **Post-Its:** Have people post questions they encounter in their minds as they process observations; then sort through and group questions, and use them for discussion
- **Ball Game:** Use a ball or token to move discussion around, combining with provocative questions

Part 6) Methods of Reflection

Suggested time 10 minutes

In this section, you want to give some additional resources about methods of reflection. (If you have longer, you can explore and try these out, but likely not in an hour training). You may want to have people "draw" one out of a hat to try coming up with an idea for how to use it.

First, present the different types of methods, such as reading, writing, and talking. Give examples of each type. Consider presenting the following, honing in on a few:

- **Reading**
Using articles or books as a foundation for discussion or journaling
Compare actual experience to written paper
- **Point/Counterpoint**
Participants read articles with conflicting positions or perspectives on issues related to their service. They then contrast the underlying assumptions and discuss.

Writing

- **Letters Home**
Students draft two letters - one before the project and one after
The first letter explains their expectations for the project as well as helps them reflect on their motivation to do service
In the second letter participants reflect on their achievements and how their attitudes and understanding has changed
- **Group Journals and Personal Journals**
Structured
Students are asked to respond to questions such as:
What happened today?
What did you do?
What were the effects of what you did?
How do you feel about that?
How does what you are observing relate to other parts of life/the world?

Applied theories
Draw on other discourses or texts:
Theories of conflict
Communication
Gender
Learning
Organizational behavior

Varied Questions

What are your first impressions?

What is different than you expected?

What have you accomplished?

Free Form Journals

Reflection through Letters

Letter to Self (What, So What, Now What)

Letter to Congressman etc.

Artistic Reflection

Community of Ideas Mural

Artistic Journal

Song Lyrics

Poetry Round Robin

Photography and Video Taping

Oral Histories

Service-Learning Theater

Policy Action

Films & Videos

- **Telling**

Informal Discussion

Formal Discussion

Finally, distribute the *Sample Reflection Activities* handout and review/present some of these ideas.

Arts & Crafts

No matter how artistically inclined or gifted your participants may perceive themselves to be, everyone can benefit from and enjoy creating. Have them come up with some sort of artistic or creative expression of the feelings and experiences that have been most powerful to them.

Coat of Arms

Everyone receives a piece of paper with an outline of a traditional Coat-of Arms (like medieval times) - with five or six spaces to be filled. The participants then complete their Coats-of-Arms with symbols of who they are, where they come from, what priorities and people they consider important, etc. Then have individuals share their Coat-of-Arms with the group.

Group Story

The Group Story challenges participants to construct a story one line at a time to describe the day's events.

Letters

Have participants write letters to themselves after the service project. Mail the letters to them three to four weeks later. This will give participants a chance to process what happened as well as remind them of the event and the thoughts and feelings that they had later.

Nature Walk

Ask the group to spend a few minutes searching the nearby environment for something that symbolizes one thing they will remember about the service project. (You can also ask for something that symbolizes a strength they bring to the group, a meaningful experience they had, a person that they met . . .). Bring the group back together to discuss what their treasure means.

One Word

Have participants come up with one word that symbolizes the day for them. Then discuss why that word is important.

Personal Map

Give everyone a large sheet of newsprint or drawing paper and some markers and a corner to be alone for about 20-30 minutes. Everyone writes or draws some sort of representation of how he/she got to this place, i.e. what people, events, decisions and other influences made you end up here. Allow plenty of time for sharing and post the maps on the walls afterwards. This is a wonderful way to explore your own past and future and to how that relates to the present.

Quotables

Write quotes on flip chart paper. First, read the quotes out loud and ask for immediate responses from the group, in the form of words or phrases blurted out. Then, post the flip chart sheets on the wall so that everyone can now see the quotes. Ask them to

think about and share the ways in which these quotes apply to the day's activities and experiences and to their own personal commitment to community involvement.

Revolution

The basic question around which this discussion is focused is the following: What kind of revolution does this community/nation/globe need?

Start with this question: Define the term "revolution" - what does it mean to you? You might also want people to talk about their feelings about power. Allow each member of the group to speak at least twice on each question before allowing the discussion to flow a bit more loosely.

Part 7) Group Brainstorm/Application

Suggested time 10 minutes

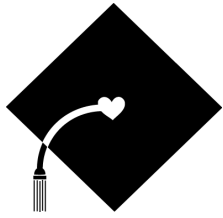
You can then lead the group through some processing of this information by having them design a reflection component for a program (individually, in pairs, or in small groups – using a real or sample scenario if necessary).

You can also lead the group in a brainstorm of additional reflection activities.

Part 8) Wrap up/Questions

Suggested time 10 minutes

End this workshop with next steps; time for questions and answers; and an evaluation.



Leading Reflection

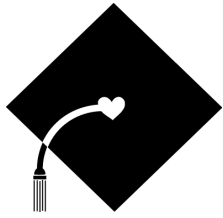
Cooperative Learning Roles

The Bonner Community Engagement Curriculum

Cooperative learning has many different roles for team members during group activities. In groups of four, one person should take both the timekeeper and observer role. In groups of three, another person should take both the recorder and reporter roles. Make sure to assume a different role each time you work in a cooperative learning group. Group members should take turns, so everyone gets a chance to experience each role.

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Facilitation Actions and Techniques

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Behaviors for Facilitators to Avoid:

- ☒ Downplaying people's ideas
- ☒ Pushing personal agendas and opinions as the "right" answer or opinion about an experience
- ☒ Dominating the group or doing all the talking
- ☒ Reading from a manuscript
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Basic Tips for Facilitators:

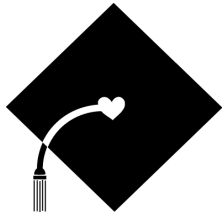
- Watch the Time
- Establish and keep to Group Norms
- Validate Everyone's Opinions
- Be Challenging but Supportive (a balance)
- Be Neutral

Creativity Counts:

For reflection, consider using and adapting games, icebreakers, and other interactive activities to encourage reflections. For example:

- **Yarn Toss:** Use a ball of yarn that is passed as people "weave a web" of their reflections
- **Post-Its:** Have people post questions they encounter in their minds as they process observations; then sort through and group questions, and use them for discussion

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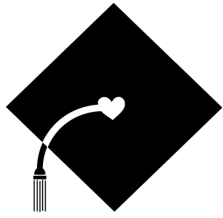
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Start with this question: Define the term "revolution" - what does it mean to you? You might also want people to talk about their feelings about power. Allow each member of the group to speak at least twice on each question before allowing the discussion to flow a bit more loosely.