



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

This tool is designed to support instructors in guiding students to become “reflective practitioners” cognizant of the complexities inherent in online community engaged learning. The tool offers some specific prompts connected to thematic areas of exploration to specific times in the course or project.

Since critical reflection refers to the process of questioning one's own assumptions, presuppositions, and meaning perspectives, it is important for instructors to provide opportunities in which students reassess their values, belief, and practices, draw on theory, and examine their progress, changes, and impacts over time. In order to provide such an opportunity, this framework offers three stages for student self-reflection:

- **Before the experience:** to ask students to examine their “self”, their beliefs and biases about the community. This stage can be considered as a baseline to check student’s changes and progress over time (before and after their community engaged learning experience).
- **During the experience:** to identify critical and transformative moments of un/learning in students’ experiences. This stage will help instructors to improvise or change their teaching practices to support student learning based on the students’ experiences and reflection input.
- **After the experience:** to ask students to revisit their beginning reflections, goals and critical/transformative moments and connect self, community, and the discipline together.

**Before the experience:** At the beginning of the course, students should be encouraged to reflect on their understanding of self, community, community-engaged learning and ethical engagement with the community as a way to develop an awareness of their current thinking and prepare them for the experience. Critical reflection at this stage is important since it involves students having not only an understanding of the assumptions that may govern their actions, but questioning their meaning and developing alternative ways of acting in their future experience. This stage provides the opportunity for students to examine their beliefs, goals, values and biases both individually and in a group. You may ask students to reflect on their expectations and understanding of how they believe the experience of community engagement might be different in an online setting.

**Self-awareness and introspection:**

- What do I know about the community? What don't I know?
- What do I want to, or need to, know more about?
- What values, beliefs and biases do I hold about the community?
- What are my strengths? What are the strengths of the community?



<p>These prompts promote deeper understanding of one’s “self” in relation to the community and ask students to examine their beliefs, values, assumptions, strengths, biases, privileges, prejudices, stereotypes before their community engaged learning experiences.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How do I position myself in relation to those I am working with in the community? How does social identity factor into this partnership? Who holds power or occupies a space of privilege? How could this affect the dynamics and or the work itself? Why is it important to consider power and privilege?</li></ul>
<p><b>Ethical Engagement with the community:</b></p> <p>These questions promote critical reflection on the meaning of “ethics” and “ethical engagement” with the community.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What do ethics look like in a community engaged learning experience?</li><li>• What does it mean to engage ethically with the community in a virtual setting?</li><li>• How can you have a reciprocal relationship with the community without physical interactions with individuals and members of the community?</li><li>• How can you adopt culturally relevant perspectives on community engagement in an online setting? What may be “culturally appropriate” interventions to promote “unlearning” of “unethical” practices virtually?</li></ul>
<p><b>Goal setting</b></p> <p>These questions help students reflect on their goals and expectations in their community engaged learning experience.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What do you hope to achieve through this community engagement experience?</li><li>• What can you learn from this online community placement?</li><li>• What skills do you expect to develop through this experience?</li><li>• How do you see your strengths showing up in your community placement?</li><li>• How will work with your community partner to define success together?</li></ul>



**During the experience (Midpoint check-in):** Students are invited to identify critical/ transformative moments throughout their community engagement experience. In order to surface the transformative moments, students are encouraged to reflect on a critical incident which has had a significant impact on their personal and professional learning.

A critical incident may be:

- an aspect of your project or group work that went particularly well or proved difficult
- an interaction with a community member that made an impression (either positive or negative)
- an activity that challenged your skills
- an experience which increased your awareness, or challenged your understanding
- an event that made you think differently, or caused you to question your assumptions, values or beliefs
- an incident involving conflict, aggression or criticism

The following prompts can help student reflect on the transformative moment:

- What was the experience? Why did it happen? Who was involved? How did the virtual setting provoke the situation? Would this incident be different in an in-person engagement?
- Why is it significant to me? What were my concerns at the time?
- What are some other ways this situation could happen or be interpreted?
- How would I share this experience with colleagues/peers so that they can learn from it? (What could be un/learned from this experience?)
- What is the key takeaway? What have I learned from the situation? What could I have done differently? Who can support me to have a better experience? How?

**After the experience:** At the end of term, students can write a reflection that brings the self, community and the discipline together. This reflection could be written as a blog post in students' ePortfolios or as an individual reflective paper/journal.

A key prompt could be: *During the entire course, while engaging with the community, what were the most significant changes that took place?*

The reflections could be framed around three key themes based on the DEAL (**D**escribe, **E**xamine, **A**rticulate **L**earning) model for reflective writing:



<b>Describe an experience or observation:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What happened and when, where and how?</li><li>• Who were the people involved?</li><li>• What did you do/not do or say/not say?</li></ul>
<b>Examine that experience:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Why do you think it happened?</li><li>• How could it be different if you were engaged with the community in an actual, in-person setting?</li><li>• What are the specific concepts and readings that may inform/help examine/explain this experience?</li><li>• What other(ed) knowledge may inform your interpretations?</li><li>• How might your own values, beliefs, assumptions, attitude and actions have influenced this experience/your interpretation of this experience?</li></ul>
<b>Articulate Learning:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What could be learned from this experience?</li><li>• How may it inform “culturally appropriate practices” in community settings and your own practices as a “reflective practitioner”?</li><li>• How are your understanding of the course readings and what you’ve experienced the same, and in what specific ways are they different (in reference to your understanding at the beginning of the course)?</li><li>• What value does this learning hold for you, the community, the course, the discipline, and the larger society?</li></ul>