



Reflection: A Learning Tool

Dr. Marie Watkins



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Definition

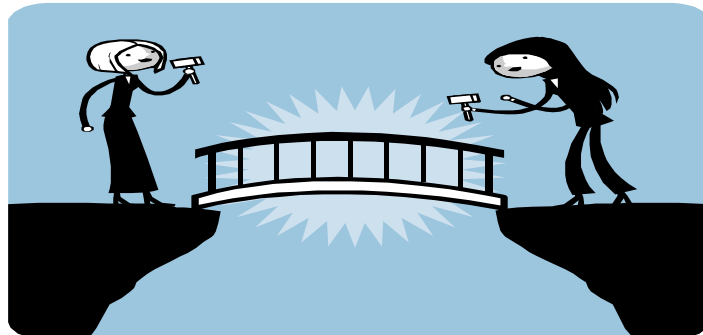


- “Reflection” is derived from the Latin term *reflectere* – “to bend back.”
- In service-learning, we try to develop processes that allow students to engage in service to bend the metaphorical light of their experiences back onto their minds:
 - To make careful considerations about what their experience were all about:
 - What did they see
 - Who did they meet
 - Why is there a need for such services in the first place, etc.

Importance of Reflection...

The act of reflection becomes
crucial to education.

It serves as the bridge between
service experiences and
academic learning.

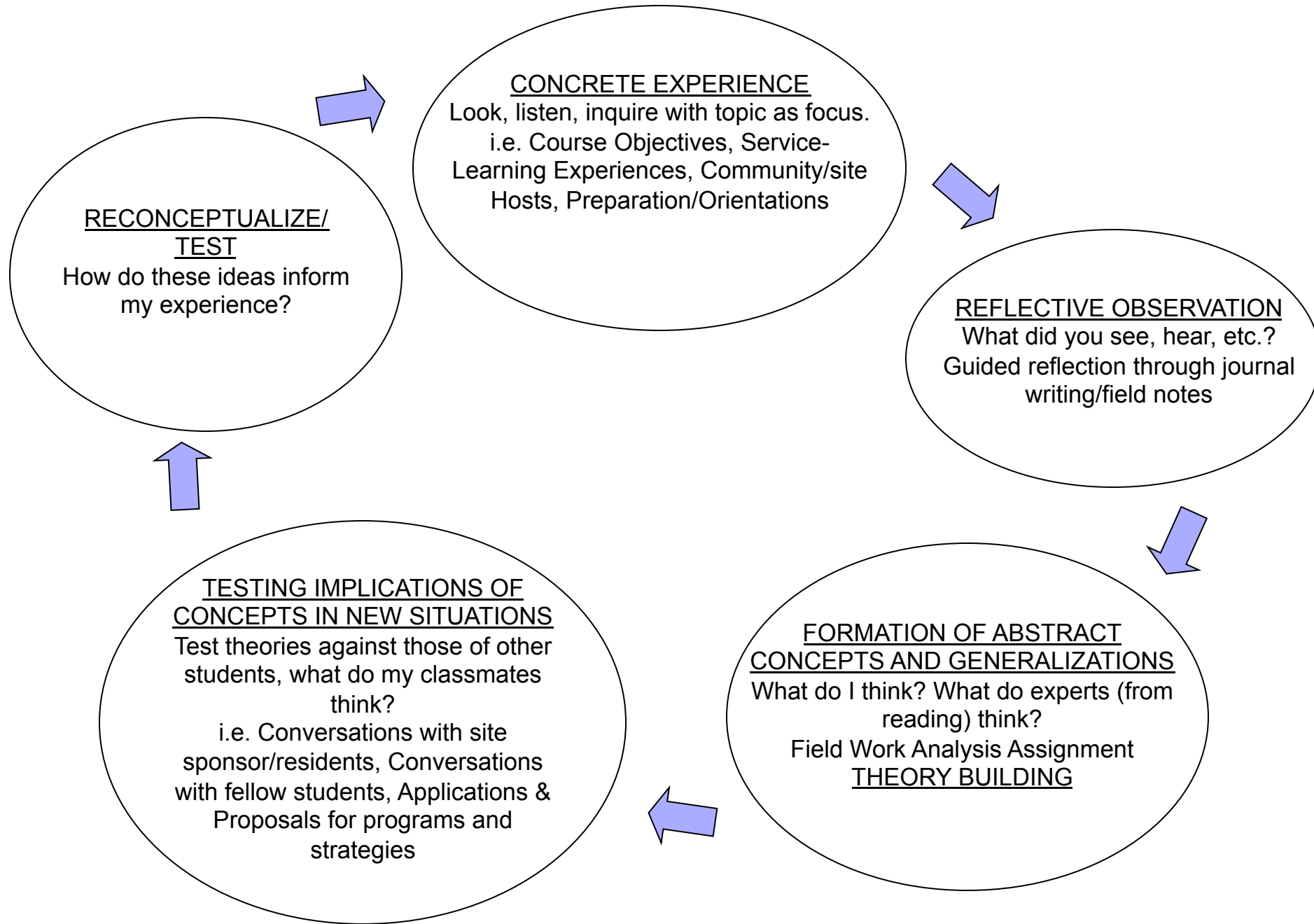




Why learn from experience?

- Most of what we know about the world and our place in it is derived from learning through our experiences.
- Education:
 - ☐ But are we merely memorizing and absorbing the facts and figures, or are we experiencing them?
 - ☐ Do we not engage in an internal dialogue with the subject matter?
- The depth of reflection determines the quality of the attitude and the quality of the action. The use of reflection encourages us not to take learning opportunities for granted.

KOLB'S FRAMEWORK



What?/So What?/Now What?

- Kolb's framework provides a structure for reflection questions.
- It is a basic way to promote discussion that begins with reviewing the details of the experience and moves toward critical thinking, problem solving, creating, and action plan.
 - Ask:
 - What?
 - So What?
 - Now What?



What?/So What?/Now What?

■ What?:

- ☐ descriptive
- ☐ facts, what happened, with whom
- ☐ substance of group interaction

■ So what?:

- ☐ shift from descriptive to interpretive
- ☐ meaning of experience for each participant
- ☐ feelings involved, lessons learned
- ☐ why?

■ Now what?:

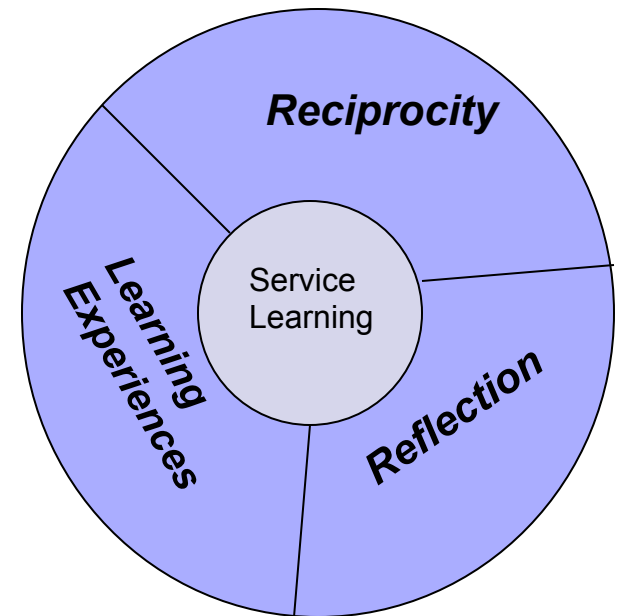
- ☐ contextual-- seeing this situation's place in the big picture
- ☐ applying lessons learned/insights gained to new situations
- ☐ setting future goals, creating an action plan



Service with Learning Experiences

■ Three Important Elements:

- Relevant & Meaningful Service
WITH the Community
 - Service must be relevant and meaningful to all stakeholders
- Enhance Academic Learning
 - Must not only serve the community but also enhance students' learning
- Purposeful Civic Learning
 - Prepare students for active civic participation in a diverse democratic society





Bring the World into the Room

- Communication & Problem Solving Skills:
 - Students must develop ability to write, read, speak and listen effectively
- Critical Thinking:
 - Students must develop ability to analyze info carefully and logically from multiple perspectives
- Integration & Application of Knowledge:
 - Utilize information from multiple disciplines and demonstrate knowledge in ways that relate to a concern or issue.

Bring the World into the Room

- Intellectual Depth, Breadth, & Ability to Adapt:
 - Show a thorough understanding and ability to use methods in all fields.
 - Able to modify perspectives given different situations.
- Understanding Society & Culture:
 - Recognize own culture and traditions while gaining understanding of other cultures and traditions.
- Values & Ethics:
 - Opportunities to clarify and develop in order to make informed choices.



Reflection Circle:



- The most basic form is the reflection circle:
 - A single question is often the simplest way to start a group talking.
 - Questions posed to facilitate discussion about students experiences and learning.
 - Questions can be flexible and flow from the developing discussion
 - Questions can be slightly more structured following a particular theme identified for the reflection session
 - Similarly, questions can be as broad as "Why are you involved in this service experience?" or can be more specific to the activity that was experienced.
 - Questions can connect to the course objectives.

OTHER Forms of Reflection

- The following reflection methods can be used in or out of the formal classroom environment.

Journals	Presentations
Reflective Essays	Photo Reflections
Learning Portfolios	E-mail Discussion Groups

Journals

- Journals are a written form of reflection in which students consider their experience in light of specific issues, such as those contained in course content.
 - Students examine their thoughts and experiences through journals in order to further their learning.
 - Unfortunately, journals are sometimes misused as simple logs of events, thereby missing the reflective component inherent in thinking critically about experiences.
- Before instructing students to complete journals, one must consider the learning objective that the journal is intended to meet.
 - Self-understanding
 - Information that will be used in another reflective activity such as a research paper
 - Becomes material on which a dialogue with others is based
- Students are encouraged to write in their journals several times throughout the semester. They are to be encouraged to share their thoughts following meaningful events, both positive and negative.



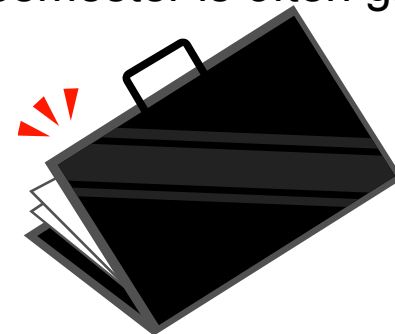
Reflective Essay

- Slightly more formalized journal entries are called reflective essays.
- This form of reflection focuses on designated issues and is completed at specified times during the course.
- These essays can form:
 - Basis of class discussion about personal and professional missions
 - Basis of discussion of academic and service goals
 - Address areas of merit and future opportunities of the service-learning experience



Learning Portfolios

- Portfolios are gaining popularity in a variety of aspects of college education as a means for students to demonstrate the knowledge and abilities they have acquired during a designated period of time (e.g., undergraduate years) or from a specific activity (e.g., participation in service).
- Portfolio contents can include administrative documents pertaining to the processes involved in the given project, as well as evidence of the project's outcomes, and the participant's evaluation of the learning experience.
- These items serve as:
 - Interesting historical markers
 - Information resources
 - Provide the group with topics for reflection in preparation for future service endeavors
- Portfolios may include:
 - A contract
 - Logs,
 - Journals,
 - Program operations information
 - Relevant academic work
 - Media coverage (including articles in the campus newspaper)
 - Evaluations by community members
 - Organizational brochures
 - Plan for action, research or other future projects, etc.
- Portfolios are commonly used when content is connected to an academic course, and at the end of the semester is often graded.



Presentations

- Sharing gained experiences with others can make students further appreciate those learning experiences.
 - Variety of forms:
 - Students may speak to a class
 - Represent their encounter on a panel discussion
 - Write about it for the campus newspaper
 - Advocate for specific programs/groups
 - Create visual promotional materials such as a video, photo exhibit or bulletin board.
 - All of which require the participants to reflect on which aspects of the experienced event were most significant, who they want/need to involve in their work, and how to present the information effectively.
 - Completing similar projects for a community-based agency and/or service provider is also a useful way to share about knowledge gained and service outcomes achieved.



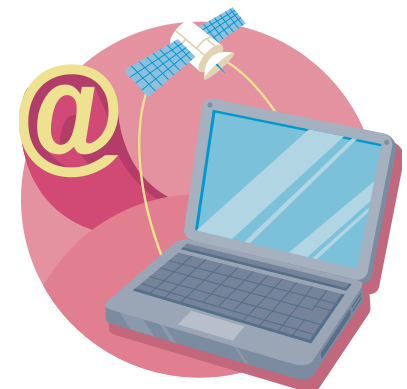
Photo/Video Reflections



- Pictorial and video accounts of student work can be shared within the class, among the service-learning participants, as well as with the general public.
- Pictures/videos can become tools for reflection when participants are asked to write reflective captions for the pictures.
 - This process may transform a purely social "pizza and picture party" into an opportunity for meaningful reflection.

E-Mail Discussion Groups

- The creation of an electronic mailing list-serve allows participants to form a discussion group to discuss their experiences.
- Participants can post questions to the group, suggest readings, or ask for feedback on issues they are facing.
- Students, faculty members, and community partners can also request summaries of service-learning activities via e-mail, while serving as moderators of discussions.
 - A digest of these email discussions can also be compiled and made available to participants.



Reflection Resources:

- Schön, D. A. (1983). The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action. Basic Books.
- Boud, D., Keogh, R., Walker, D. (1985). Reflection: Turning experience into learning. Routledge.
- Hatton N., Smith D. Reflection in teacher education: Towards definition and implementation. *Teaching and Teacher Education*. Jan, 1995. 11(1), 33-49.
- Klein P., Olson D.R., Stanovich K. Structuring Reflection: Teaching Argument Concepts and Strategies Enhances Critical Thinking. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology*. 1997. Vol. 13(1), 38-47.
- Watkins, M. & Braun, L. (2005). Service-learning: From classroom to community to career. Indianapolis. JIST Publishing, Inc.