

Community-Based Learning
— BONNER —
CENTER FOR CIVIC
ENGAGEMENT
U n i v e r s i t y o f R i c h m o n d

Reflection Activities

Philosopher and educator John Dewey said: "We don't learn from experience; we learn by reflecting on experience."

For the students in your class to make the most of their experience, they have to spend time integrating the in-class and out of class pieces, the theory and reality.

Often it is necessary to help students to become good observers first, before asking them to reflect on what they have observed and experienced. Carefully consider what kinds of tasks you will assign to your students to help them make the most of their activities with the community.

How will they record their observations? How will they be held accountable to do so in a timely manner (hint: blogs are great for this: students entries will automatically be date and time stamped!) How will they get to practice their observations and get feedback on them early in the process so they might improve as observers?

How will they be encouraged to connect their own observations to course material, readings, etc.? Will they be encouraged to use a particular skill like summary or analysis of text to go along with this observation and connection activity?

When will students get to share their observations with other students in the class? Students report that sharing orally is the most powerful form of reflection for them, and are often frustrated if they feel their community based learning is "separate" from the rest of the course, and not something they ever get to talk about in class.

What kind of reflection will you want them to do? Reflection about change over time? Drawing conclusions based on observations? Reflections on power structures? Reflections on their own feelings is just one type of reflection!

Consider having students read back over their own observations and reflections at various points in the semester and reflecting on their own change and learning.

**Carefully consider how you will grade reflections. Make sure that you assign points based on the learning goals and reward/assess learning.

RESOURCES: [Curricular Engagement](#), Patti Clayton:

- [DEAL Model Graphic](#)
- [Defining Critical Reflection](#)

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