**Reflection Guide**

“Reflection is a skill, more accurately a cluster of skills, involving observation, asking questions and putting facts, ideas, and experiences together to add new meaning to them all. Learning to learn in this way, and instilling the practice as a habit, can allow program experiences to live on in the students’ lives in new experiences and new learning”.

-Dan Conrad and Diane Hedin, *Youth Service: A Guidebook for Developing and Operating Effective Program*

 **Why Reflect?**

Reflection is critical to the service learning process, since this is where a lot of the learning takes place. Reflection serves as a bridge for connecting what a student learns in class and what they are experiencing in the community. Reflection activities ignite a sense of ownership in the student, a better understanding of one’s own abilities, and a greater awareness of oneself.

**When to Reflect:**

**Before:** Course material provides stimulus to determine community or campus needs in order to focus the project around. Teach students to use the Project Planning Guide and Logic Model to clearly identify goals, resources, patners and activities, address potential problems and identify contingency plans.

**During:** Connection and application to course material and personal insights through opportunities for continual observation and analysis of the project.

**After:** Guided reflections promote increased civic engagement, awareness of community needs, deeper application of course material, increased indigenous knowledge and connection and individual development.

**HOW TO REFLECT:**

**Telling**

Storytelling remains one of the most important ways that humans transit information to each other and both the teller and the listener increase understanding from communicating and listening. Oral class presentations, honor, circles, electronic story telling though digital or power point media, art, collage, puppetry, drama, music all ways to tell the story.

**Activities**

Reflection through action can also offer some specific advantages in meaning-making. Often, these sorts of exercises speak to a variety of learning styles, help to develop groups, and allow forward momentum to be bilt into the project. Case studies, interviewing classmates, class discussions, role playing, drama, art are some examples of engagement through action.

**Writing**

There are numerous strategies to design a writing assignment and have some advantages over other reflection modes. They provide an opportunity to refine writing skills, challenge the students to organize their thoughts, and generate a permanent record of the service experience. Portfolios, guided and directed assignment, or journal entries are some examples.

**Sharing and honoring the circle**

Reflecting at the closure of the service project in a circle provides a unique opportunity for students to share their experience with one another. It also is a great opportunity to express gratitude and thanks.

**A FINAL NOTE:** *The 4 C’s of Successful Reflection*

**Continuous:** Reflection must take pace before, during and after the completion of the service project to be fully useful

**Challenging:** Effective reflection involves pushing ourselves out of our comfort zones to make new connections between concepts and to think in new ways

**Connected:** Successful reflection can serve as a bridge between the service experience and our discipline-based academic knowledge

**Contextualized:** Effective reflection is framed in a manner that is appropriate for the context in which the service experience takes place.

Cress, Christine, Peter Collier, and Vicki Reitenauer. *Learning through Serving*. Sterling: Stylus, 2005