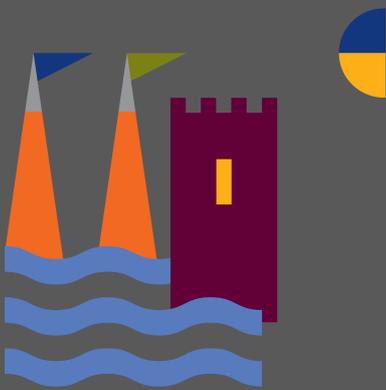


UL Engage

share

enable

grow



Reflection in
Community Engaged
Learning

INTRODUCTION TO REFLECTIVE LEARNING

What is Reflection?

Reflection is an essential component of community based scholarship. It completes the learning cycle, as students think about what they did, what it means, and what they will do because of their experience. Reflective practice can support a mindful and focussed approach to deep learning enabling the bridging between theory and students' learning experience. This component not only benefits the students, but it also strengthens the contribution they provide. As the students become more knowledgeable and sensitive about issues, more skilled in activities, and more aware of the organisation's needs and challenges, they become more effective in their community contribution.

Reflection is the means by which students come to understand the meaning and impact of their efforts. They link what they have learned about themselves and the academic disciplines to what they have done in the community with others. Reflection is the active, persistent, and careful consideration of the community based scholarship activity. Students ask: "What am I doing and why? What am I learning?" Reflection leads to self-assessment; hence, students become more independent learners. Areas of possible academic reflection are: morality, theology, race, class, gender, ability/disability, economics, public policy, civic responsibility, psychology, and sociology.

Reflection is the most effective forum for students to link what they learn in the classroom with what transpires in the community environment, and vice versa. In other words, reflection is the intentional consideration of the experience in light of a particular learning objective. Reflection also provides the opportunity to practice and enhance one's capacity for critical thinking. Lastly, reflection can function as a means to celebrate oneself and the accomplishments of a community based-learning partnership.

What Are the Benefits of Reflection?

Reflection improves basic academic skills and promotes a deeper understanding of course subject matter and its relations to the non-academic world; it improves higher level thinking and problem solving, and students' ability to learn from the experience. Reflection promotes personal development by enhancing students' self-awareness, their sense of community, their value of civic engagement, and their sense of their own capacities.

Reflective activities have an essential role in facilitating knowledge transformation in work-integrated learning (Sattler, 2011).

Conditions of High-Quality Reflection

- ✓ Reflection should be *continuous*.
- ✓ Reflection activities should *draw on personal experience* as well as be situated *within the broader community*.
- ✓ *Reflection activities should be guided by a deliberate connection* between theory and practice
- ✓ Reflection should involve *personal changes* to the learner and emphasize consistently *setting new goals*.
- ✓ Learning is strengthened when activities emphasize *inductive* (e.g., experience followed by academic learning) and *deductive* (e.g., academic learning followed by experience) reflections.

References: Bringle & Hatcher, 1999; Eyler et al., Rogers, 2001; Zlotkowski & Clayton, 2009

Learning is strengthened when activities emphasize *inductive* (e.g., experience followed by academic learning) and *deductive* (e.g., academic learning followed by experience) reflections (Rogers, 2001)

While no formal definition of reflection has reached a consensus among scholars (Atkins & Murphy, 1993), there are several definitional aspects that have been suggested, including:

- An understanding of one's personal philosophy, while continuously re-examining that philosophy in relation to experience (Nolan, 2008)
- An active process in which students develop and learn through analysis of personal and professional practice (Bolton, 2001; Brock & McGill, 1988; Dewey, 1910; Kim, 1999; Nolan, 2008)
- Thoughtful retrospection and judgment about experience, feelings or knowledge that provides new understanding and informs future action (Kember et al., 2008; Schon, 1983; Sullivan & Rosin, 2008)

Critical reflection enhances basic reflection through questioning personal assumptions or biases, connecting theory to experience, addressing the ways in which theoretical knowledge and experience differ, considering multiple perspectives and creating evidence of new learning (Ash & Clayton, 2009; Whitney & Clayton, 2011; Zlotkowski & Clayton, 2005).

Reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action

Reflection-in-action refers to an impromptu process in which the individual is required to understand and adapt to a challenging and ongoing situation (Beard & Wilson, 2013; Schon, 1983). Reflection-in-action commonly occurs when an individual encounters a situation – often in the workplace – that is unfamiliar and requires attention or resolution (Schon, 1983). Conversely, **reflection-on-action** is a planned and structured reflection exercise that facilitates experiential learning (Schon, 1983). Reflection-on-action is most common when the individual is not currently engaged in the workplace or environment in which the situation or experience occurred (Schon, 1983).

Single-loop reflection refers to thoughtful retrospection on a particular experience, including its connection to theoretical knowledge but not considering personal influences (Argyris & Schon, 1974).

Double-loop reflection, on the other hand, is when reflectors challenge their role and contribution in learning environments and carefully consider the influence of their own personal beliefs, attitudes or actions (Argyris & Schon, 1974). During double-loop reflection, learners will often pose questions such as, “Am I doing the appropriate things?” (Beard & Wilson, 2013).

Surface reflection refers to an approach in which learners typically view the reflection and corresponding learning opportunities as mandatory requirements (e.g., for course credit) that are completed through reliance on extrinsic motivation (Biggs, 1987; Chin & Brown, 2000; Marton, 1983). In surface reflection, students reflect upon the descriptive elements of their structured work experience, which may or may not include a review of theory and/or relate directly to the students’ learning plans and intended outcomes.

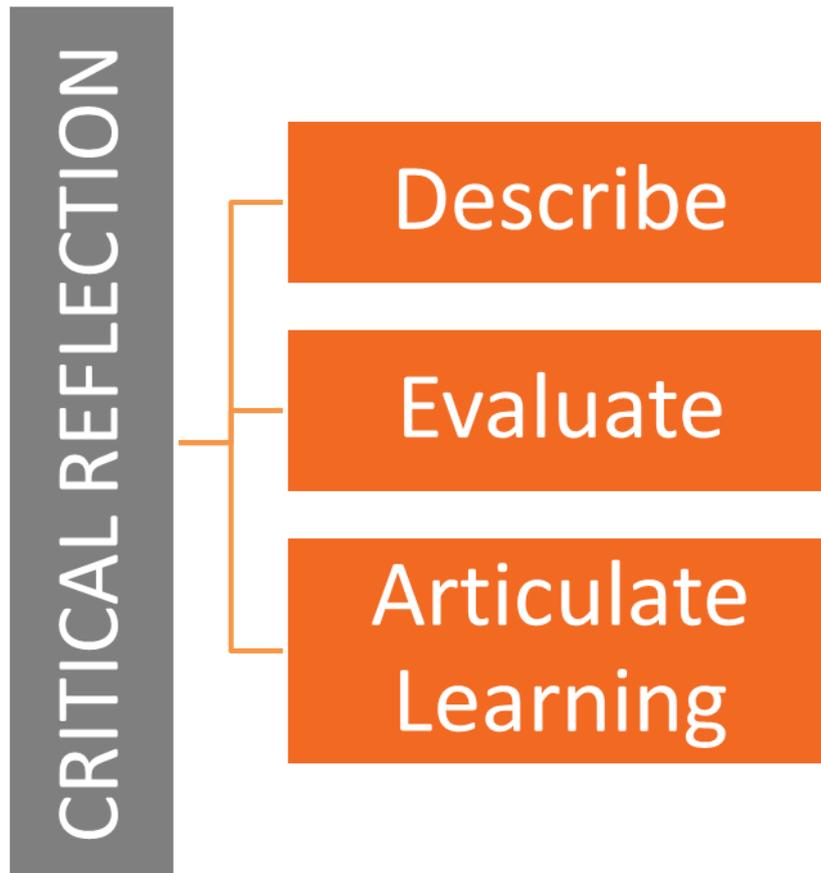
In contrast, **deep reflection** occurs when a learner views a learning opportunity as relevant to their experience or applicable to real-world contexts, and often relies on intrinsic motivation to complete the task (Biggs, 1987; Chin & Brown, 2000; Marton, 1983). In deep reflection, students strive to develop an understanding of the experience through an emphasis on linking previous understandings with new knowledge; recognizing others’ perspectives in solving difficult tasks; providing multiple explanations to highlight an issue; and allowing themselves to change or deepen their perspective on an issue (Biggs, 1987;

Summary of Reflection Definitions

Reflection	Thoughtful retrospection that provides new understanding and informs future action
Critical reflection	Enhances basic reflection through questioning personal assumptions, connecting theory to experience, considering multiple perspectives and creating evidence of new learning
Reflection-in-action	Impromptu reflection required to understand and adapt to an ongoing situation
Reflection-on-action	Planned and structured reflection post-experience
Single-loop reflection	Connection of experience to theoretical knowledge
Double-loop reflection	Considers influence of personal values, attitudes and actions
Surface reflection	Extrinsically motivated reflection upon the descriptive elements of experience
Deep reflection	Intrinsically motivated reflection on experience as applicable to self and real-world context

D.E.A.L. Model for Critical Reflection

(Ash & Clayton, 2004)



The D.E.A.L. model is useful for viewing reflection as a means for learning throughout an educational opportunity, as opposed to a task to complete following the experience (Clayton & Ash, 2004). The three steps of the D.E.A.L. model are detailed below:

1. **Description** of learning experiences that is as objective and comprehensive as possible. Ash and Clayton (2009) suggest that learners be prompted to consider simple but important aspects of an experience, such as who was involved in the experience, where the experience occurred and the details of what happened throughout the experience.
2. **Examination** of learning opportunities with respect to previously identified learning goals or expected outcomes. During this step, learners should be encouraged to personalize the learning experience in order to avoid simply summarizing it (Ash & Clayton, 2004).
3. **Articulation of Learning** involves recognizing the learning experience that has occurred and creating goals intended for future action. These new learning goals are generated to enhance and refine practice moving forward (Ash & Clayton, 2009).

Reflection Questions for Students: The D.E.A.L. Model for Critical Reflection

Describe

- ◆ What took place?
- ◆ When and where did the experience in question take place?
- ◆ Who was and was not present?
- ◆ What did you and others do/not do?
- ◆ What did you see, hear, etc.?

Evaluate

- ◆ In what ways did you succeed or do well?
- ◆ In what ways were you challenged?
- ◆ How did this experience make me feel (positively/and/or negatively)?
- ◆ How has your perspective/thoughts changed in light of your experience?

Articulate Learning

- ◆ What did you learn?
- ◆ How did you learn it?
- ◆ Why does it matter?
- ◆ What will I do in light of it?

UL PRACTICUM

Weekly Reflection Diary

Adapted from The DEAL Model (developed by Ash & Clayton, 2009)

Name:

UL Semester Week:

Student ID:

Project Team:

Describe (What took place (who was/was not present, what did you/others do, /not do?)

--

Evaluate in what way did you succeed or do well? In what ways were you challenged? How did this experience make you feel (positive/negative)? How has your perspective/thoughts changed in light of your experience?

--

Articulate Learning (what did you learn? How did you learn it?)

--

Plan (What will you do in light of it?)

--

Student Feedback

--

Final Reflection Essay Guidelines

Before you write your final reflection, use the following prompts to create a comprehensive reflection piece detailing your community engaged learning experience and what you learned from it.

STEP 1: DESCRIBE

Describe your experience objectively. Answer the following prompts:

- What did you do?
- Where did you do it?
- Who were you working with and/or for?
- When did this happen?
- Why did you do it?
- What did others do?
- What actions did you/others take?
- What else happened that might be important? (e.g., *equipment failure, weather-related issues, etc.*)

STEP 2: EXAMINE

Examine your experience in terms of the following four learning outcomes: civic knowledge, civic skills, civic values, or civic motivation. To guide you, prompts associated with learning outcomes are listed below.

- Did this experience differ from your initial expectations? Why or why not?
- What was the goal you were trying to accomplish?
- Were you able to effectively achieve your goal? Why or why not?
- Which skills did you bring to the experience that helped you meet your goal?
- How did your skills contribute to the diversity of the people with whom you worked?
- Did you form any new assumptions that required you to change your approach? How so?
- Did you acquire any new skills by having to work to achieve this goal?
- Was this an easy or a difficult task to undertake? Why?
- Did you recruit others to help accomplish your goals or raise awareness of the problem you are actively trying to address? Why and how? Or Why not?
- How did your strengths and weaknesses contribute to working towards the goal you were trying to accomplish? What were the positive and negative effects of these personal characteristics?
- In evaluating the plan in light of its benefits and challenges, did you recognize any need for you to change personally? How so?
- Did this experience have any influence on your future educational or career path?
- What personal knowledge and skills did you discover or acquire during this experience that will assist you in your future endeavours in this area?

STEP 3: ARTICULATE LEARNING

Use your responses to the prompts in both the “Describe” and “Examine” sections of this reflection template to create a thoughtful essay wherein you articulate what you have learned from your community engaged learning experience.

- Word Count 1,500+/- 10%.
- A cover page should include, your name , student number, title of your reflective essay and word count.
- Each of the following questions should be addressed in your essay:

What did I learn?

Provide a clear and concise explanation of the aspect(s) of learning in question so that someone outside of the course can understand

How did I learn it?

Connect the learning to specific activities making it clear what happened in the context of that experience so that someone who wasn't there could easily understand it

Why does it matter?

Consider how the learning has value, both in terms of this situation and in broader terms, such as other activities, issues, professional goals, personal goals, courses, etc.

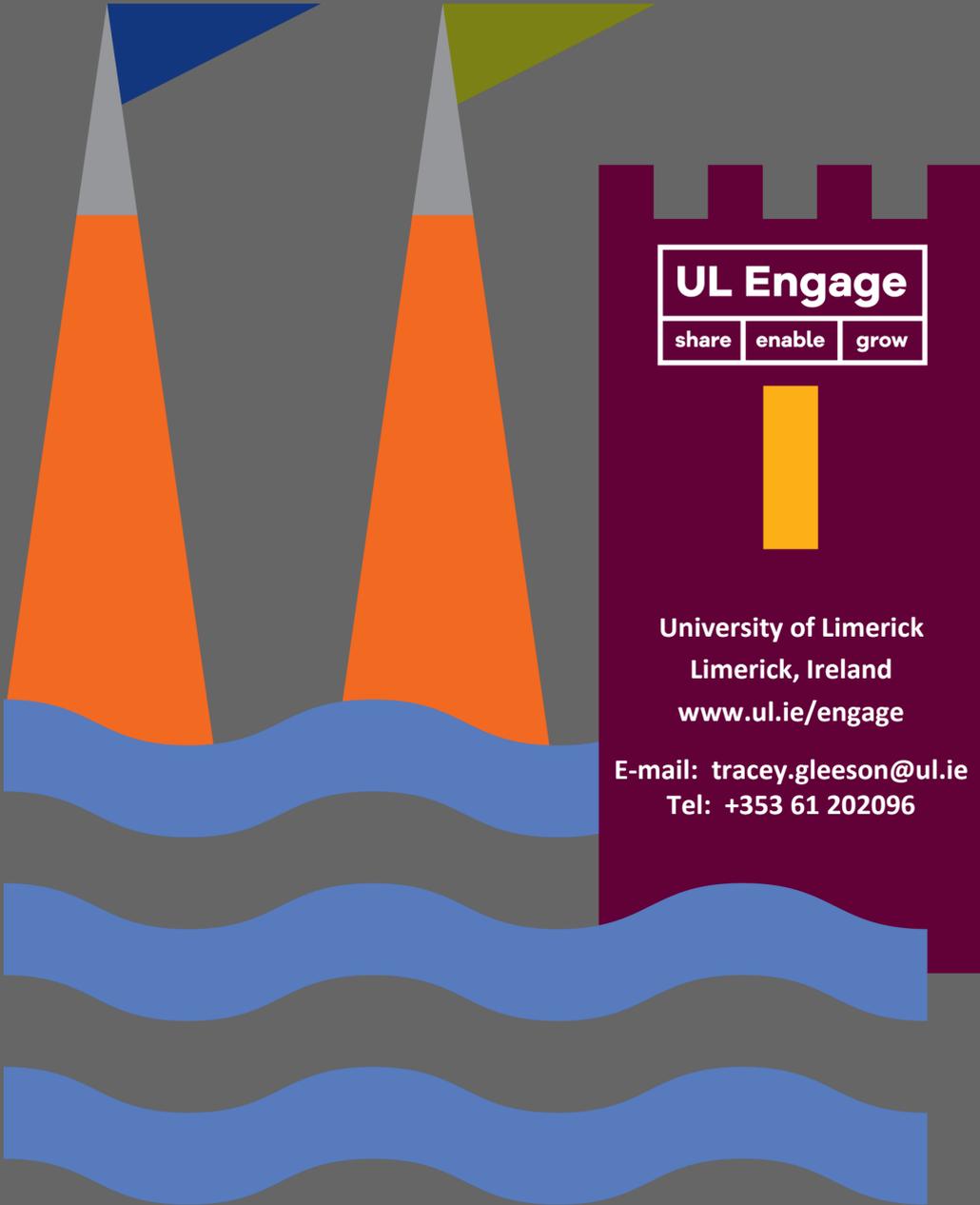
What might/should be done in light of it?

Criteria	Score					Comments
	Under-developed 1	Satisfactory 2	Good 3	Excellent 4		
Articulation about what was learned (e.g., about one's self / specific knowledge or skills through working on the project)					(---/4)	
Articulation about how this was learned (e.g., tasks, situations, feedback mechanisms)					(---/4)	
Articulation about why this matters					(---/4)	
Articulation about what you will do in future practice in light of this learning.					(---/4)	
Reference and Writing Style (Appropriate sentence structure, appropriate /correct referencing)					(---/4)	
Total Score					(---/20)	

	Under-developed 1	Satisfactory 2	Good 3	Excellent 4
Articulation about what was learned (e.g., about one's self / specific knowledge or skills through working on the project,)	Provides no clear connection between the experience and the learning. Fails to keep discussion specific to the learning	Provides minimal and/or unclear connection between the experience and the learning. Keeps the discussion reasonably well focused to the learning	Provides adequate and reasonably clear connection between the experience and the learning. Keeps the discussion reasonably well focused to the learning	Provides thorough and very clear connection (s) between the experience and the learning. Keeps the discussion very well focused to the learning
Articulation about how this was learned (e.g., tasks, situations, feedback mechanisms.)	Consistently makes inaccurate statements and/or fails to provide supporting evidence for claims	Makes several inaccurate statements and/or supports few statements with evidence	Usually but not always makes inaccurate statements that are accurate and well supported with evidence	Consistently makes statements that are accurate and well supported with evidence
Articulation about why this matters	Consistently fails to provide examples to illustrate points	Only occasionally provides examples to illustrate points	Usually but not always provides examples to illustrate points	Consistently provides examples to illustrate points
Articulation about what you will do in future practice in light of this learning.	Draws conclusions and/or sets goals that don't address the specific issue(s) raised by the experience	Draws conclusions and/or sets goals that only minimally address the specific issue(s) raised by the experience	Draws conclusions and/or sets goals that usually follow well from the line of reasoning presented	Draws conclusions and/or sets goals that follow very well from the line of reasoning presented
Reference and Writing Style (Appropriate sentence structure, appropriate /correct referencing)	Consistently makes typographical, spelling and/or referencing errors	Makes several typographical, spelling and/or referencing errors	Makes few typographical, spelling and/or referencing errors	Makes very few or no typographical, spelling and/or referencing errors

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University of Limerick
Limerick, Ireland
www.ul.ie/engage

E-mail: tracey.gleeson@ul.ie
Tel: +353 61 202096