

# REFLECTION GUIDE

**WHAT IS REFLECTION?** | Some say that experience is the best teacher. However, reflecting on experience is the true heart of learning. Structured reflection before, during, and after an experiential education opportunity helps students analyze their learning and question their own experience in relation to new knowledge. Research says that reflection has some positive impact on the attitudes of students. However, the lack of reflection can have a strong negative impact on the students' attitudes.<sup>1</sup> Doing does not equate to learning, but rather thinking about what we do facilitates learning.

## REFLECTION MODEL 1 | Lenses of the DEAL Model<sup>2</sup>

### PERSONAL

How did this experience make you feel (positively and/or negatively)?

What assumptions or expectations did you bring to the experience and how did they affect your actions?

How have past experiences influenced the way you acted or responded to this situation?

What personal strengths/weaknesses did the situation reveal?

What personal skills did you draw on in handling this situation?

What personal skills would you like to have had in order to have handled it better and how might you develop them?

How did this situation reveal your own attitudes or biases toward other people, toward the organization in question, etc.?

Do you need to make any changes?

### CIVIC

Did you reinforce or challenge an assumption or social system by the way you acted?

How else could you have handled the situation? Identify both the paths of least resistance and the paths of greater resistance.

In what ways did power differentials emerge in this experience?

What privilege did you/others bring to this situation?

How did leadership emerge in this situation, on your part and/or on the part of others?

What changes are needed based on this experience: within your group, within the organization, within our society more generally?

How does this experience help you to better understand the organization's vision, mission, and goals?

### ACADEMIC

What specific academic material/course learning objective is relevant to this experience?

How did the material emerge in the experience? When did you see it or note its absence?

What academic (e.g. disciplinary, intellectual, professional) skills did you use/should you have used?

How does this experience enhance your knowledge of a specific reading, theory, or concept?

Does it challenge or reinforce your prior understanding?

Based on analysis of the experience in light of the course material, is the material (or your prior understanding of the material) adequate?

**Major in you.**

# REFLECTION MODEL 2 | What? So What? Now What?<sup>3</sup>

## WHAT?

What did you do in your role?  
 What knowledge/skills did you develop in your experience?  
 What were the results/outcomes of your experience?  
 How is your site/employer important to the community?  
 What does your site/employer do well? What would you like to see done differently?

## SO WHAT?

Did you meet your learning objectives? Why or why not?  
 What did you learn that you were not expecting to learn?  
 In what ways do you think you made a difference?  
 In what ways were your stereotypes or assumptions challenged?  
 How has this experience supported your personal values?  
 What could you have done differently at the site to help you accomplish your goals?  
 How did you grow in your ability to interact with people?

## NOW WHAT?

How will you apply what you have learned in the future?  
 How has this experience impacted your anticipated career path?  
 Have you learned a new skill or clarified an interest? How can you apply it?  
 What would you still like to learn?  
 How would you describe this experience to a peer? A future employer?  
 Would you want to work/volunteer here again? Why or why not?

## Examples of Reflection Activities

Journal  
Paper

Blogs/vlog  
Presentations

Elevator pitch  
Art project

Media production  
Update resume

Student-supervisor conversation

These two models provide suggested questions for reflection.

What questions would you add for reflection?

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## CAREER READINESS COMPETENCIES



You can link reflection prompts to the NACE Career Readiness Competencies.

- Career and Self-Development
- Communication
- Critical Thinking
- Equity and Inclusion
- Leadership
- Professionalism
- Teamwork
- Technology

Learn more about NACE competencies at [uwp.edu/CareerReady](http://uwp.edu/CareerReady)

1. Indiana Department of Education, Service Learning Program. "Key Elements of Service Learning."  
 2. Adapted from Queen's University EL Faculty Toolkit – DEAL Model for Critical Reflection, and Clayton, P.H. (2015) [www.curricularengagement.com](http://www.curricularengagement.com)  
 3. Kolb, D. (1984) *Experiential Learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.