
ADVANCING REFLECTION AND CRITICAL REFLECTION

We begin this chapter with two stories of powerful CBGL experiences.

I was the only one of my American friends who participated in a service-learning study abroad experience. While my peers were touring historical cities and partying until dawn, I was living in one of the dirtiest city slums of Ecuador and supervising children who were routinely beaten, sexually assaulted, or forced to work the streets all night long. My friends returned with a taste for Spanish wine, while I returned frustrated, confused about social injustices, and 15 pounds thinner after giving my dinner to street children all semester.

When I arrived back to my family in upstate New York, my dumb-founded parents watched helplessly as I refused to enter an overcrowded grocery store, nauseated by the rows of shiny, boxed, endless options and spoiled, cantankerous children who screamed and begged for yet another treat.

I would lie awake at night, eyes wide open, staring at the glowing plastic stars on my ceiling, tucked under plush, pink, warm covers, my room lined with stuffed animals and storybooks, as I pictured the six-year-old children who had called me “mama” wandering the streets under a brutally less forgiving sky until dawn. I felt like I had been yanked out of my universe, experienced another world, and then plopped right back where I had left off and nobody else had missed a beat. I looked the same, everyone expected me to be the same, and nobody else seemed to have changed, but I couldn’t even remember who I was before, and suddenly, the people with whom I had felt closest seemed unrecognizable and out of reach. (Lang, 2013)

The next story is told within the broader narrative of a thesis on alternative spring break programming:

For another student who identified as African American, this feeling of “otherness” was a critical moment of her ASB [alternative spring break] experience. Prior to departure to the Pine Ridge reservation, she anticipated being “a person the community members could empathize or identify with because of similar forms of historical discrimination.” However, upon her return, she shared the following reflection:

I was surprised at the reaction I received. When I was working in the elementary school, this was the first time many had seen an African American and [they] called me “freaky looking.” This used to happen to me when I was little and this experience kind of brought me back to that. The kids didn’t identify with me like I expected. Even at the pow-wow recognition ceremony, the comments made by the host made me feel uncomfortable. At times it seemed like I was being exploited because of my skin color. I really felt like an outsider and that I didn’t belong.

When asked, this participant reported how this was the first in-depth reflection of her feelings of “otherness” she experienced while on the trip. “I didn’t bring it up during evening reflections because I didn’t want to seem like a distraction. Although we were there to experience different things, I didn’t want it to be all about me.” (Wendel, 2013)

These anecdotes are representative, not exceptional. In such challenging, unpredictable, and diverse environments, this chapter elaborates on how reflective tools can support CBGL participants’ personal, spiritual, political, social, emotional, intercultural, moral, and academic development during programs. It shares how reflective activities can be designed to invite participation and grow trust among participants, simultaneously engaging participants’ emotional experience and related academic learning. It charts strategies for navigating the relationship among reflection, intercultural learning, academic content, and healthy return to a student’s home community. Fundamentally, it answers the question “Why insist on reflection?” and provides program leaders with techniques to move beyond giving participants vague (though often eagerly embraced) spaces “to reflect” and move toward systematic encouragement of multiple forms of both structured and unstructured reflective learning experiences.

Engaging in Reflection to Advance Learning

This chapter begins by indicating why reflection is foundational and defining precisely what is meant by *reflection* in experiential learning. It moves on to summarize major contributions to reflective practice in CBGL

while integrating the insights we have gained through practice. We then turn to sustained consideration of the notion of “critical” reflection, which we distinguish from reflection. We demonstrate how some contributors to the reflection literature have been primarily concerned with systematic learning progress on specified academic goals, whereas others have been much more consciously oriented toward understanding hegemonic structures, power, positionality, and privilege as social phenomenon inside and outside of the course environment (Brookfield, 2000, 2009; Freire, 2000; Kiely, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2015; Mezirow, 1995). Each process has an important place.

This chapter describes what are understood as effective practices in CBGL reflection. Those practices are filtered through experience to offer additional insights and practical applied tips. Finally, the chapter discusses the special role of criticality in CBGL. Notably, the challenging and real stories shared at the beginning of this chapter not only require leadership and pedagogical skills in respect to carefully designed reflection but also necessitate insights that relate to intercultural learning, power and privilege, and critical global citizenship. This chapter first explores the expectation-setting and reflective practices that will support program leaders’ abilities to systematically approach those topics. Some reflective activities, such as the fist-to-five activity described in Toolbox 3.1, are not centrally academic exercises. Nonetheless, activities that gauge group energy and cause group members to consider one another’s experiences can be useful in learning outside of the classroom, particularly when schedules and ending times may be somewhat unpredictable.

Reflective activity may indeed serve many different goals, including but not limited to supporting students in processing high-intensity dissonance experiences, setting group behavioral norms and expectations, and developing an environment of trust as a precursor for reflective activities that probe personal identity and assumptions. With the exception of Toolbox 3.1, the first portion of this chapter concerns itself primarily with reflection as a tool to advance disciplinary, global citizenship, and intercultural learning. The second portion of this chapter focuses on critical reflection and its role within CBGL. Chapter 7 offers several further reflection tips, tools, and strategies relating to group norms, trust, and processing high-intensity dissonance moments.

Reflection and Its Rationales

Reflection is central to service-learning done well (Ash & Clayton, 2009; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Eyler, Giles, & Schmiede, 1996). Without reflection, service-learning “all too easily leads to reinforced stereotypes, simplistic solutions to complex problems, and inaccurate generalization from limited data” (Whitney & Clayton, 2011, p. 150). It advances intercultural understanding

TOOLBOX 3.1

Fist-to-Five

Fist-to-five is typically not an activity that is central to planned and targeted academic learning, yet it is an effective ritual for gauging group opinions and emotions and setting the climate for open, active, participatory, non-judgmental reflection and dialogue. Establishing this kind of ritual has many salutary benefits, and among them is the regular assertion of a space in which individuals are prompted to share the kinds of concerns that may start longer, important conversations rooted in students' experience and reflective processing. It's a bridge between experience and the possibility of longer discussion. The exercise provides a sense of how the group is feeling and makes everyone aware of each other. The topic can be emotional, intellectual, or even simply logistical. To implement, leaders ask participants to respond to a question by holding up fingers. The activity is described in the following table with sample prompts for each stage.

| Step | Example Prompts |
|--|--|
| Define a question. | "How tired are you right now?" |
| Define the response. | "Hold up your fist if you're more exhausted than you've ever been in your life and are basically asleep with your eyes open. Hold up five fingers if you are wide awake and as ready to go as a fresh cup of coffee. Or hold up any number of fingers in between." (Humor goes a long way in getting the group to play along.) |
| Encourage people to respond quickly and all at once. | "One, two, three, go!" |
| Ask everyone to look around the room and assess the temperature of the group. | "Okay, so it looks like the majority of the group is exhausted. Let's all note the folks who are showing fists right now and be sensitive to them. Also, let's make tonight's discussion a short one. Amber, you seem to have the most energy, so would you be up for kicking off our discussion tonight?" |
| Remind everyone that they can lead a fist-to-five whenever they want to gauge the group. | |

Give the group ownership over fist-to-five. Once people get the hang of it, they will be tempted to throw out fist-to-five throughout the day. Remind them to be sensitive to the “fists” in the group and to draw strength from the “fives.” Use this as a tool for team building, airing out problems, and just generally checking in.

Good Uses of Fist-to-Five

1. Making decisions and voting in direct, democratic, and participatory ways
2. Determining emotional feelings and energy levels
3. Checking understanding (e.g., of an academic concept)
4. Managing plans and logistics
5. Sharing opinions

and cross-cultural communication skills (McAllister, Whiteford, Hill, Thomas, & Fitzgerald, 2006). And it is the key component in deliberately fostering a global perspective (Braskamp, Braskamp, & Merrill, 2009). It is, in short, the foundation for learning deeply about self, others, values, and academic content (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Rhoads, 1997). Drawing on decades of research in international and intercultural education, Vande Berg, Paige, and Hemming Lou (2012) stated,

Most students do not, then, meaningfully develop either through simple exposure to the environment or through having educators take steps to increase the amount of that exposure through “immersing” them. Instead, students learn and develop effectively and appropriately when educators intervene more intentionally through well-designed training programs that continue throughout the study abroad experience. . . . The data show that students learn and develop considerably more when educators prepare them to become more self-reflective, culturally self-aware, and aware of “how they know what they know.” (p. 21)

Reflection is symbolized in the hyphen that connects service to learning (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Jacoby, 2015). According to Hatcher and Bringle (1997), reflection is “the intentional consideration of an experience in the light of particular learning objectives” (p. 153). Reflection that is systematic, structured, and intentional should occur before, during, and after the service experience (Eyler & Giles, 1999). CBGL practitioners should incorporate into their course design diverse reflection strategies at different stages of the students’ service-learning experience. For example, prior to engaging in the service experience, time should be spent providing

novice students with opportunities to practice the art of reflection (Jacoby, 2015; Kiely & Kiely, 2006). Most students are not familiar with the concept of reflection, and providing students with a framework for engaging in different methods of reflection enables students to develop their reflective abilities (Collier & Williams, 2005). Once such framework that we discuss later in this chapter is Ash and Clayton's (2009) DEAL model.

Whitney and Clayton (2011), like several others in the service-learning literature (Bringle & Hatcher, 1999; Eyster & Giles, 1999), discussed the role of reflection in terms of advancing learning goals and improving student mastery of content, while also pointing toward the possibility that reflection will lead to consideration of outcomes, deeper understanding of learning processes, clarification of values, and even understanding of "the role of power and hegemony as constraints on civic agency" (Whitney & Clayton, 2011, p. 151). Drawing on several decades of research, practice, and empirical insight, Whitney and Clayton (2011) suggested critical reflection is "a process of metacognition that functions to improve the quality of thought and of action and the relationship between them" (p. 150).

Applying Reflection Models in CBGL

Robust forms of reflection are systematic and educationally meaningful. Reflection must be "purposeful and strategic," and it must "begin with the end in mind" (Whitney & Clayton, 2011, p. 153). It is a deliberate learning process that simultaneously engages cognitive learning, ethics, and application (Baxter Magolda, 2003) in ways that challenge students to move beyond current content understanding, self-understanding, and critical thinking capability.

Drawing from reflective traditions in experiential learning (Dewey, 1916; Kolb, 1984), and after decades of focus on reflective practice applied to service-learning, Clayton and colleagues have developed the DEAL model (Ash & Clayton, 2009; Whitney & Clayton, 2011) for critical reflection. The DEAL model suggests the following three essential steps for systematic critical reflection: "Description of experiences in an objective and detailed manner, Examination of those experiences in light of specific learning objectives (in the case of service-learning, at least in the categories of academic enhancement, civic learning, and personal growth), and Articulation of Learning" (Whitney & Clayton, 2011, p. 156).

The DEAL model's growing status in the service-learning field is due to its application of learning theory insights to reflective practice; its integration

of assessment; and its empirical validation as a process that enhances student critical thinking and objective learning (Ash & Clayton, 2009). It has been validated by multiple independent researchers using blind evaluations of student progress on objective content mastery and critical thinking skills at multiple points throughout evaluated semesters (Jameson, Clayton, & Bringle, 2008; McGuire et al., 2007).

We will consider several other key contributions to understanding how reflection works for CBGL learners, but we begin with example reflective questions to stimulate thinking about reflection design in the context of a sandwich model CBGL program. (A CBGL sandwich model involves academic preparation and processing before and after a travel experience including intercultural immersion. Sandwich models, along with several other immersive CBGL program structure possibilities, are discussed in chapter 6.) Toolbox 3.2 demonstrates reflective prompts specific to CBGL in terms of how they relate to both the DEAL model and the pre-, during, and postimmersion experience typical of sandwich programs. It is important to note, in addition, that local community engagement and even facilitated intercultural dialogue on campus can be productively disruptive in ways that parallel the disruption and questioning that is common during an immersion experience.

The DEAL model is helpful for structuring reflection and, as demonstrated previously, is applicable before, during, and after immersive learning experiences that may occur in a sandwich model program. With any program, involving community engagement near or far, throughout the semester or during breaks, the DEAL model may be paired with a time line of learning and engagement similar to what is expressed in Toolbox 3.2. The reflective process is further informed through considering learning design principles (see chapter 7), understanding student development (Baxter-Magolda, 2003; Perry, 1981), and embracing different learning styles and strengths (Ash & Clayton, 2009).

Learning design principles are useful when considering ways in which course content can be enhanced through reflection with any type of service (Collier & Williams, 2005). Course content and service type may vary considerably. It is possible to enhance academic learning through professional experience, physical labor, or unconventional forms of service such as listening and learning at the request of community partners. These experiences may also enhance prosocial development, group cohesion, or personal and professional development. What matters is the systematic relationship between specified learning goals (further discussed in chapter 7), experience, and targeted reflection questions.

TOOLBOX 3.2

Sample Intercultural Learning Prompts Before, During, and After Intercultural Experiences Using the DEAL Model

| | Before | During | After |
|----------------------------|---|---|---|
| Describe | Complete the identity pie activity to represent what “makes you, you” in terms of your biography and cultural background. (Activity is available in chapter 4.) | Describe an event that made you think about culture in a new way today, or carefully describe an intercultural interaction you had today. | Have conversations with six friends or family members about your experience, and describe the perceptions they have about the place you visited. |
| Examine | How did sharing identity pies and having a discussion about identity relate to the assigned readings on culture? | What do your observations in public spaces demonstrate about varying communication patterns and cultural assumptions? | How has your academic and experiential interrogation of culture affected your ability to see the biases and assumptions of your home culture? |
| Articulate Learning | What have you learned about yourself as a cultural being through our preparation for travel and service? | How does our experience here in the community affect your understanding of yourself and others as cultural beings? | How can you apply the insights you’ve developed about culture and intercultural communication to improve your capacities for listening and communicating? |

Toolbox 3.3 demonstrates how reflection questions provide a link between experience and targeted discipline-specific learning.

What is difficult to capture in a chart such as the one offered in Toolbox 3.3 is the extent to which reflective practice brings course concepts to *life*. Through combining best practices in systematic preparation with careful attention to the need for dynamism and flexibility, several colleagues

TOOLBOX 3.3 Employing Reflection Questions to Link Experience With Targeted Learning

| Course | Site and Service Description | Literature | Learning Objective | Reflection Question(s) |
|---|---|---|---|--|
| Development Economics | Assist with physical labor supporting the construction of a community's first library and Internet center in rural Ghana | Introductory texts on development economics | Identify and analyze dominant approaches to development | How has your experience with the challenges of physical labor and project management in a developing country affected your evaluation of dominant approaches to development? |
| Engineering: Professional Experience | Design and implement support for community water systems throughout Honduras | Engineering texts; significant literature on high-performing teams | Demonstrate increased understanding of personal role in and contribution to dynamic teams | How have the challenges of implementing water systems in cross-cultural teams in developing communities affected your understanding of the role you inhabit on a high-performing team? |
| History of the Holocaust | Engage in some direct physical service through restoration of Jewish graveyards near Auschwitz; learn about the Holocaust | Historical texts and several pieces on the challenge of remembrance | Communicate historical issues to a broader public | How will you communicate the visceral experience of being at Auschwitz, hearing from survivors, and being at one of the most notorious sites of the Holocaust to friends and family members? |

(Continues)

TOOLBOX 3.3 (Continued)

| Course | Site and Service Description | Literature | Learning Objective | Reflection Question(s) |
|-----------------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Nationalism and Literature | Support youth reconciliation programming at an interfaith summer camp in Northern Ireland | Works of fiction from multiple Northern Irish perspectives | Analyze the role of story in defining and redefining <i>identity</i> | How have the texts we've examined presented multiple Northern Irish realities? How do you see these disparate realities reflected in the worldviews of community members with whom we've worked? |
| Community Development | Gather data to support a local women's rights organization's grant application in rural Tanzania | Texts on development, community-based research methods, and rural Tanzania | Demonstrate ability to engage in community-based research and continuously refine methodology | What assumptions about the research process have changed as you've engaged with community partners? How have you altered your approach? |

have achieved deep learning experiences with students that went well beyond the initial course design.

A faculty member directing a program in rural Bolivia explained to students that “lack of redundancy” was a characteristic of developing countries. The students were able—just as would have been the case on campus—to conceptualize that lack of redundancy may mean unreliable transportation systems, access to water, inconsistent electricity service, or inconsistent stock in stores. Yet when a hammer actually did break on a construction site—causing a significant issue for the workers because it was one of the few hammers available nearby—students saw the effect of this concept quite clearly. The faculty member integrated the experience with students’ reflective discussion and journaling that evening, asking how experiencing lack of redundancy related to and affected their interpretation of the development theories they studied. Furthermore, the discussion turned to whether it is legitimate to theorize about development from afar without engaging with, seeing, or experiencing the depth of challenges faced in rural communities in developing countries.

Also in Bolivia, a different faculty member was engaged in a conversation with a community partner about human rights, when the community partner said many of her friends felt that human rights might be useful elsewhere, but in Bolivia they protected only criminals. This utterance triggered a long discussion with students and community members that illustrated the contingent and culturally contextualized nature of human rights—one of the goals of the course. It also highlighted the power and positionality of the community partner in Bolivian society. Although a similar discussion could have taken place in a classroom on campus, leveraging the community partner’s comment into a conversation harnessed the energy of the moment into an engaging, personally connected, and educationally rich discussion.

In Ghana, students and a faculty member were learning about the local community through an informal tour provided by a community partner. Knowing that microfinance was a very popular idea, the community partner took care to introduce the group to a farmer involved in a microfinance project. The farmer shared that he was part of a microfinance program that permitted him to grow “the strategic crop” for the region. Curious about the limited frame placed on the farmer, the faculty member asked a few follow-up questions and quickly learned the “microfinance program” was actually a corporation’s program designed to ensure coca production from smallholder farms. This unanticipated learning moment led to rich discussion on precisely what microfinance is, as well as how corporate programs that cooperate with smallholder farms can be both beneficial and limiting for rural communities.

The previous examples illustrate how faculty members leveraged particular experiential moments, often drawing from and engaging in dialogue with local community members' experience and knowledge, to deepen students' thinking about course concepts and delve into the complexity of theory in practice. This kind of effort should occur systematically throughout a course experience and also dynamically when the opportunity presents itself. To systematically advance reflective questioning, we find it helpful to consider learning objectives in the context of anticipated academic and experiential content throughout the experience, as illustrated in Toolbox 3.3 on disciplinary content and in Toolbox 3.4 in respect to several common thematic areas in CBGL. Importantly, we have not included a disciplinary content example in the four learning areas considered in the following list. We have instead focused on reflective questioning, texts, and exercises that provide opportunities for staggered exploration of the core CBGL content areas of global citizenship and civic action, service and development, intercultural learning, power, positionality, and privilege. Some of the following examples refer to specific texts, exercises, or experiences. Depending on faculty members' leadership decisions and the unpredictable nature of local contexts and conditions, these reflective questions can complement academic reading. In addition, best practices in reflection suggest that questions should be "connected, contextualized, continuous, and challenging" (Eyler et al., 1996).

The four Cs suggest that reflection must be

1. connected to academic assignments that continuously build knowledge and sophistication of analysis;
2. contextualized in the community experience and broader social issues;
3. continuous by happening before, during, and after a service experience; and
4. challenging in terms of pushing students to reflect and question evermore deeply (Eyler & Giles, 1999).

Toolbox 3.4 demonstrates how the four Cs can be integrated through continuous reflection on CBGL. It also demonstrates how questions may be explicitly connected to specific texts and contextualized through learning from the experience, as is the case when students are asked to revisit their understandings of culture after working with host community members. In terms of challenging students through reflection, like many best practices in education, that goal is often best achieved by working with each student individually. Toolbox 3.5 employs the DEAL framework in light of pre-, during, and

TOOLBOX 3.4 Learning Goals, Experience, and Reflection Before, During, and After CBGL Experience

| Content Area | Learning Objective | Before | During | After |
|--|---|--|--|--|
| Global citizenship and civic action | Describe and begin to implement personal commitment to human dignity | After reading the introduction to Nussbaum's (2002) <i>Love of Country?</i> how would you describe your own commitment to the notion of human dignity? | Consider the Global Civic Action Guide (on the globalsl website) and indicate if you can imagine being involved with any of those organizations. If not, how might you advance your commitments? | Develop and deliver a community presentation describing your CBGL experience, why it mattered to you, and ways in which you might continue to stay involved with the related issues. |
| Power and privilege | Demonstrate understanding of positionality and its effects | Complete the identity pie exercise (Toolbox 3.2). | After you examine your initial identity pie, ask: How has your time in the community affected your understanding of your home and host cultures, specifically in respect to power and privilege? | How does your positionality give you special "voice" to possibly advocate for or influence particular kinds of policies and attention to social issues? |
| Service and development | Articulate personal philosophy of service | Why are you coming on this trip? | Complete the "Global Civic Action?" activity (Toolbox 2.1). | How has this experience affected your understanding of service? How might you continue to serve? |
| Intercultural understanding | Exhibit increased understanding of culture and ability to communicate across cultures | Develop a "stereotype list" with peers (Toolbox 3.5). | Revisit, critique, and consider stereotype list in light of experiences. | Develop a friendly "elevator speech" response for trusted friends who label community partners with stereotypes. |

TOOLBOX 3.5

Focusing on Intercultural Understanding and Comprehension of One's Own Positionality

| | Before | During | After |
|----------------------------|---|--|---|
| Describe | As a group, develop a "stereotype list" of ideas you believe you or others hold about the community or country where you will be working and cooperating. | Revisit, critique, and consider the stereotype list in light of experiences. | Develop an "elevator speech" response for friends and family who may label community partners with stereotypes. |
| Examine | Which stereotypes are negative? Positive? | Which of your ideas have been challenged and how? Which have been confirmed and how? | What have you learned about your culture through this activity? |
| Articulate learning | How do you benefit from these stereotypes? How do these ideas connect to dominant group privilege? | How has confronting your stereotypes through experiential learning helped you to become more culturally competent? | How can you learn from the reactions to your speech to further develop your capacities to support more intercultural understanding? |

postimmersion opportunities to demonstrate how one theme may be continuously revisited to encourage student learning and reflection in a specific area. In this case, we offer further elaboration on the development of intercultural understanding and appreciation for the dynamic nature of one's own positionality in specific CBGL contexts.

Theorists have suggested there is a pattern or set of stages of university students' cognitive development in which the final stage tends to be characterized by a meta-awareness of one's own learning process and an ability to make decisions and reach judgments in the context of continuously changing knowledge (Baxter-Magolda, 2003; Chickering, 1969; Kegan, 1982, 1994; Perry, 1981). These cognitive developmental theories can provide a helpful reflective framework for cooperating with students in their struggles as they work to understand new ideas as well as accept new understandings of

knowledge, its foundations, and its evolving character. Applications of this theoretical insight on cognitive development are extensive. We explore these practices later in the section on critical reflection, but we first consider several specific implications for academic learning in terms of both course content mastery and skill development.

Perry (1970, 1981) suggested that college students move through a patterned progression of thinking stages from dualistic to relativistic thinking and finally to making a commitment to a particular perspective and potential action in light of continuously developing knowledge. They begin with dualistic thinking, which posits a right and a wrong and a deference to their teachers as the arbiters of correct and false knowledge, before moving into a relativistic space in which students begin to open their mind to the possibility of multiple valid perspectives on a particular concept, idea, topic, or problem. Following a relativistic phase, according to Perry (1970, 1981), students embrace the need to make a commitment to particular judgments while recognizing the knowledge is both grounded in and evolving with the context (Fitch, Steinke, & Hudson, 2013). The trajectory he suggested is consistent with the kind of development of critical thinking sought by liberal educators, that thinking should embrace a diversity of ideas and recognize multiple legitimate ways of knowing (Association of American Colleges & Universities, 1998), while maintaining the ability to lead ethically and effectively.

This process can be nurtured through application of targeted reflection questions specific to disciplinary content areas. When students demonstrate dualistic thinking, faculty members should ask a question that encourages further nuance. When their answers are nuanced but relativistic, faculty members' individualized journal responses should encourage them to consider the implications of decisions for individual human lives that take place in a specific political, cultural, and social context. In other words, faculty members should demonstrate that commitments to ideas (or lack thereof) have implications for people's lives under particular contextual conditions. Both in the United States and abroad, CBGL frequently demonstrates that most people experience contexts that are strikingly complex, dynamic, and unpredictable, in which a shift in policy may have profound implications for individual lives and families. Toolbox 3.6 suggests this kind of dynamic in relation to indigenous health care policy.

Thus far we have considered how reflection can be systematically developed to describe, examine, and articulate learning before, during, and after immersion; how specific course content and learning goals should relate to reflection questions; and how ongoing reflection during course experiences should respond to students individually, calibrating to their degree of nuance in thinking. Responding to students where they are as individuals can be

TOOLBOX 3.6

Individualized Reflection to Develop Critical Thinking Skills

| Reflection Question | Student Response | Faculty Response |
|--|--|---|
| We have reviewed several articles relating to indigenous health care, self-determination, and childhood vaccinations. On the basis of these articles and your experiences speaking with community members and observing in local health clinics, what do you think is the best policy for the local community? | <i>Dualistic response:</i> Every child should have access to vaccinations. That is clearly the policy most strongly correlated with longer lives. | You make a good point about longevity, but the Indigenous Tribal People's Convention was clearly developed because many indigenous community worldviews consider some things (e.g., relationship with the divine) more important than longevity. How would you address this perspective? |
| | <i>Relativistic response:</i> It is impossible to say. There are good arguments on both sides. For example, longevity wins the day on one hand, whereas on the other hand, self-determination should arguably be held as a preeminent right for all peoples. | You make good points, but you must nonetheless take a position. That is what human rights lawyers, policymakers, and advocates or abstainers must do every day. We make decisions whether we expressly advocate for particular policies or simply go along with what others have decided. So weighing the best arguments, current evidence, and context, put yourself in the position of a human rights judge. Would you side for required childhood vaccinations or complete community autonomy on health-care decisions? Why? |

achieved through individualized journal responses and interpersonal reflective questioning during class discussion. We will now consider the role of different kinds of learning strengths and styles.

Educators should design activities that provide a variety of opportunities for reflective processing and expression (see Eyster et al., 1996). Different types of reflective spaces for students comfortable expressing themselves individually, interpersonally, in teams, or through creative outputs are demonstrated next. These categories and related types of reflective activities are organized in Toolbox 3.7. Some of the activities are self-evident, whereas others are described in greater detail throughout this book, including the comfort zone

TOOLBOX 3.7
Diverse Opportunities for Reflection

| Individual/ Semiprivate Writing | Public Writing | Interpersonal With Class | Interpersonal/Experiential With Community | Creative |
|---|--|--|--|---|
| Journal, reflective essays, thank-you letters to the community, explanatory letters to friends and family, letter to legislator, research paper | Editorial, conference poster or presentation, posts to social media, reflective blog, or creation of online petition | Facilitated discussion, identity pie (Toolbox 4.1), presentations, elevator speech development, group journal, and structured feedback | Comfort zone activity (Toolbox 4.4), seven strangers exercise (Toolbox 7.6), ethnography, listening exercises, elevator speeches, presentations, asset-based mapping | Photo essay assignment, development of website, multimedia reflective blog, development of product for the community, newsletter, video, publication, grant proposal, radio segment |

activity (Toolbox 4.4), the group journal (chapter 7), and the seven strangers activity (Toolbox 7.6).

Critical Reflection

The preceding section clarified what is meant by reflection in CBGL, best practices for reflective planning using the DEAL model, awareness of the flow of a sandwich course (described more comprehensively in the program models section in chapter 6), backward design (further discussed in chapter 7), and student development theory. We now turn to highlighting what we believe (along with other adult learning scholars such as Brookfield, 1995, 2000, 2009; Freire, 2000; Kiely, 2004, 2005, 2015; Mezirow, 1995) are important differences between reflection and critical reflection. As Brookfield (2009) stated, “This conflating of the terms ‘reflection’ and ‘critical reflection’ implies that adding the qualifier ‘critical’ somehow makes the kind of reflection happening deeper and more profound” (p. 294).

Brookfield (2009) clarified that reflection is not inherently critical. He described at least four intellectual traditions underpinning the concept and use of critical reflection, each of which brings a set of assumptions, practices, and implications for how reflection is used (Kiely, 2015). Brookfield (2009), whose writing on critical reflection draws heavily from Marxist thought, Gramsci, and the Frankfurt tradition of critical social theory, contended,

Critical reflection turns the spotlight squarely onto issues of power and control. It assumes the minutiae of practice have embedded within them the struggles between unequal interests and groups that exist in the wider world. For reflection to be considered critical then, it must have as its explicit focus uncovering and challenging the power dynamics that frame practice and . . . hegemonic assumptions (those assumptions we embrace as being in our best interests when in fact they are working against us). (p. 298)

For CBGL educators and practitioners, the use of critical reflection from a critical theory tradition indicates engaging in a learning process that recognizes and critiques ideology (political, economic, social, and cultural), uncovers hegemonic assumptions, and examines relations of power with the goal of becoming critically aware of how each distorts our worldview. It also involves exploring ways to act and challenge the status quo to achieve a more just and equitable set of social, political, economic, and cultural relations (Brookfield, 2009). That is, the work of CBGL is bound up with the effort to critically examine the distortions of our own and others’ taken-for-granted assumptions in order to imagine and re-create a world that better respects every person’s

basic dignity (Hartman & Kiely, 2014a). It is aligned with critical service-learning (Kiely, 2005; Mitchell, 2008) in the Freirean tradition (Deans, 1999) and engages ongoing analysis and critique of multiple forms of structural violence (Galtung, 1969). Critically reflective practice can help us move beyond hegemonic structures and discourses that prevent us from enacting mutual respect and equal treatment around the world, while our commitments remain to this value of equity and basic moral equality among all people.

Especially because CBGL may be pioneering, path breaking, or perhaps even radical, a faculty member cannot plan for all of the insights and outcomes that may result from it. This is the case for any course that is community engaged and thereby includes unpredictable interactions with others. That community engagement requires ongoing adjustment and flexible planning is made clear in the service-learning literature (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Jacoby, 2015; Sandmann, Kiely, & Grenier, 2009), but we are suggesting something that goes one step further. One cannot plan precisely for outcomes when CBGL is part of the development of critical consciousness or conscientization (Freire, 2000), transformational learning (Edwards, 2008; Kiely, 2004), movement building (Swords & Kiely, 2010), or doing the pioneering work of global citizens creating an as-yet-unimagined tomorrow (Falk, 2000). This is the case in two different ways.

First, critically reflective practice and the movement-building work of service-learning that explicitly and intentionally challenges long-standing institutional arrangements, power relations, and dominant cultural norms that serve to oppress rather than empower necessarily involves creating new pathways and possibilities (Swords & Kiely, 2010). Students as civic actors and cocollaborators in community development may imagine and implement an unplanned possibility. For example, several community initiatives and advocacy campaigns have grown from youthful idealism into full-fledged nonprofit organizations, social sector initiatives, and movements (see amizade.org, www.engagegrassroots.org, www.wateraid.org/us/water-for-waslala, www.teachforamerica.org). This cannot be a precisely targeted learning outcome but may be a more likely result with the infusion of critically reflective practice, a practice that highlights the distance between ideal and real social structures. Second, our understandings of humility, continuously developing knowledge, and history lead us to embrace the notion that ongoing criticality (Burbules & Berk, 1999) is important for everyone to develop as a life habit. As Freire (2000) recognized, this permanent position of criticality is itself an unsettled outcome. It is continuously shifting, asking, wondering, sometimes acting, and always returning again to question. It is never finished.

Kiely's (2002, 2004, 2005, 2015) work questions current conceptions of reflection in the experiential and service-learning literature (Eyler & Giles, 1999; Kolb, 1984) and demonstrates the shortcomings of many programs that claim to advance transformational learning. Although the terms *critical reflection* and *transformational learning* are often employed without robust attention to their theoretical roots, Kiely conducted a longitudinal study of a CBGL program that engaged students in critically reflective practice before, during, and after their CBGL experience. His research demonstrates the value of critical reflection for students' perspective transformation in CBGL and its connection to individual and social action. However, as his study indicated, students who engage in critical reflection often experience perspective transformation or profound shifts in their worldview that are personal, ethical, political, cultural, intellectual, and spiritual (Kiely, 2002, 2004). Such shifts, while illuminating distorted and sometimes harmful assumptions about one's self, culture, consumption habits, ways of knowing, institutional structures, and the sources and solutions to persistent problems in the community, can also lead students to disengage. They may feel frustrated, particularly with status quo thinking that neglects to consider the complex structural factors that affect social problems, and experience difficulty communicating the meaning of their CBGL experience to friends, family, coworkers, and others. Indeed, the student and scholar featured in the story that began this chapter identified strongly with Kiely's insights.

Kiely (2004) referred to the challenges students have returning home in communicating, sharing, and sometimes reconciling their worldview shift with those who haven't experienced a shift in perspective as the *chameleon complex*. Having experienced a deep shift in how they see and understand the world, students have begun to question and challenge current social and cultural norms that they find harmful and oppressive. They are often unable to share and connect with their peers and family and instead hide their true colors while feeling frustrated and conflicted about how to negotiate and maintain stable and meaningful relationships. They struggle to share their sense of how they have changed and who they are becoming with the people around them. Because of the potential for students to experience the chameleon complex upon return and long after participating in CBGL, it is crucial that faculty incorporate numerous reflection assignments and exercises for students to hone their skills in reflection and critical reflection. Ongoing reflective activity supports students' capacities to move through disruption and confusion toward transformative action. Such reflective activity may support their capacities to respond to one of the greatest challenges in the CBGL learning cycle: negotiating one's newfound insights and identity

with loved ones and friends after the experience. This theme of understanding the Chameleon Complex and therefore channeling students' insights and energies following a CBGL experience is further explored in chapter 9.

Critical reflection as it is understood in the critical theory tradition, therefore, differs from much of the dominant cognitive developmental, technical-rational, and constructivist reflection traditions in service-learning in terms of its intentionality regarding interrogation of taken-for-granted assumptions and common sense wisdom; its examination of ideology and hegemony; its embrace of alternative perspectives; and its explicit questioning of power and self-interest in relation to harmful practice, systemic oppression, marginalized communities, and the development of critical consciousness (Freire, 2000; Kiely, 2002, 2004, 2005, 2015; Mezirow, 1991, 1995). This reflective orientation thereby moves well beyond learning that focuses on students' personal growth, objective content mastery, and disciplinary skill development toward becoming part of a larger, ongoing movement challenging dominant norms and existing structures, policies, and institutions that have historically benefited certain groups' interests over others (Kiely, 2015; Swords & Kiely, 2010). Brookfield (2009), for example, proclaimed that the focus of critical reflection is "always on analyzing commonly held ideas and practices for the extent to which they perpetuate economic inequity, deny compassion, foster a culture of silence and prevent people from realizing a sense of common connectedness" (p. 298).

To set up reflection in service-learning as concerned purely with learning goals within disciplinary fields is unfair. We recognize that service-learning scholars who have written about reflection (Ash & Clayton, 2009; Eyler & Giles, 1999) are interested in advancing transformational learning and that they often include reflective activities that advance that goal. Yet our suggestion here is that an embrace of critical reflection, which clearly represents a values orientation toward philosophical and intellectual traditions that focus on ideology critique, questioning of hegemonic assumptions, and concern for the marginalized, is more likely to lead to individual and social transformation beyond the focus of the course, as documented by Kiely (2004, 2005).

Engaging in critical reflection, to a much greater extent than is the case with structured reflective practice for specific learning goals, requires the faculty member to decenter himself or herself as an authority figure (Freire, 2000; Weiler, 1991). This means faculty need to share control over how knowledge is constructed and how decisions are made over the content and process of the service-learning course and community work. In addition, faculty need to engage in dialogue with multiple and diverse stakeholders in order to create a democratic learning environment and civic space.

Faculty members and teachers may find this process disorienting, as it often “breaks the wall” of authority and expertise created by the traditional academic model. Critical reflection asks a lot of our participants in terms of questioning assumptions, critiquing dominant and oppressive norms and structures, sharing feelings, and taking concrete action steps. The end goal of critical reflection is a lifelong commitment to continuously considering the legitimacy of habits and social structures and being willing to make ongoing adjustments and realignments to create a better, more just world. CBGL educators and practitioners should model and demonstrate how they have approached these challenges in their own lives (Brookfield, 1995, 2000; Kiely, 2015) and remind students in a very real and inspiring way that our lives are spiritual and political statements. Students also model faculty behavior in this and other aspects of CBGL, so honest sharing about personal struggles to live justly and well is powerful and important. In reflection, authority and expertise are not nearly as valuable as integrity and commitment.

CBGL educators and practitioners may also find themselves as the object of questions from participants and community members—interrogated and challenged by those with a critical consciousness. By practicing critical reflection themselves, CBGL program leaders can respond, think deeply, and even alter their own perspectives and actions as necessary. Brookfield (2009) recognized the challenge of power and privilege within our own practice, writing “better to acknowledge publicly our position of power” and to engage with others “in deconstructing that power, and to model a critical analysis of our own source of authority” (p. 301). Without practicing the critical thinking and reflection required of participants, CBGL program leaders risk perpetuating problems and then becoming defensive about them.

Tilley-Lubbs (2009) provided an excellent example of CBGL program leader reflection on the privilege and hierarchy issues she created via an intercultural service-learning course model that positioned students as “haves” and community members as “have-nots.” When she began the work, her “only concerns focused on responding to perceived community needs and providing an opportunity for everyone to meet” (p. 62). She wrote, bravely, that she nonetheless “enacted historian Wise’s (1980) words, ‘An ironic situation occurs when the consequences of an act are diametrically opposed to the original intention,’ and, ‘when the fundamental cause of the disparity lies in the actor himself, and his original purpose’” (p. 62). Tilley-Lubbs’s reflections led her to develop service-learning practice more consistent

with her ideals than the charity approach she had inadvertently embraced. Relationships with students and community partners (see chapter 5) can benefit from Tilley-Lubbs's insights:

“Service-learning is a way of building relationships; not hierarchical relationships that are top-down, helper–helpee, but nonhierarchical relationships in the sense that each partner has something to gain and each has something to give” (Jackson & Smothers, 1998, p. 113). Additionally, I acknowledge that the “served control the service provided” thus making them “better able to serve and be served by their own actions” (Sigmon, 1979, p. 3). . . . I seek creative ways to involve students with families in empathic relationships that foster attitudes of concern for social justice and equity not based on deficit notions but rather on a realization of their responsibility to help people meet their basic needs. . . . The bottom line is the imperatives of involving the women in the process of praxis to transform charity into collaboration. (Tilley-Lubbs, 2009, p. 65)

As we emphasize throughout this book, the skills and practices of CBGL are profoundly interdependent. One cannot, for example, engage community-driven partnerships thoughtfully without considerable critical reflection and cultural humility, the topic of our next chapter.

