

Introduction:

This lesson plan outlines the reflective journaling prompts used as part of a Community of Practice (CoP) program to support first-time biology graduate Teaching Assistants (TAs). Four times during the semester in which they are teaching, the TAs reflect and write responses in an electronic journal to prompts that range from topics generally about their teaching and student interactions to topics specifically aligned with intercultural self-awareness development. TAs read and react to each other's journal entries before a synchronous informal discussion designed to elaborate from the reflective prompts for that week.

Objectives:

As a result of this activity, participants will be able to:

1. Articulate their own cultural norms and biases that they bring with them to their teaching in undergraduate biology courses.
2. Practice reflective awareness of how students' own cultural identities may be different from their own and how that could affect their participation and learning in courses.
3. Identify and practice teaching and interaction strategies to engage ALL learners in their classrooms.

Time:

6 hours.

(Four 30-minute reflections and peer responses along with four 50-minute sessions for informal discussion.)

Group Size:

Individual reflections and small group discussion.

Materials:

Computer with a webcam (if conducting virtually); access to the internet; discussion board platform; Participant Instructions (in [Downloads](#)).

Intercultural Development Continuum Stages:

- Polarization
- Minimization
- Acceptance

AAC&U Intercultural Knowledge and Competence Goals:

Cultural Self-Awareness

- To articulate insights into own cultural rules and biases (e.g., seeking complexity; aware of how their experiences have shaped these rules, and how to recognize and respond to cultural biases, resulting in a shift in self-description).

Empathy

- To interpret intercultural experience from the perspectives of own and more than one worldview.
- To demonstrate ability to act in a supportive manner that recognizes the feelings of another cultural group.

Other Skills:

Mentorship & Leadership; Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion.

Activity Instructions:

1. Instruct students to write weekly reflections on their teaching each Friday (see prompts below).
2. Before each CoP meeting, instruct students to review the reflections of the other participants and post a response on the pages of the other participants (write in a different font color or add a text box by clicking on their page and include their own name).
3. Additional prompt for September reflection:
 - What virtual platforms have you been using that work well for you and your students?
 - What have been challenges?
4. Additional prompt for mid-October reflection:
 - Describe a successful strategy you have used that has helped with classroom management this semester and an area in which you would value advice.
 - Or describe a strategy you would like to try this semester.
5. Additional prompts for late October reflection:
 - How do you define "culture?"
 - In what way(s) do(es) your cultural identity(ies) affect how you approach teaching and interactions with students?
 - In what way(s) might student cultural identity(ies) affect their behaviors and learning in their courses?
6. Additional prompts for early November reflection:
 - Visit the Inclusive Teaching Guide here: https://lse.ascb.org/evidence-based-teaching-guides/inclusive-teaching/?_ga=2.119565327.684230250.1604323518-1418086574.1597014403
 - Read the high-level descriptions for the following area: Developing Self-Awareness, Developing Empathy, Classroom Climate, and Pedagogical Choices subareas

- (Fostering Sense of Belonging and Promoting Engagement and Self-Efficacy).
- Pick one of the areas to explore more and reflect on after exploring the Inclusive Teaching Guide and their area of interest:
 - What are you doing currently in your teaching and interactions with students?
 - What is something new that you learned in the Inclusive Teaching Guide?
 - What could you do differently in the future based on what you learned in the Inclusive Teaching Guide?
7. Additional prompts for late November reflection:
- Review the Purdue Academic Integrity website (or another academic integrity website of your choosing): <https://www.purdue.edu/odos/osrr/academic-integrity/index.html>
 - What is the process that you should follow as a TA in your current course if you suspect student academic dishonesty?
 - What questions do you have about what qualifies as academic dishonesty and your role in addressing it?