Challenging reflection “requires intervention on the part of a teacher or colleague who is prepared to pose questions and propose unfamiliar or even uncomfortable ideas for consideration by the learner.” It is important in this situation that the students feel they are in a safe and mutually respectful atmosphere where they can freely express their opinions, ideas and thoughts.

Contextualized reflection ensures that the reflection activities or topics are appropriate and meaningful in relation to the experiences of the students. For example, should the reflection be more formal or informal? Or should it occur in proximity to the community the students will be working with? Does the reflection topic coincide with the considerations and issues that the students have been expressing? Contextualized reflection takes into consideration all these components, which makes for a more meaningful and educational reflection session.

2 Ibid, p.18
4 ibid, p.19

The Experiential Learning Cycle

Experiencing
The activity phase

Applying
Planning Effective Use of Learning

Generalizing
Developing Real-World Principles

Now what?

Sharing
Exchanging reactions and observations

Processing
Discussing Patterns and Dynamics

So what?

Wysocki, Anne (the material on this page was originally adapted by Pamela J. Wilson from material published by J. E. Jones and J. W. Pfeiffer, eds, the 1973 handbook for group facilitators—it has been further modified by Anne Wysocki for the Corporation for National Service)
“Get Up, Get Into It, Get Involved”

The Training and Reflection Series at the Career and Community Learning Center

The “Get Up, Get Into It, Get Involved” pre-entry training is a three-hour interactive session that examines important issues relevant to any student who will be participating in a community involvement experience. The training is broken down into three sections entitled Tools, Diversity, and Big Picture. The Tools section touches on several skills necessary to enabling the student to get the most out of their community involvement and/or have a successful service learning experience. Such skills include recognizing and respecting boundaries, active listening, clear communication, responsibility, confidentiality, and problem solving. The Diversity section of the training explores the importance of understanding one’s own cultural frame and being aware of the assumptions and biases one unknowingly can view the world through. This section also discusses racism in our community and what it means to live in a society with institutionalized systems of privilege and oppression. The Big Picture section specifically looks at the issue of the unequal distribution of wealth and power in our society and how it connects to systems of oppression. The section also challenges students to analyze the notion of “service” and the paternalistic relationship that can be implicit in service.

In addition to the pre-entry training, the Get Up, Get Into It, Get Involved program offers follow-up reflection sessions that occur either in the classroom or during structured reflection sessions. The in-class reflection sessions our coordinated jointly by course faculty and community involvement staff at the CCLC. Faculty are encouraged to incorporate structured critical reflection into their service learning course work, and challenge students to reflect on their experiences on an on-going basis. The CCLC offers extensive resources for faculty and community partners to develop customized critical reflection for students involved in community involvement. Students are encouraged to discuss how their work is going, reflect on what they have learned, discuss any possible conflicts they may be having, and look deeper into specific community issues relevant to their work and learning experience on an on-going basis.

The students who participate in this training series are starting work at a community organization either through a service-learning course or of their own initiative. The training and reflection sessions are here to provide a vehicle through which the students can further explore the issues they are coming across in their community involvement experience and empower them to critically examine those issues, to connect the theory they are learning in their classes to their experience, and give them the tools to take action for social change.
“Get Up, Get Into It, Get Involved”
A Pre-Community Involvement Training for University of Minnesota Students

SCHEDULE
Length of Session: 3 hours

Introduction
Overview of Program
Icebreaker Activity
Statement of goals and guidelines
Expectations Questionnaire and Attendance Sheets

Section I: Tools
Communications Activity
Active Listening
Communication Skills
Case Scenario Exercise – group discussions
Boundaries Roles and Problem Solving
Guidelines to Follow at Your Community Organization

Section II: Diversity
Overview of Diversity
Definitions and discussions
FRAME Exercise
The Race Exercise
Institutionalized Systems of Privilege – group discussions

Break: 10 minutes

Section III: Big Picture
“Systematic Oppression and Unequal Resources” Exercise
Large group discussion
“Starfish Hurling and Community Service”—reading and group discussion
Continuum Exercise

Wrap-Up
Question and Answer period
Closing Comments
Evaluation

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