Engaged Leadership

Community Engaged Student Travel Grant (CESTG)

Winter 2018 During-Engagement Reflection Guidelines

Thoughtfully respond to one (1) of the four (4) reflective prompts of your choice to reflect on your engaged experience. You may respond using any medium you see fit (whether you prefer writing prose or poetry, speaking, video recording, blog-type writing, etc.). Be sure to mention which prompt you are responding to in your medium.

Rather than setting a word minimum or maximum, we encourage you to just sit down and take about an hour to do this exercise. “Let it flow” rather than thinking about it as though it were a research paper. No need to over-think. Focus on providing your fresh, unfiltered story-telling abilities and letting your first personal voice come through as though you were talking to a friend or writing in a personal journal.

During-Engagement Reflection due on Thursday, January 11 at 4:00 PM

Submit reflection by email to EngagedLeadership@cornell.edu with the file name: LastName_FirstName_CR 1_W18

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What is Reflection?

**Reflection** is a learning process that entails “a person’s intentional and systematic consideration of an experience, along with how that person and others are connected to that experience framed in terms of particular course content and learning objectives” (Collier & Williams, 2005, p. 84).

**Critical reflection** in the context of community engagement means “guiding students through the process of considering and reconsidering their values, beliefs, and acquired knowledge that enables them to question and challenge their stereotypes and other a priori assumptions. Critical reflection adds depth and breadth to meaning by challenging simplistic conclusions, comparing varying perspectives, examining causality, and raising more challenging questions” (Jacoby, 2015, p. 27). According to Kiely (2015), “the ‘critical’ in reflection requires an explicit set of questions that prompt students to examine relations of power, hegemony, ideology, and trenchant historical structures and existing institutional arrangements that marginalize and oppress (para 19).

Prompt 1: Ethical Framework

**Introduction**
When we talk about actions being right and wrong we are making judgements about personal ethical frameworks without defining them. Ethical frameworks vary from person to person and vary even more between cultures. When entering new communities, individuals are often confronted with these differences in ethical principles, forcing them to be introspective and critical of their own views.

**Questions to Consider**
- What ethical framework or background are you bringing to this experience? What are your guiding principles and where do you think they come from?
- Describe an observation or experience in your community which has challenged or reinforced your ethical framework. What relevant ethical principles did you have before the observation or experience and did they change?
- How are your beliefs and ethical principles affecting your actions during this experience?
Prompt 2: Biases

Introduction
It is natural to make predictions about an experience before it comes to pass. Often, those predictions involve people or communities we expect to interact with. Those predictions stem from a series of biases (conscious or subconscious) that inform how we anticipate and then make meaning of experiences.

Questions to Consider
- In light of your experiences to date, analyze each bias you had prior to your travels about the people or communities with which you planned to engage, and describe experiences you have had in the community that verify or disprove your assumptions.
- How might identifying and analyzing these biases shape your continued engagement with communities?

Prompt 3: Single Story

Introduction
Chimamanda Ngozi, a Nigerian novelist and nonfiction writer, has spoken publicly about “the dangers of a single story,” that is, the unintended consequences that can arise when stories about people and cultures are told through the single lens of an ‘outsider.’ To avoid these unintended consequences—and to more fully and authentically relay the story of people and cultures to which we do not belong—Ngozi encourages those who engage with communities to document experiences “in their words too.”

Questions to Consider
- Describe a time in which you recognized the “danger of a single story.” What were some of the unintended consequences of the single story? Why did those consequences unfold in the ways they had?
- What steps can you take to ensure that the experiences you document more authentically relay the stories of the people and culture with which you are engaging? How will you incorporate perspectives that are “in their words too”?

Prompt 4: Identities

Introduction
We often talk about identities as categories in which people fall into. Although we all understand how identity is a highly complex and shifting component of individuals we rarely look at how our experiences shape how we perceive our own identities.

Questions to Consider
- Consider the 8 identities you’ve previously identified during the pre-engagement workshop’s identity sticker exercise. Which do you think are central to your experience? How?
- How do you think your identity is affecting your relationship with your community and organization? How is privilege playing a role in this?
- Has your experience altered any of these? Is this due to a change in yourself or in how you understand this identity?