

With Any Group

The Reflection Circle

In a group, use a quote, a question, or a prompt to encourage conversation in a Reflection Circle. This conversation can be structured in many ways. Knowledge of context and participants should inform the format of the Reflection Circle.

- Free-form: allow conversation to flow organically
- Go-Rounds: Each student speaks in turn, without interruption, responding to a question or giving a statement
- Mutual Invitation: Facilitator passes speaking privileges to one student, who then passes to another, and another, until everyone has been given the opportunity to speak

Critical Incident

Each person should choose a significant event and write about it, describing it in detail. They should analyze the event, including their own role and the event's impact. In a sense, this activity aligns with "What" and "So What." Instruct the group to examine the written report for hidden assumptions and values.

Criteria Analysis

Consider how you know that someone is successful (in whatever way is relevant: in community engagement, as a leader, as a student, as an adult...) and to list clear, directly observable, noncliche criteria. These benchmarks for success or failure may seem objective but are based on our values and can reveal our values. Modification: Instead of asking explicitly for criteria, you can ask: When did you feel successful? Who among your colleagues do you admire? Who did you see during your service that you admire? Why?

Core Reporting

Ask participants to identify 1-3 words to describe the event, their emotions, or their learning. Then dig deeper using reflection questions.

Free Write

With or without a prompt, allow participants 1-5 minutes to write as much as they can. Encourage participants to explore and see where their stream of consciousness wanders.

Image Identification

Provide a diverse set of images (of anything- people, actions, nature, color, abstract...) From a set of images, students should choose one that best expresses their motivation, emotions, or experience and explain why.

Learn by Teaching

Create a website or presentation about your experience or develop a guide for others in their shoes

Reflection Tree

Instruct students to draw a tree and label the parts as follows: Roots are values, people, beliefs that influence you. The bark is the different issues you care about and things you are working towards. Branches are the steps you must take to act on these issues.

Accountability Go-Rounds

If you meet periodically, ask each participant to identify one action they can take before the next meeting to continue their learning. At the next meeting, require reports on what they did and how it went

Persuasion

Write an editorial or letter of request to a public figure. You can choose whether or not to send the letter, as the deepest reflection occurs simply in writing it.

Pop Culture Connections

Identify a song, book, or film that represents your experience and your growth.

With Small Groups

Snowballing

Begin discussion in small groups by sharing in small groups, slowly increasing group sizes as participants become more comfortable.

Think, Pair, Share

Give a question or prompt. Allow a few minutes for individual reflection before sharing with a partner.

Team Journaling

Create a shared journal in which every participant writes for one day or activity.

Graffiti Wall

Post boards with different questions around the room (see Questions for ideas) and allow students to respond by writing on the board

Peer interviews

With a topic in mind, interview a partner on their opinion/perspective/journey on the subject. Afterwards, allow them to interview you.

With Large Groups

Coffee and Conversations

In a casual setting (such as over a meal or coffee hour) set up multiple tables labeled with different topics of conversation. Allow students to choose the table that most interests them.

Reflection Stations

With a large group, allow students to rotate between stations with different reflection activities. Either set a certain amount of time per station or allow the student to visit as many stations as they wish.

Four Square

Mark each corner of the room as “Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree.” Read statements and ask students to stand in the corner that best represents their opinion. Use this to begin conversation about different perspectives.

Creative Assets

Participants create a representation, using provided craft materials, of an asset they have realized that they possess.

Postcards

Provide inspirational postcards for students to write to people who have impacted them.