



## Reflection Strategies Beyond Written Papers

Loyola University Chicago's [Center for Engaged Learning, Teaching, and Scholarship](https://www.luc.edu/celts) has compiled a list of helpful prompt and assignment structures that are best practices. This is by no means exhaustive, but we hope it will help you and your students make the most out of their community-based learning experience!

Consider one or more of the following reflection strategies/tools that can facilitate critical reflection with your students:

### Photo Journal

**Objective:** Use photography or images to capture and reflect on significant learning moments during the service-learning project.

*Prompt:*

- *Describe:* Create a photo journal by taking pictures that represent your experiences, observations, and/ or lingering questions you have as a result of your service-learning throughout your. Choose 3-5 photos that stand out to you and place them in a powerpoint or google slideshow.
- *Examine:* For each photo, answer these questions via voice thread or in narration over the slides.
  - What is happening in this photo or image, and why did you choose it?
  - How does it reflect what you were thinking about and learning while at the site?
  - How does this photo relate to the material we are studying in class? Is it an example of a concept we are learning? A counterpoint? Make sure to mention the course reading or lecture this class content comes from.
- *Articulate Learning:* Do these photos reflect what you have learned from the experience? What isn't included here or is hard to capture?

**\*\*Additional Focus** - Have the students make sure that at least one photo is of a recognizable or distinctive part of the community they did service in. Have them then reflect on whether or not that landmark did or did NOT reflect the community they came to know (e.g. Students in Uptown might photograph the increasing gentrification around the Wilson L stop and comment on the

ways in which it show the changes in the community and how those changes impacted the people they worked on site with).

## Meme Reflection

Memes are images, videos, or pieces of text that are typically humorous in nature and spread rapidly across the internet. They often involve a recognizable format or theme, which is adapted by individuals to convey various messages, jokes, or social commentary. Because they use familiar templates, cultural references, and brevity, they can often deftly communicate complex ideas in creative ways or invite the viewer to consider and issues from another angle. The combination of visual elements and text allows for quick comprehension, even for intricate topics. For example a meme about climate change featuring a well-known "distracted boyfriend" template can humorously illustrate the distraction from serious environmental issues, making the point more striking and easily relatable. Inviting your students to create memes to sum up some of their learning and reflections (along with a brief thoughtful description) encourages to engage the topics creatively.

- **Activity:** Create a series of 3-5 memes that encapsulate different aspects of your service-learning experience as well as what you learned in class. Use popular meme formats to represent specific moments, challenges, emotions, and realizations from your project.
- **Guiding Questions:**
  - What meme represents your initial expectations and feelings at the start of the service project?
  - Is there a meme that symbolizes a significant learning or breakthrough during your experience?
  - Can you convey a complex topic or ongoing question that you have around your course content in meme form?
  - What meme would you choose to represent the overall learning of your service-learning?
- **Descriptions:** Provide a one to two paragraph explanation of your memes, including why you think Make sure to mention the course reading or lecture this class content comes from.

### Tips for Facilitating the Exercise:

1. **Provide Meme Templates:** Offer students a selection of popular meme templates to get started, ensuring they have the tools needed to create their memes.
2. **Encourage Humor:** Remind students that humor is a powerful tool for reflection and can help convey complex emotions and insights in an accessible way.
3. **Create a Class Meme Gallery:** Compile the memes into a class gallery, either physically or digitally, to showcase the diverse reflections and experiences of the service-learning journey.

4. **Connect to Personal Values:** Encourage students to explore how their memes reflect their personal values and the challenges or questions they may still have as a result of the course and service-learning.

## Reflections Using Music

Incorporating music into reflection exercises can be a powerful way to engage students in service-learning, allowing them to express and connect their experiences through a medium that resonates with them. Here is a reflection exercise using songs, aligned with the DEAL model of critical reflection.

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### Playlist Reflection

**Objective:** Use music to explore and articulate personal insights and emotions gained from the service-learning experience.

- **Activity:** Create a playlist of 2-3 songs that capture different aspects of your service-learning experience. Consider songs that resonate with the emotions, challenges, and key moments you encountered.
- **Guiding Questions:**
  - Choose a song that reflects your initial feelings and expectations at the start of your service-learning.
  - Choose a song that represents an issue or concept we learned about in class and how it links back to your service-learning experience.
  - Choose a song to represent the overall impact of your service-learning.
- **Analysis:** Select one of the songs and print out the song's lyrics. Then go over the text and hand write on the documents in the margins an explanation of your insights. Be sure to highlight and underline the lyrics that prompted your reflection. If it includes class concepts be sure to cite the source or lecture date. Feel free to use the back of the paper. Once you are done, scan or take a photo of the document and send it in.



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