

The Value of Reflection: Providing Opportunities for Meaning Making Throughout the Peer Educator Experience

Jennifer Latino, Campbell University

Jaime Shook, University of South Carolina

Reflective Interlude

Reflect on your most powerful learning experience.

What made it powerful?

What aspects of the experience can you recall that made a difference?

Share a brief summary of your experience with your neighbor.

THESE are the ingredients in the recipe of building a meaningful learning experience for our students.

How do we create an environment where our students discover these meaningful/powerful experiences?

Creating the TIME and SPACE

Who are our peer educators?

What is reflection?

What does reflection do/provide for our students?

We want to create time and space for a powerful learning experience!

Peer Educators-Defined

[Peer Educators] are students who have been **selected and trained** to offer educational services to their peers. These services are intentionally designed to assist in the adjustment, satisfaction, and persistence of students toward attainment of their educational goals. Students performing in [these] paraprofessional roles are usually compensated in some manner for their services and are **supervised by qualified professionals**.

-Newton & Ender, 2010

Benefits of Peer Education

Communication skills

Study habits

Time management and Organizational skills

Develop leadership skills

Group dynamics and conflict resolution

Gain greater insight into self; making practical applications to personal and career decisions

Academic achievement

Benefits of Reflection

Gives meaning to the experience

Provides an opportunity to establish expectations

Relieves tension and provides renewal

Can create a sense of accomplishment

Improved service

Additional Benefits within Personal and Team Development

Fosters life-long learning skills

Reality Check – Guards against reinforcing inaccurate perceptions/ biases

Builds community

Problem solving (personal/ group)

- Confidence

- Empowerment

Clarifies values

4 C's of Reflection

Continuous

Is it incorporated in the many components of your peer leader program?

Connected

Is the activity connected to the PL experience?

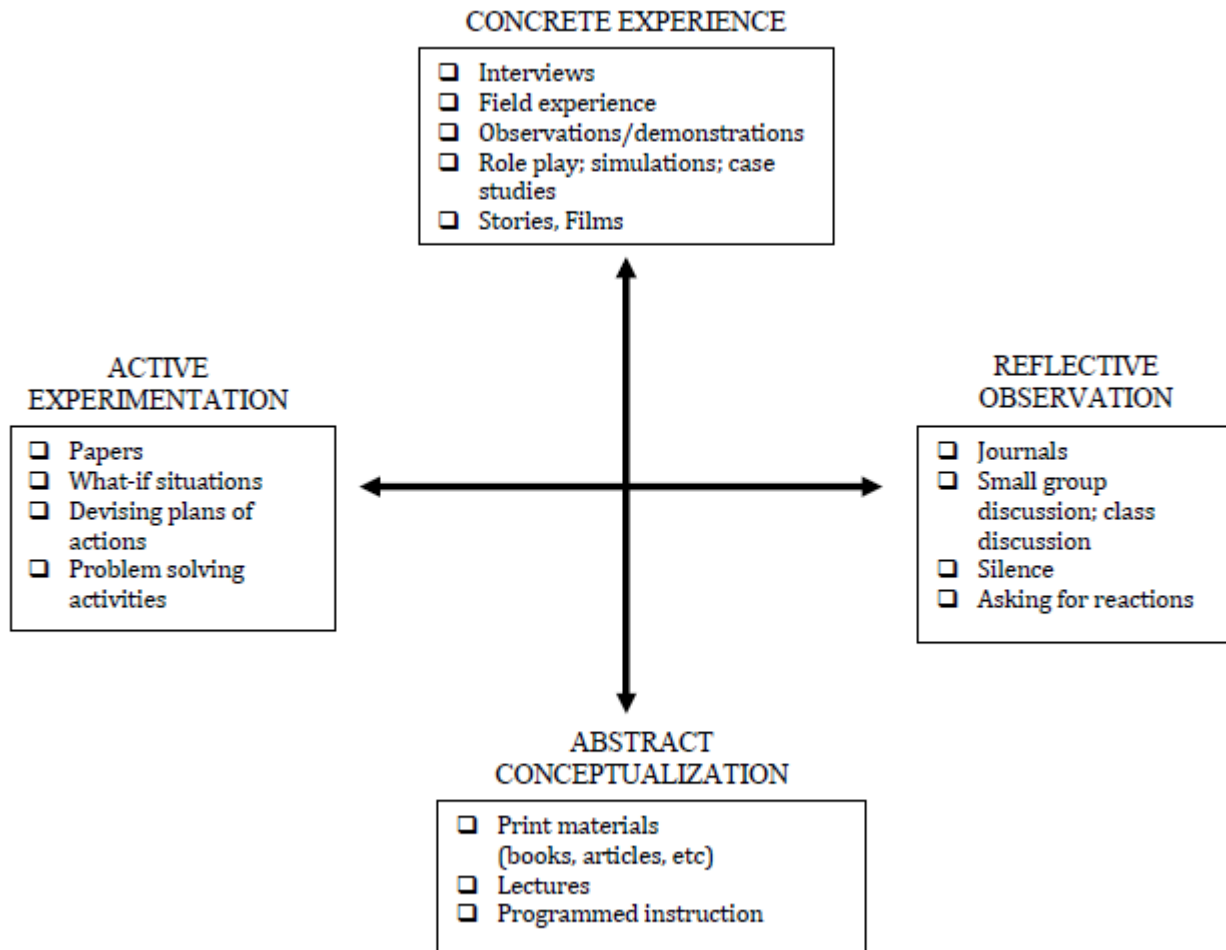
Challenging

Are you challenging your PL to think beyond the surface?

Contextualized

Is there a meaningful correspondence? What does this experience mean beyond this moment/activity?

Kolb's Model of Learning



When (TIME) can we provide those opportunities?

Training

Coursework/Assignments

Evaluation and Assessment

Tradition

Ongoing Support

Training

Today I learned...

My reactions to today's workshop are...

What has been your greatest challenge in the peer leader role so far?

What has been your greatest success in the peer leader role so far?

Coursework & Assignments

How much time do you have?

Semester:

Video Project

Portfolio / Scrapbook / Memory Box

Moment of Meaning presentation

“Critical Incident” Journal

Class / Session:

Lifeline

Develop a skit, write a song, do a collage

My 30 Values

Coursework & Assignments

How much time do you have?

Less than an hour

What? So what? Now what? Processing

Pipe cleaner

Yarn ball

Draw / explain

Interview each other about experiences

Moments

Check-in activities

Ask questions

Evaluation and Assessment

Exit Interview and/or End of Experience Evaluation Items

What was the most challenging aspect of your peer mentor experience?

What was the most rewarding aspect of your peer mentor experience?

What aspects of your peer mentor experience as a whole will you apply to other settings?

Please share any suggestions you have for improving the CUFS 100 Peer Mentor Program.

End of Experience Written Reflections/ Assignments

Write a letter to a new peer leader. Explain what your peer leader experience was like.

- What you learned
- Your biggest struggles
- Your greatest joys or accomplishments
- Comment on your relationship with your instructor
- Comment on your relationship with your students

Explain ways in which you have changed, grown, or developed over the past semester as a result of your peer leader experience.

Evaluation and Assessment

The most rewarding aspect of the position was interacting with the students. It was extremely rewarding to help them with any of their needs; I truly felt that I was a huge part of their success in their first year of college.

Because of the relationship I built with my co-instructor, I felt I had a place/person to go to if I experienced difficulties with any aspect of my role as a peer mentor.

Evaluation and Assessment

...I also learned some things about myself. Even as a senior, I feel unsure about where I am heading in life but, after teaching U101, I learned that I made a lot of good decisions and that I am not far off from where I should be. I always wondered if I was in the right field, second guessed not rushing a social sorority, regretted some of my decisions and reflected about other things that have happened in my time at [institution]. Helping guide freshmen through the process of making decisions and helping them begin to formulate their futures really helped me realize that, for the most part, I'm on the right track and that it's okay that at times I still feel unsure. I always heard myself saying to students, "College is all about what you make it" and I learned that I really just need to take my own advice.

Evaluation and Assessment

Self Evaluation

Cooperative Teaching and Communication Self-Assessment

Do I openly share my ideas and thoughts with my co-instructor(s)?

Do I encourage my co-facilitator(s) to share ideas and opinions?

Do I stay focused on the agenda at class and not stray to other topics?

Do I ask for feedback after I have presented a lesson?

Do I make sure that all feedback I give is constructive?

Do I receive feedback without defensiveness or hurt feelings?

Do I inform my co-instructor(s) if I am going to be late for a class meeting?

Traditions

Fire and Water Dinner

Peer Educator Celebration Banquet

End of the Experience Video Montage

Professional Development Series

Cross Campus Advising

Peer Advisors took advantage of time available when appointments did not show up

Developed a document students could complete at their own pace

Reflective activities focused on 3 parts

Three Focus Points

About Me

About My Peer Advisor Experience

About My Future Experiences

One-on-one conversations throughout the semester

Discuss reflective activities

SPACE to Provide Reflective Opportunities

Campus Lawn

Faculty/Staff Member's Home

Chapel

Bean Bag Room

Residence Hall

Advisor Meetings

Final Reflection

What reflective opportunities are you already providing for your students.

Identify at least 1 new method you will incorporate into your peer education program

Immediately (this term)

Short term (this year)

Long term (1-3 years)

Thank You For Your Participation

Dr. Jennifer A. Latino
Director, First-Year
Experience
Campbell University
latinoj@campbell.edu
www.campbell.edu/fye

Ms. Jaime Shook
Graduate Assistant,
University 101 Programs
University of South
Carolina
shookj@mailbox.sc.edu
www.sc.edu/univ101