

Reflection 1 on Description, Interpretation, Evaluation (D.I.E.)

Goals for this reflection

1. Students will describe people and situations with depth and detail.
2. Students will assume different perspectives.
3. Students will know the difference between description, interpretation and evaluation and be able to identify each.

Length

20 minutes

Best time to use this reflection

Near the middle of the service project or placement (mid-semester).

Materials needed

1. Watch, timer or clock
2. Blackboard, dry erase board or flip chart paper (any large writing surface)
3. Markers or chalk
4. One “ambiguous object”
It is best if this object is unknown to participants. Objects from unusual hobbies such as fishing or mountain climbing are good. Objects from other cultures such as Japanese sword cleaning implements are also good. Unusual hardware items or household utensils may also be good.
5. 1 photograph or image for whole-group D.I.E. exercise
6. 5-10 photographs or images for small groups
Enough to have one for each small group of 3-4 students. It may help if these photos are topical to students’ service learning experiences (for example, homelessness, schools, health, animal welfare, children, etc).

Preparation

1. Make enough copies of Handouts #1 and #2 for each student in the class
2. Make enough copies of whole-group photograph (#5 above) for each student in the class.
3. Make one copy of each of the additional photos for small groups (#6 above).
4. Review in-class procedure below.

IN-CLASS PROCEDURE

1. Divide the chart paper or chalkboard into three columns with lines. DO NOT put headings or titles on the columns.
2. Show the “ambiguous object” to the class. (2-3 minutes)

Instructor should prompt students by saying: “Tell me about this object.” DO NOT tell them what the object is or is used for. DO NOT ask them what they see or to describe the object. If feasible, students can touch the object and pass it around, but it should be quickly passed on to others. Spend two-three minutes on this. If necessary, prompt further discussion with “What else can you tell me about this?”

Write down what students say in the three columns. In the first column, put descriptions (things that can be seen or directly sensed; observable facts only). In the second column, put interpretations (what students think about what they see; their explanations of the object's purpose or use). In the third column, put evaluations (what students feel about what they think about the object, its appearance, or its assumed use, positive or negative). But remember, do not put headings or labels on the columns.

3. D.I.E. (2-3 minutes)

Distribute Handout #1 with definitions. Add labels/headings to the 3 columns. Review and explain the definitions of each category (description, interpretation and evaluation) and show how their comments fit into the three categories. Erase contents of the columns but leave headings.

4. Whole-group photo D.I.E. (3 minutes) – see Sample Photos

Distribute copies of the photograph or image you've chosen for whole-group discussion. First, ask students only to describe what they see. Chart in the "description" column. Correct them if they make any interpretations or evaluations. Spend 1 minute on this. Next, have them interpret, charting their responses. Correct them if they make descriptions or evaluations. Spend 1 minute on this. Finally, ask them to evaluate, including both positive and negative. Spend 1 minute on this.

5. Small group photo D.I.E. with alternatives (7-8 minutes)

Break the large group up into smaller groups of 3-4 students. Give each group a different photograph. Ask them to work together to fill out the chart on Handout #2 with one description, at least two alternative interpretations of the description (though they can add more interpretations if they choose), and at least two alternative evaluations of each interpretation (adding more if they choose). Give them about 7-8 minutes to work on this.

6. Report back and discussion (3-4 minutes)

Have one spokesperson from each small group report back on the alternative interpretations and evaluations the group generated. Prompt discussion with the following questions: "What role do assumptions, preferences and worldviews play in creating interpretations and evaluations of observed reality?" "How should you weigh alternative interpretations and evaluations?"

Post-reflection

Ask students to use the D.I.E. categories in a short writing assignment describing a situation from their service learning experience or a person they've encountered during their service learning.

Reflection 2 on Description, Interpretation, Evaluation (D.I.E.)

Goals for this reflection

1. Students will describe people and situations with depth and detail.
2. Students will assume different perspectives.
3. Students will know the difference between description, interpretation and evaluation and be able to identify each.

Length

20 minutes

Best time to use this reflection

Near the middle of the service project or placement (mid-semester).

Materials needed

1. Watch, timer or clock
2. One photograph, chosen in advance
3. Chart paper, whiteboard, or chalkboard (any large writing surface)

Preparation

1. Make enough copies of Handout #1 and the Interview Template for each student in the class.
2. Make enough copies of your chosen photograph for each student in the class.
3. Review in-class procedure below.

IN-CLASS PROCEDURE

1. Introducing D.I.E. categories through large group photo exercise (3 minutes)

Divide the chart paper or chalkboard into three columns with lines. DO NOT put headings or titles on the columns.

Pass out copies of the photo. It may help if this photo is topical to students' service learning experiences (for example, homelessness, schools, health, animal welfare, children, etc).

Instructor should prompt students by saying: "Tell me about this photo. DO NOT ask them what they see or to describe the photo. Spend two-three minutes on this. If necessary, prompt further discussion with "What else can you tell me about this photo?"

Write down what students say in the three columns. In the first column, put descriptions (things that can be seen; observable facts only). In the second column, put interpretations (what students think about what they see; their explanations of the image). In the third column, put evaluations (what students feel about what they think about the photo, positive or negative). But remember, do not put headings or labels on the columns.

2. Distribute Handout #1 and discuss (3 minutes)

Add labels/headings to the 3 columns on the board. Review and explain the definitions of each category (description, interpretation and evaluation) and show how their comments fit into the three categories.

3. Service learning interviews (1 minute + 5 minutes + 5 minutes)

Group students into pairs and hand out Interview Templates. If there is an odd number of students, the instructor may need to step in as an interviewer. Tell each student to choose an event, incident, or occurrence that happened in his/her service learning experience. It can be a small incident, and it can be one in which the student was an active participant or just something that was observed. But it should involve at least one other person, and it should be something that was significant in the sense that the student wasn't sure what to do or say, or it caused the student to re-think something or changed the student's perspective somehow. Leave 1 minute of thinking time/silence for students to choose their event, incident or occurrence.

Instruct one member of the pair to interview the other member about his/her chosen event, incident, or occurrence, using the Interview Template to take notes. Allow 5 minutes for the interview. Call time when 5 minutes are up.

Tell the partners to switch. The interviewee becomes the interviewer and uses the Interview Template to take notes. Allow 5 minutes; call time.

4. Report back and discussion (3 minutes)

Invite discussion with the following prompt: "Tell me how the person you interviewed described, interpreted, and evaluated the situation." "As the interviewer learning about the situation from outside, were there any alternative interpretations or evaluations that you could see?" NOTE: students are asked about the person they interviewed, not about their own incident. This puts the emphasis on listening and on assuming other perspectives.

Post-reflection

Ask students to do a short (2-3 page) writing assignment on their interviewee's situation using the D.I.E. categories. They should identify the interviewee's description, interpretation, and evaluation of the event, occurrence or incident they shared. Invite students to come up with at least one alternative interpretation or evaluation of their interviewee's situation.

DESCRIPTION, INTERPRETATION, AND EVALUATION

DESCRIPTION: What I see/sense (only facts that can be known tangibly/empirically)

INTERPRETATION: What I think about what I see; the sense I make of what I see

EVALUATION: What I feel about what I think (positive or negative)

EXAMPLES

Description: I see a woman of Asian origin covering her mouth.

Interpretation: She's yawning, so she must be bored.

Evaluation: That's all right, I don't blame her a bit.

Description: I see a red handle.

Interpretation: It must be something you use in emergencies.

Evaluation: People should be prepared to use safety equipment in emergencies.

ALTERNATIVE INTERPRETATIONS AND EVALUATIONS

Description: I see a woman holding a child.

Interpretation A: The woman is the child's mother and is holding the child out of love.

Evaluation #1: That's so natural and caring.

Evaluation #2: That's such a patriarchal depiction of women as mothers.

Interpretation B: The woman has kidnapped the child and is hiding the child from being seen by others.

Evaluation #1: That's repulsive and evil.

Evaluation #2: I hope the woman gets caught and the child is safe.

Interpretation C: The woman is a doctor and is examining the child for infectious illness.

Evaluation #1: Pediatricians are such noble people.

Evaluation #2: It's sad that many children suffer from preventable childhood illnesses.

Handout #2

Description

First interpretation

Alternative Interpretation

First evaluation

Alternative evaluation

First evaluation

Alternative evaluation

DESCRIBE		Interviewer's Notes
WHAT: Summarize the basic gist of the event, occurrence, incident or situation in 1-2 sentences.		
WHO: Who were the other people involved? Describe them. Describe their relationship to you and to each other.		
You: What did you do or say? How did you act/react/ interact? What was your role?		
WHEN/WHERE: If it's relevant, describe the location, surroundings, time frame, etc.		
INTERPRET		Interviewer's Notes
What was your read on the situation? What did you think about the situation when it happened?		
Do you have a different read on the situation now? Do you think about it differently now?		
Why do you think this incident was significant?		
EVALUATE		Interviewer's Notes
How did you feel about the situation when it happened?		
Do you feel any different now?		
If you had to judge how you and others acted in the situation, what would you say?		





