Peer Leader Supervisor Reflection Guide

As a REAL Level 3 experience at VCU, Peer Leadership is expected to include **guided reflection** as a core component of the experience. According to the VCU REAL website and drawn from Eyler, Giles, and Schmiede (1996), "Guided reflection is a learning process specifically structured to deepen understanding of lived experiences, and is most effective when it is continuous, connected, challenging, and contextualized." This practice is essential for all Level 3 and 4 REAL experiences at VCU because of how necessary reflection is to maximize experiential learning opportunities.

Far from simply meeting a University requirement, guided reflection enhances the Peer Leadership experience. Peer Leaders engaging in reflection can process their experiences and develop resilience, adaptability, and other skills relevant for their ongoing work in their position and their future careers. By offering support to Peer Leaders through intentional reflection on their experiences, Peer Leader supervisors help their students make meaning that they can then translate into new behavior in future situations and growth in self-awareness.

As you consider the practicality of reflection opportunities with Peer Leaders you supervise, remember, **reflection can occur in individual and group settings**. We recognize that extensive individual reflection is simply not feasible within the supervision structures that support many Peer Leader positions. Know that group reflection can be just as effective and meaningful, especially for teams that work together closely on a regular basis. While our REAL reflection resources provide more in-depth information about facilitation in both of these settings, we wanted to offer an explicit endorsement of both individual and group reflection.

This Reflection Guide will be far less extensive than other available resources on reflection, especially the REAL Reflection Handbook (linked here and available in the Peer Leader Supervisors REAL Reflection Resources folder). However, this guide will introduce one of many reflection models and introduce relevant reflection questions related to the Peer Leader learning outcomes. The Peer Leadership Initiative Team hopes these resources help you feel supported in your work, confident in your abilities, and well-equipped to serve your students as a Peer Leader Supervisor.

ORID Model for Critical Reflection – Objective, Reflective, Interpretive, Decisional

Drawn and adapted from the REAL Reflection Guide, pp. 14-15

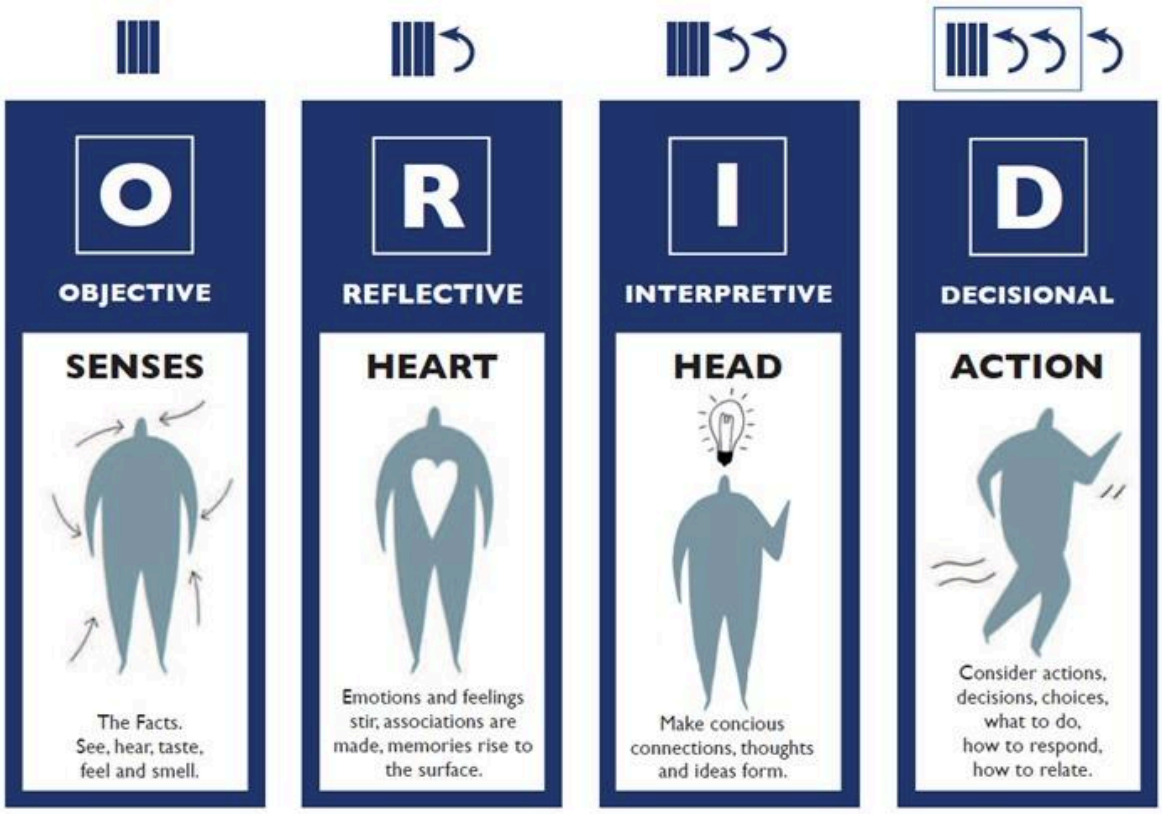


Image Credit: Martin Gilbraith

Objective

This first sets the scene. Provides the context. Establishes the facts and introduces any data sources that are behind the subject. It provides the basis for all parties to "get on the same page". Using the method you ask questions that relate to establishing people's knowledge and understanding of the subject area in question. ***For Peer Leaders***, this angle of reflection will help ground your conversation in reality. Especially after a particularly intense experience, recalling the facts of a situation without judgment and as objectively as possible will lay a strong foundation for the rest of your conversation.

Helpful Questions

- Imagine you were a video camera recording what you saw happening that day. What actions, words, phrases, objects, and scenes are recorded on your tape?
- Let's get everything out so we all have a full picture of what happened.
- What has happened since?

Reflective

During this phase participants are helped to identify or context their own situation to the subject, objectives or learning outcomes in questions. It gets out their reactions and feelings towards the subject. Providing key questions, analogies, practical examples or benchmarks are useful in helping participants reflect. By having first established the facts and understanding of the situation by objective questioning; reflexive questioning commences a learning journey in relation to the topic. ***For Peer Leaders***, this step may come naturally, even too quickly, or be difficult to access. Be patient and help them both fully recount what happened and how they felt about it.

Helpful Questions

- What shocked you?
- What was most frightening?
- What made you want to escape?
- How else did you find yourself reacting? Were you disappointed? Angry? Sad?
- Any place you wanted to cheer?

Interpretive

In this phase assistance is provided with additional information or the opportunity for further questioning that helps participants to learn further about the subject and identify what it is that may be important to them in respect to it. Using the context provided in the objective and reflexive phases, the interpretive phase is used to delve deeper into the subject area and develop a greater understanding. ***For Peer Leaders***, this phase is where your experience as a supervisor can be most helpful. Invite them to consider more of the context beyond what they have directly experienced. Help them recognize their own behavior in the situation, either as a highlight or as a potential area of improvement. Again, if identifying where things went wrong, do so with kindness and the intention of helping improve the situation for next time.

Helpful Questions

- What are all the things you think lead up to this event?
- What might have been some other contributing factors?
- What impact does it have on you?
- How are you different now?
- How might we be different a year from now?
- What can we learn from this?

Decisional

This is the final stage that helps draw conclusions and documents what future actions may be taken by people; given the discussion that has already taken place in the first three phases. ***For Peer Leaders***, your ongoing supervisory/mentoring relationship is crucial to this step. This learning does not occur in a vacuum removed from any ongoing work or development. Your consistent check-ins for ongoing reflection and follow-up on the decisions made in this phase will help solidify learning and open the door for transformative future reflection opportunities.

Helpful Questions

- What can we do to prevent this from happening again?
- Who else do you need to see or talk with?
- What can we do to help each other now?
- What can we do to symbolize how we changed or what we have learned?

Remember that reflection is an ongoing process; even if you can identify potential areas for growth in your Peer Leaders, focus on their willingness to learn and reflect on the immediate situation. They are not a product or project that needs to be finished by the time they leave your supervision. Rather, Peer Leaders deserve our respect, care, and attention to help them grow how they can while entrusted to our leadership.

Peer Leader Learning Reflection

All Peer Leaders are instructed in four learning outcomes to create a common standard of service and enhance their sense of belonging and career readiness through their Peer Leadership experience. These outcomes are:

1. Quality Service
2. Diversity and Inclusion
3. Self-Efficacy
4. Integrative Learning

Though each Peer Leader is assigned online modules in each of these areas, your supervision will enhance their learning in these areas by providing focused reflection opportunities related to each outcome. Using the questions below, or those you think of on your own, we encourage you to facilitate reflection at least once per learning outcome with Peer Leaders during their experience. These questions are written with the assumption that reflection will occur on a monthly basis, and were piloted to evaluate their effectiveness with a group Peer Leader supervisors in Spring 2022. You do not need to use all of these questions, but we hope they provide a strong starting point for fruitful reflection with Peer Leaders you supervise.

Quality Service

- How have you demonstrated quality service to others in your Peer Leader role this month?
- How have you been resourceful to (insert stakeholder here: students, professional staff, guests of VCU like family visitors) this month in your Peer Leader role?
- How did you promote or support the well-being of your peers in your Peer Leadership role over this past month?
- How have you built relationships with (insert stakeholder here: students, professional staff, guests of VCU like family visitors) this month?
- Think about an example this past month where you provided quality customer service. What did you do, and is there anything that you would've done differently to have had an even greater impact in your customer service?

Diversity and Inclusion

- What situations this past month in your Peer Leader role challenged you to increase your understanding of other people and cultures, or even your understanding of yourself and your place in the world?
- How have recent current events impacted your understanding of your identity? How have these changes affected your leadership style?
- How have you used your skills as a Peer Leader to advocate for your peers who hold historically-marginalized identities?
- How does understanding your own identity affect how you relate to others in your Peer Leader role?
- What are some examples of barriers to diversity and inclusion (e.g. implicit bias, microaggressions, power and privilege) that you have experienced in your peer leader role this past month? How did you address them, and/or how would you address these types of barriers going forward in your Peer Leader role?

Self Efficacy

- What types of personal challenges have you faced in your role this past month? Challenges can include self doubt, imposter syndrome, past experiences, internalized thoughts, and perspectives from peers. How will you address these challenges going forward in your Peer Leader role?
- What is an example where you succeeded in feeling accomplished with a task or situation in your Peer Leader role over the past month?
- Talk about a time where you had the confidence to problem-solve on your own in your Peer Leader role. What was the situation, and how do you feel the situation resolved on a scale of 1-5 (1 being the situation was not solved, 5 being the situation was solved and you were recognized for your hard work in doing so)?
- Talk about a time where you had to delegate responsibility to those you were leading while in your Peer Leader role? What did you delegate, and how did they do with their new responsibility?
- Talk about a time where you had to motivate those you were leading while in your Peer Leader role? How did you motivate them, and what was the outcome? Is there anything you feel you could've done differently for a stronger, more constructive outcome?

Integrative Learning

- How does your learning through your Peer Leader role connect to your career goals?
- How do you think skills and knowledge learned from this Peer Leadership position will connect with your life beyond VCU?
- How have you applied the skills and knowledge of your Peer Leader role to your everyday life? For example, how have you applied your quality customer service training to the classroom, or in interactions with family/friends?
- What is one aspect of leadership you would like to improve upon? It can be in this role or in your life outside of this role.
- How does the learning you gained through this experience connect with classes in your major AND with your lived experience?

References

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