

see→think→act → → see→think→act → → see→think→act → → see→think→act

## Reflection and Doubt

Praxis, the interaction between action and reflection, occurs at all times in INVST. Since we recognize the importance of reflection in the process of what Freire calls *conscientization*, the development of critical consciousness, students are guided in reflection and integrative discussions about their assigned readings and lived experiences. "The important thing," writes Paulo Freire in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, "is for the people to come to feel like masters of their thinking by discussing the thinking and views of the world explicitly or implicitly manifest in their own suggestions" (1970: 124). Those of us who are instructors & staff in INVST recognize that "a critically transitive thinker feels empowered to think and to act on the conditions around her or him and relates those conditions to the larger contexts of power in society .... Those people who do think holistically and critically about their condition reflect ... critical transitivity" (Shor, 1993: 32).

"Reflection" becomes the word that everyone in our program hears and says, over and over again. Instructors and staff will know we are succeeding in cultivating the curiosity and vivaciousness of learners when the students start asking for *more* time to reflect in their journals! Our hope is that this establishes a lifelong commitment to contemplative, thoughtful, responsible community leadership and action. In the words of educator Bill Ayers from the University of Illinois-Chicago, "... this knotty, complicated challenge requires patience, wonder, awe, humility. It demands sustained focus, intelligent judgment, inquiry and investigation. It requires wide-awakeness, since every judgment is contingent, every view partial, every conclusion tentative" (Ayers, 2004: 3) .... "I believe this is an essential rhythm: learn, act, doubt, in an endless circle" (12). Just as teaching requires constant reflection, so does social justice and action to protect the natural environment – in our program, we instill a commitment to being reflective, so that lifelong learning, willingness to be wrong and correct one's course, and recognizing there is room to grow become attributes of the INVST graduate.

Service Learning is HOW we do what we do in INVST: Service Learning occurs across the *entirety* of the 2-year INVST training!

Reflection is the “DASH” in “service-learning!” **The Role of Reflection in Service Learning:**

- Thinking is a *dialogue* we have with ourselves. Sharing this aloud lets us represent ideas so that we can assess them. We learn to be meaning-makers.
- Reflection conversations can be like cradles, where newborn ideas are nestled while they develop. Since service learning is personal, facilitators encourage students to fully engage with what they’re experiencing, what’s coming to life in them, as they observe, listen, learn and serve and become conscious.
- Where do we start? Which ideas are worth following? What are the origins of the beliefs or attitudes we hold, and ought we to examine those origins? What have I learned from my reading, and how does it relate to what I’m *seeing*?
- Verbalizing these questions and their answers will allow learners to orient themselves and map their learning journey through space, in time. By following along in journals with their own thoughts & each other’s, learners will later be able to track the progress of their own learning & development.

*“I am stronger because I bear in me  
Not my little life, but all the lives,  
And I walk steadily forward because I have a thousand eyes.”  
--Pablo Neruda*

## Definition – Service-Learning:

Since 1990, INVST has been weaving meaningful service together with the theory and practice of community leadership. One of our programmatic goals is “to help INVST students learn to work *with* people, not *for* people, in a reciprocal relationship of mutual benefit and inter-cultural exchange.” For us, service must be meaningful for both the student who is doing the service, and the community organization or individual with whom the student is partnering. We strive to develop “power-with” relationships, as opposed to “power-over” relationships.

We also discuss “charity versus social change” and we encourage INVST participants to celebrate all types of service – not just direct service or charity, but also efforts that are aimed at the root causes of social and environmental problems, or structural change. We respect current students and INVST alumni who are contributing all along this service continuum.

Intertwining service with the scholarly pursuit of knowledge is now defined in colleges and universities, as well as at other levels, as “service-learning,” although it was not yet being called that in 1990 at the time of INVST’s inception. Service-learning is sometimes confused with “volunteerism” or “community service”; it may be coupled with notions of “engaged scholarship” or “civic education”. “Social entrepreneurship” is even being defined in higher education settings as something comparable.

In INVST, “service-learning” includes the following elements:

1. *Experiential immersion*: student learning is most powerful when it is linked to real-world contexts. Learning experiences where the complexities and the richness of real-world scenes are encountered first-hand tends to be motivating and transformative.
2. *Reciprocity*: Students can meaningfully participate in the amelioration or elimination of the negative effects of current social and environmental arrangements, while seeking to understand them. Members of the community, various organizations and institutions, and the natural environment all enrich student learning, while the students enrich *them*, through their contributions. Service-learning activities thus require close contact with both academic and community-based supervisors to ensure that outcomes are mutually beneficial.
3. *Critical reflexivity*: Student learning occurs most powerfully when it combines text-based learning with real-world experiences through intentional reflection activities. Reflection, many say, is the *hyphen* in “service-learning”.

## Transactional Leadership vs. Transformational Leadership

Borrowed from <http://leadershipchamps.wordpress.com/2008/08/04/transactional-leadership-vs-transformational-leadership/>

### Transactional Leader:

*approaches followers with an eye to exchanging one thing for another ... give me this & then I'll get you that*

### Transformational Leadership

- \* Leaders arouse emotions in their followers which motivates them to act
- \* Leadership is proactive and forms new expectations in followers
- \* Leaders are distinguished by their capacity to inspire and provide individualized consideration, intellectual stimulation, influence to their followers
- \* Leaders create learning opportunities and stimulate followers to solve their own problems
- \* Leaders might develop strong emotional bonds with followers
- \* Leaders motivate followers to work for goals that go beyond self-interest

“The transactional leaders work within society as it exists; the transformational leader” ... helps change society. (Bass, Leadership Studies)

- Clear sense of purpose, expressed simply
- Values driven
- Strong role model
- Has high expectations for members of the group
- Self-aware
- Perpetual desire for learning; a life-long learner
- Identifies themselves as a change agent
- Enthusiastic
- Able to attract and inspire/motivate others
- Strategic
- Effective communicator
- Emotionally mature
- Courageous
- Risk-taking
- Risk-sharing
- Visionary
- Sense of public/community need
- Considerate of the personal needs of each participant
- Listens to all viewpoints & develops spirit of cooperation
- Mentoring
- Able to deal with complexity, uncertainty, ambiguity

Transactional: just need to move the group from one place to another (El Paso to Nicaragua), just need to get something done (dinner cooked for guests at A House), just need to take an action (gather the group for a reflection session)

Transformational: is based on building relationships