

Reflective Practice on Experiential Learning,  
and how to Unlock its Career Development Value

# MAKER'S AUDIT & GUIDE

Companion to Wayfinder Search Site



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*No matter what subject you teach or program you lead, you can and should connect experiential learning to universal career development outcomes through reflective practice design.*

From report on Unlocking the Career Development value of Experiential Learning, CERIC-OneLifeTools project.

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This Guide is a companion to the [Wayfinder](#) site to help makers like you find resources and tools to unlock the career development value of experiential learning.

### Who this is for

This Audit & Guide is for anyone designing, implementing, or wanting to improve experiential learning. The term “Maker” is meant to include post-secondary staff or faculty, any designer or developer, event or workshop facilitator, employer or work supervisor, community organization staff, K-12 teacher or counsellor.

### What's inside

-  Overview
-  Addressing Imbalances
-  How to use this Maker's Audit & Guide
-  Maker's audit to guide reflective practice
-  Questions & prompts for makers to guide reflective practice
-  Reflective practice map

Now, Let's get started!

# OVERVIEW

A literature search, environmental scan, key informant interviews and makers survey – conducted within the CERIC-funded, OneLifeTools “Unlocking Career Development” project in 2021 – **found a limited overlap between reflective practice and career development in experiential learning.** While many desire to link career development to reflective practice within experiential learning, in practice it does not occur as much or as effectively as makers would like. Many reasons exist for this limited overlap including lack of staff time or institutional budget. However, an important reason for this limited overlap is **lack of clarity around how to link career development to reflective practice.**

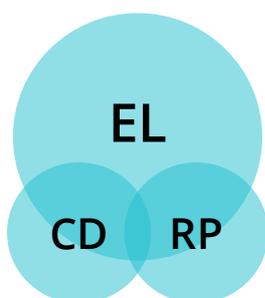
“ Career development is the lifelong process of managing learning, work, leisure, and transitions in order to move toward a personally determined and evolving preferred future (Canadian Standards & Guidelines for Career Development Practitioners).

“ Your “career” is the full expression of who you are and how you want to be in the world. And, it keeps on expanding as it naturally goes through cycles of stability & change (Franklin, 2015).

With holistic definitions in mind, we invite makers to engage in a “mighty movement” toward unlocking more career development value from reflective practice in experiential learning. This movement gives practitioners the tools, resources and insights from available practices to integrate into their experiential learning programs. Career development can and should become a universal outcome of reflective practice in experiential learning.

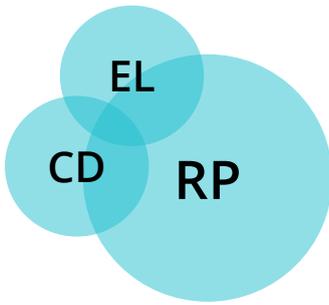
## ADDRESSING IMBALANCES

Though experiential learning may include reflective practice programs and aim to support career development, the quality and degree to which each is being implemented varies across programs, resulting in a range of imbalances that reduce effectiveness. Examples of imbalances are depicted in three micro-narratives:



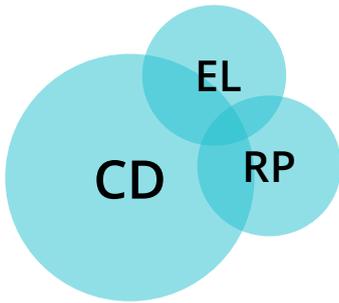
“ For my field experience degree requirement, I spent 4 months in Northern Ontario as a firefighter – which was a huge commitment, much more than what my peers did. My prof asked me to write a ‘reflection paper’ with no other instruction and no length limit. I wrote a few pages about what I liked and how it linked to my studies but I’m not sure if that’s what they wanted.  
- D.R.

Figure 1: Over-emphasis on Experiential Learning (EL), relative to Career Development (CD) and Reflected Practice (RP)



“ For what was supposed to be a 1 week interactive simulation, all I got was a half day job shadowing opportunity. Afterward, the program staff asked me dozens of reflective questions about what I learned and how the experience contributed to my career development; it didn't.  
- L.W.

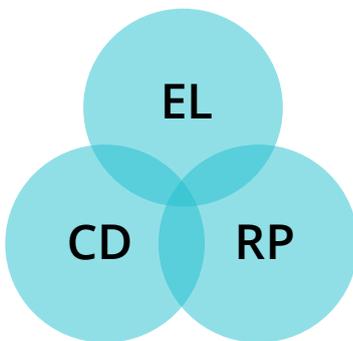
Figure 2: Over-emphasis on RP relative to CD and RP



“ Before my co-op placement, the career centre required that I attend a lengthy career development program which mostly emphasized resume writing and interview prep, both of which I had experience with and didn't learn much. After co-op there was another multi-part career program that interfered with my studies, but mostly was about job search for next co-op. I didn't really like that first co-op, not sure why, and still not sure what I should do for my next co-op or for my career.  
- C.D.

Figure 3: Over-emphasis on CD relative to EL and RP

Use this Guide and the Wayfinder Search Site to address the imbalances between experiential learning, career development and reflective practice, as illustrated in this micro-narrative:



“ Throughout my counselling practicum I was asked to reflect, on my own and with my practicum supervisor, with specific questions and effective tools, on my progress and client interactions. I also shared views with my peers in our weekly practicum class facilitated by our professor. This practicum was the best part of my program, and these reflections and interactions helped me make a well-informed choice in my career.  
- M.F.

Figure 4: Effective balance among EL, CD, RP

# HOW TO USE THIS MAKER'S AUDIT & GUIDE

The questions and prompts in this Maker's Audit & Guide draw from theory, literature and resources on reflective practice, and link it to career development outcomes. These questions and prompts serve as a Guide to help makers reflect on the quality of your learners' experiences. We have grouped questions into two categories:

- **Maker's audit to guide reflective practice.**
- **Questions and prompts for learners, to unlock career development value** are example reflective practice questions and prompts. Makers may find many more examples of questions and prompts in the resources within the companion [Wayfinder](#) site.

By focusing on "can do" actions that link reflective practice to career development, learners, faculty and other makers master the steps to:

- Gain clarity about "what's next?" possibilities by assessing strengths, desires or values, personal qualities, interests and how they've changed during Experiential Learning.
- Take inspired actions to explore those possibilities.
- Identify necessary learning and workplace skills and what learners need to do to acquire those skills (such as problem solving, teamwork, making presentations, client communication)
- Navigate transitions.
- Translate Experiential Learning to workplace success.
- Translate Experiential Learning to "life roles" success.
- Identify additional learning sources and opportunities.

# MAKER'S AUDIT TO GUIDE REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

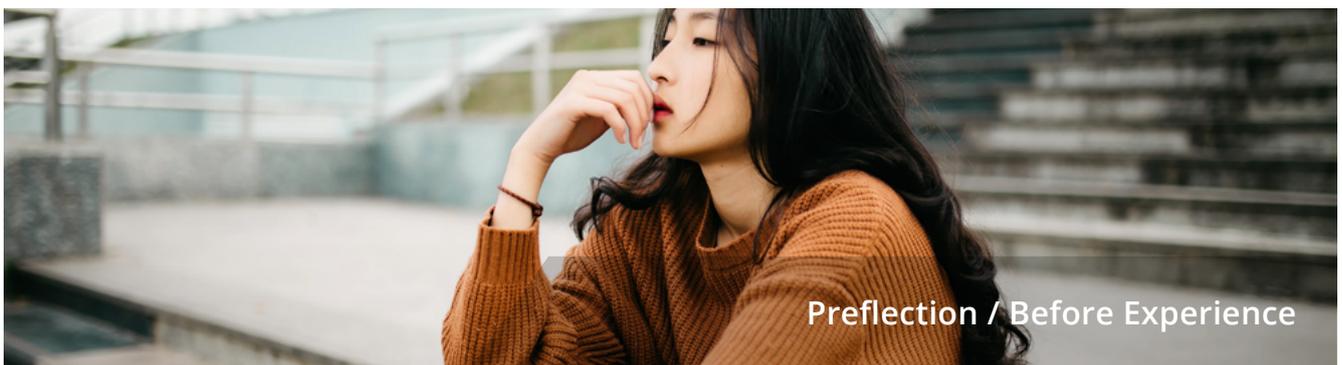
The questions in this audit may apply to any experiential learning program. You may not require responses to all questions. For existing experiential learning programs, the questions guide your review and to develop steps for continuous improvement. For prospective experiential learning programs, these questions and prompts aid in integrating best practices into your reflective practice.

1. Does your Reflective Practice include **questions or activities focused on the learner's Career Development?** For example, is there a prompt that asks how the experiential learning activity influenced their what steps they should take next to prepare for transitioning further along their career pathway? Does the experience identify alternative career possibilities opening new pathways? [See QUESTIONS AND PROMPTS FOR LEARNERS below]
2. Have you considered the **DEAL Model for Critical Reflection** when creating your reflective prompts? **DEAL** stands for:
  - **Describe.** Simply describe the experience. Example: Describe your Experiential Learning. Where was it? Who supervised it? What tasks did you do? Add a Career Development lens by asking about the jobs and careers observed in the workplace.
  - **Examine.** Delve into what else led the learner into that experience. Add a Career Development lens by asking about individual career possibilities. Example: What were your career possibilities before the experience and how did they change?
  - **Articulate Learning.** Transform experience into personal learning. Add a Career Development lens by asking how new skills and interests link to career possibilities. Example: If your learning objective was to gain employability skills, which skills did you develop? What new career possibilities come to mind building on those skills?
3. Does the Reflective Practice you employ provide for purposeful, active, and **critical examination of both positive and negative experiences?** For example, if the reflection is to be shared with an employer or supervisor, will the learner be comfortable sharing negative experiences and run the risk of an unfavorable reaction from the employer, such as withdrawing an offer for full-time employment?
4. Does Reflective Practice link **theory to practice**, sometimes called single-loop reflection? Learning is strengthened when activities emphasize inductive (e.g., experience followed by academic learning) and deductive (e.g., academic learning followed by experience) reflections.
5. Does Reflective Practice **challenge the learner's role and contribution in learning environments, considering personal influences, beliefs, attitudes or actions**, sometimes called double-loop reflection?

6. Is Reflective Practice occurring before experience, during (**reflection-in-action**), and after (**reflection-on-action**) experience?
7. Does Reflective Practice go beyond surface reflection (extrinsically motivated, e.g. “just to get marks”), and into **deeper reflection** (intrinsically motivated)?
8. Does Reflective Practice provide for both **individual reflection and group or guided reflection** with a mentor?
9. Does Reflective Practice allow for **alternate forms of expression**, adapted to learning styles of learners and thus avoiding reflection fatigue? Alternate forms may include:
  - Pre-experience and post-experience surveys.
  - Structured dialogue or interview (e.g., mentor-to-mentee, class discussions, online chats).
  - Technology mediated questions and answers, (e.g. narrative prompts, narrative inquiry).
  - Video or audio recording.
  - Writing activities (e.g. reports or short answers, worksheets, case studies, essays, journaling, question posing, narrative).
  - Acting or storytelling (e.g. in front of audience).
  - Portfolios and visual arts (e.g., graphic designs, poster presentations, video).
  - “Critical Friendships” (e.g. peers help each other) or collaborative non-evaluative peer conversations.
10. Does Reflective Practice nudge the learner into **transformative learning**, where they can make meaning of experiences and improve understanding of themselves, and question current practices and assumptions around an experience to inform future actions and beliefs?
11. Does Reflective Practice exist in a context where the learner is **open and eager** to reflect on experiences?
12. Does Reflective Practice provide **guiding questions, prompts and activities**?
13. Does Reflective Practice provide for **aggregation of insights over multiple experiences**? Does it provide a scaffolding approach ensuring continual progression from simplistic to advanced knowledge, in a way that deepens the student's connection theory and integrated practice (or something like that)?
14. Is Reflective **Practice assessed**? Who assesses? Is there a helpful rubric for reviewers (and learners) to review? How is it graded – pass/fail, or a specific grade?

## QUESTIONS & PROMPTS FOR LEARNERS, TO UNLOCK CAREER DEVELOPMENT VALUE

Makers can integrate or adapt the example questions and prompts to unlock career development value in reflective practice. Questions and prompts can be adapted for written activities, 1-on-1 guided reflection, or group workshops. Many such questions and prompts exist; you can find more by searching the [Wayfinder](#). Questions and prompts are organized in:



To avoid your learners experiencing 'reflection fatigue,' it is recommended to use a variety of Reflective Practice activities. To do so, use the Reflective Practice Map further below.



## Reflection-on-Action / Post-Experience

### Articulated Learning

You can use these questions to help students reflect on any experiential learning activity. For example, a written assignment may start with, "In your internship..."

1. What did you learn?
2. How, specifically, did you learn it?
3. Why does this learning matter, or why is it significant?
4. In what ways will you use this learning in your career and life? What goals will you set given what you have learned in order to improve yourself, the quality of your learning, or the quality of your future experiences or service?

*Source: Adapted from Articulated Learning section of the DEAL model (Ash & Clayton, 2004).*

### Ikigai / Leading Edge

These questions are adapted from the four Ikigai questions shown further below. For example, a written assignment may start with, "In your co-op..."

1. What did you love?
2. What were you great at?
3. Related to what you loved, and were great at, what does the world need?
4. Related to what the world needs, what can you be paid for?

(Four Ikigai questions are: 1. What do you love? 2. What are you great at? 3. What does the world need? 4. What can you be paid for?)

*Source: University of Victoria explains that "these questions first appear in use as a career exploration tool (Vilaseca, 2013; Zuzunaga, 2011;) and then, to represent the life philosophy, Ikigai (Garcia & Miralles, 2016; Winn, 2014)." The University of Victoria's Leading Edge supports students' career development building through self efficacy, becoming agents of their own experiential learning (Hodges*

*et al., 2014) and thriving personally and professionally in the twenty first century (Soffel, 2016). The four philosophical questions form the core of the Leading Edge Framework. Adapted from Ikigai ('a reason for being'), a Japanese concept referring to something that gives a person a sense of purpose, a reason for living.*

## What? So what? Now what?

Adapt this popular framework for career development reflection.

1. [WHAT] What happened in this Experience? Who were the important people? What tasks did you do? What skills did you use or develop? What did you like about the Experience? What did you dislike? How did you feel during the Experience?
2. [SO WHAT] Why was this Experience important for you? How did it align with your expectations? How was it unexpected or different from what you expected? How did it change your ideas for future career possibilities?
3. [NOW WHAT] By answering the WHAT and SO WHAT questions, what career or job ideas come to mind? How can you apply what you learned in your education or future work? How do you want to pivot your plans? What small actions can you do to explore new career or educational possibilities? How can you experiment with these new ideas, for example, by talking to people who've made the decision you're considering, or by volunteering? What is your next action?

*Source: First developed by Borton (1970) and built upon by Driscoll (1994) and Rolfe (2001), this framework is easy to use and adapt.*

## Professional identity

Use these questions for professional programs such as law, engineering, social work, and more.

1. When you think about what being a "good" [lawyer/engineer/social worker/\_other professional...] means, what are the first three qualities that come to mind?
2. How did you see these qualities in action during your experience?
3. What further experience would give you the best opportunity to further develop these qualities?
4. What steps can you take to find your next experiential learning opportunity?
5. How has your understanding of what makes a good [lawyer/engineer/social worker/\_other professional...] changed?

*Source: Adapted from Learning Law in Place / Experiential Learning Guide for Law Students / Canadian Bar Association*

## Feedforward Interview

Feedforward Interview Protocol questions are most useful in a 1-on-1 conversations. This Feedforward Interview can be adapted to a paired activity in a workshop or class.

1. **Introduction** I'm sure that during your Experience you've had both negative experiences and positive experiences. Today, I'd like to focus only on your positive experiences.
2. **The story** Please tell me a story that happened in your Experience during which you felt happy, energized, 'in flow', even before the results of your actions became known.
3. **The peak 3a)** What was the peak moment of this story? **3b)** What did you think at the peak moment? **3c)** How did you feel at that moment?
4. **The conditions 4a)** What were the conditions with in yourself that allowed this story to happen? **4b)** Conditions in others? **4c)** Conditions in the organization?
5. **Feedforward** Consider those conditions that allowed you to feel positive as "road signs" that show you the way to fulfill your potential. To what degree do your career or education plans for the immediate future take you closer to, or further away from, the conditions that allowed you to feel what you described?

Source: *Feedforward Interview Protocol questions (Kluger & Nir, 2010).*

## Prospective Planning

Students are asked to "Pretend it is five years in the future" then respond to these three questions.

1. How did your student work experience affect your life?
2. What have you done since this experience?
3. How have your actions affected others?

Source: "Plan for the Future" in *Reflection Handbook. The Center for Leadership & Civic Education, Florida State University.*

## Object Share

Questions for workshop activity or 1-on-1 conversation. Have each student bring in an object that represents his or her work experience. From a Career Development lens, bring an object about "What will I do next?" For example, a microphone may represent a job in media, or a hardhat may represent construction work. Learners can also bring in an object representing "How I felt about the work experience"; "My contribution"; "What I learned".

1. How can you describe the object?
2. Why did you select it?

Source: "Object Share" in *Reflection Handbook. The Center for Leadership & Civic Education, Florida State University.*

## Online Storyteller, Post-Experience questions

Use these questions to help students reflect on any experiential learning activity. For example, "In your practicum..."

1. What did you like about the Experience?
2. What didn't you like about it? \_\_\_ [e.g. long hours] Instead of \_\_\_ [e.g. long hours] what do you want more of in your career or life?
3. What skills and knowledge did you gain?
4. How would people describe you in your Experience?
5. Who played an important role in your Experience? What did you learn from them?
6. What interests of yours did the Experience reveal or generate?
7. How would you describe the Experience in a one line on your resume or LinkedIn profile?
8. Now that you have reflected on your Experience, what possibilities for your future – in career, life or education – come to mind?
9. What next steps can you take to explore each of those possibilities?

*Source: Online Storyteller, OneLifeTools*



## Reflection-in-Action / During Experience

### Two Things

Use these questions to initiate a daily reflection practice. Daily reflections may be especially useful for brief experiential learning activities or 'micro-WIL' experiences.

1. What are two things significant for your learning, that you notice, following every day or shift in the workplace?
2. How can these two things be applied to your future practice, or career planning? How can they be integrated with knowledge gained from the classroom and other experiences?

*Source: "Two Things" in Reflection Handbook. The Center for Leadership & Civic Education, Florida State University.*

### Online Storyteller, During Experience questions

You can ask learners to reflect weekly on their experiential learning. Consider recommending weekly reflections on a Friday or weekend, to reflect on the past week.

1. Overall, on a scale of 1-10, how did you feel this week?
2. Overall, on a scale of 1-10, how was your health this week?
3. What worked well for you this week? Example: Advanced the NMS project. Engaged in good conversation with TJ
  - What does it say about you, that it worked well? Example: I'm adaptable. I'm friendly
  - What skills or knowledge did you use when you did that?
4. What is something you learned, or were reminded of, this week? Example: The value of compassion. I can work hard

5. Who helped you this week, and how? Example: Maureen - supported my work on NMS project.
6. Considering what you did, read or learned this week, what interest of yours was revealed? Example: Visual art. Games. Hockey. Cooking.
7. Based on your reflection on the week, what's something you want more of in your life?
8. What was challenging for you this week? Example: getting all my tasks done.
9. What's a strategy or tool or resource you could use to overcome that challenge? Example: check my Tasks every morning.
10. Based on your reflection on the week, what's something you might want to do next in your career or life? Example: LEARN by taking a programming course. VOLUNTEER in conservation. JOB in marketing.

*Source: Online Storyteller, OneLifeTools*

## Preflection / Before Experience

### Building your professional identity

1. When you applied to [this program] you likely already began forming a professional identity. Think back to the reasons you wanted to go to [this program]. Why did you come to [this program]?
2. And now that you're in [this program], what do you think you want to do with [this credential]?
3. How do you think your Experiential Learning fits into your future goals?
4. When you think about what it means to be a "good" practitioner in this field, what are the first three qualities that come to mind?

*Source: Adapted from Learning Law in Place / Experiential Learning Guide for Law Students / Canadian Bar Association*

### Online Storyteller 'Before Experience' questions

1. How can you describe your upcoming Experience, in just a few words?
2. What skills and knowledge are you wanting to develop in this Experience? Example: Marketing. Social media. Design. Writing. Programming. Strategic thinking.
3. What are three personal qualities that you could share to introduce yourself to others? Example: Thoughtful. Creative. Practical.
4. What are you wanting to get from this Experience? Example: Clearer view of what it would be like to work in a marketing agency.
5. What future possibilities have you been considering that align with this Experience? Example: JOB as marketing specialist. SELF-EMPLOYMENT as social media consultant.

*Source: Online Storyteller, OneLifeTools*

## REFLECTIVE PRACTICE MAP

This Reflective Practice Map helps practitioners consider a variety of reflective practice activities to engage learners and avoid reflection fatigue from overusing one or two forms of reflection. You may not have activities in every cell of this table; however, the literature supports variety as valuable in your design.

For any experiential learning activity, plan your prompts and questions using the Map.

	Pre-work Experience	During work Experience (Reflection-in-Action)	Post-work Experience (Reflection-on-Action)
Reflect alone	[insert practice]	[insert practice]	[insert practice]
Reflect with peers	[insert practice]	[insert practice]	[insert practice]
Reflect with Course Instructor /WIL Programme Coordinator	[insert practice]	[insert practice]	[insert practice]
Reflect with Members of the Worksite	[insert practice]	[insert practice]	[insert practice]

Source: Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario, 2016; Eyler, 2002