

Implementing the Reflection Booster

An artist cannot be continually wielding his brush. He must stop at times in his painting to freshen his vision of the object, the meaning of which he wishes to express on his canvas. Living is also an art."

Mordecai Kaplan, *The Meaning of God in Modern Jewish Religion* (1937)

As one of the four boosters of **I*Express**, reflection entails stepping back periodically to view your work in a bigger and broader context. It asks you to see what you are doing through different eyes. Reflective thinking helps clarify what needs to be the next steps to sustain your innovation.

There are many opportunities for reflection as you design and roll out a new model of learning. Two important times are at the end of a team meeting and following a planned learning experience.

Reflection at the end of a team meeting

As the last item of business at a team meeting, reflection time asks team members to step back and think about what the meeting accomplished and what needs attention as you move forward. By capturing these thoughts in the "now" you will benefit from immediate and fresh insights.

Take 5-10 minutes at the end of each meeting and go around, inviting each team member to complete one or more of the following sentences:

1. Now I better understand...
2. Now I'm pleased to see....
3. Now I don't want us to lose sight of...
4. One idea I am still thinking about is...

This kind of reflection may be new to some members of your team. Once everyone gets used to it, you will find the time it takes to be a valuable way of getting a read on how individual team members feel about the work you are doing. Include some of their comments in your meeting notes and consider addressing some of their expressed concerns at your next meeting.

Reflection following a learning experience

Capturing written reflections of both the facilitators and participants in a learning experience as soon as possible catches people when the experience is fresh and before conversations with others have influenced their opinions. This type of data collection is relatively quick and accessible unlike the other data you are collecting which will paint a much broader and more detailed picture of the impact of your model.

Build time for reflection into the experience itself. When you begin reflection time about 10 minutes before the scheduled end of a program people appreciate being able to finish on time.

Ask all those involved for their reflections. Their different perspectives will present a well-rounded picture when you consider them in their totality. Plan on sharing the reflections with the team and your consultant. Together you will see where there is agreement, where reactions diverge, and if there are adjustments you should make as you move forward.

Common wisdom is that people will be more forthcoming if they can be anonymous. That may be true, but there is also value in knowing how specific individuals are reacting and if/how their reactions are changing over time. You may want to ask for names and to make clear that this is optional.

Below are suggested reflection questions for children, parents and facilitators. The questions should remain the same for all the experiences. This is the best way to compare reactions over time. You may find it helpful to put questions for each group on a different color paper so you can sort them easily.

For Shabbat experiences, you may want to send everyone home with a reflection sheet to complete and return in person or you may want to email a very short survey that you ask be returned/filled out by the end of the week.

CHILDREN REFLECTIONS

Date _____

1. An important thing I learned today was...
2. When we do something like this again, I hope...
3. As a result of what we did today, I wonder...

Your name (optional) _____

PARENT REFLECTIONS

Date _____

1. As a result of this experience, I now realize...
2. When we do something like this again, I hope...
3. As a result of what we did, I wonder...

Your name (optional) _____

FACILITATOR REFLECTIONS

Date _____

1. As a result of facilitating this learning experience, I now realize...
2. I was surprised...
3. Through my interactions, I noticed (people or situations that need attention)...
4. When we do something like this again, I hope...
5. As a result of what we did, I wonder...

Your name (optional) _____