**What If I Can’t Do Direct Service?: Workbook for Bonners Abroad**

*Reflection Activities and Alternatives for the Davidson College BSP*

Greetings from Davidson! If you are reading this document than you have decided to spend a semester abroad. You may be worried about fulfilling your service requirement while you’re away from campus. Direct service hours may be more difficult to complete but don’t worry – you’ll get there! The Bonner office has developed a comprehensive training and enrichment plan just for YOU! In the attempt to ensure that everyone actually fulfills their requirements and enjoys doing so, you will find various opportunities below which will help you achieve your goal of completing **all** of your Bonner hours. ☺

There are four reflection components which cover a broad range of topics and allow you to use different media to convey your thoughts and ideas. The reflection activities are to be completed in numerical order, so please begin with reflection component #1 and end with reflection component #4. Each component includes reflection activities about different aspects of your experience, from the beginning to the end. These activities have been developed to incorporate various aspects of the Bonner Scholars Program and it is important that you make completing these activities a priority.

All we ask is that you complete each of the reflection components. We encourage you to be as creative as possible, but also realize that there may be limits to that creativity due to limited resources. If you are able, we would love for you to utilize technology as much as possible to complete your reflection activities. This means if you are *able* to video blog, web blog, or create online photo journals; please take the opportunity to do so. On the other hand, if you do not have access to these resources, a regular pad and pencil will do the trick.[[1]](#footnote-1) Please consider keeping a private journal in addition to your service journal while you’re abroad.

When you arrive back in Davidson, you will be asked to present your reflections to your fellow Bonners class in a semester class meeting.

**Training and Enrichment**

As you embark on this journey, it is imperative that as you complete the reflection components you also take time to explore different aspects of your host country. So take this as a free pass to take advantage of EVERYTHING that this experience offers!

While we hope that you’ll attend different lectures and participate in different activities which count towards your ‘formal’ T&E requirements, please think outside the box. Attend different events, especially those that relate to any of the BSP’s 6 Common Commitments. IF you need a reminder, the commitments are listed below. Please record and journal these experiences and keep the commitments in mind as you construct your journal responses.

Although it is not required, we recommend that you have at least 3 experiences that connect to each of the 6 Common Commitments.

Social Justice

*We advocate for fairness, impartiality, and equality while addressing systemic social and environmental issues.*

International Perspective

*We develop international understanding that enables us to participate successfully in a global society.*

Spiritual Exploration

*We explore personal belief while respecting the spiritual practices of others.*

Civic Engagement

*We participate intentionally as a citizen in the democratic process, actively engaging in public policy and direct service.*

Community Building

*We establish and sustain a vibrant community of place, personal relationships, and common interests.*

Diversity

*We respect and engage the many different dimensions of diversity in our public lives.*

**REFLECTION COMPONENT #1**

OMG…you MADE it! Take it all in. You’ve been anticipating this trip for months now and you’ve finally arrived. In this reflection section, we want you to think about your new surroundings and begin to reflect on this exciting experience.

Please read the following “assignment” and use the questions following the passage as well as the questions provided below as a guide around which to frame your journal reflection.

Please take into consideration that your responses for each component should be substantial, so plan and respond accordingly.

Reading Assignment #1:

Chisholm, L. (2000) Charting a Hero’s Journey. IPS-L Press: New York. p. 81-84.

Reading Assignment #2:

Chisholm, L. (2000) Charting a Hero’s Journey. IPS-L Press: New York. p. 90-91.

* What did you learn about the country?
* Did anything surprise / shock / worry you? How did you respond?
* Were there miscommunications? How did you overcome them?
* Did you feel welcomed? Why or why not?
* What was your biggest challenge?
* Why are you unable to complete your direct service requirement?
* What are the circumstances that restrict opportunities for service?
* Do you think that the community could benefit from forms of volunteerism or community service? Where are those needs? Why do you think they need to be met?

**REFLECTION COMPONENT #2**

Now that you’ve arrived and are beginning to acquaint yourself with your new surroundings, how does it feel? Everything is new. There are new people, new sights, new sounds, new smells and new tastes. Are you still glad that you decided to study in this particular country? When arriving in a new place and then realizing that your visit will last for months for some is an easy realization and for others a difficult one. In this reflection section we would like for you to focus on the differences between your preconceptions and initial perceptions as well as any misconceptions that you had about your study abroad country.

How does American culture differ from the culture of your study abroad country? Please read the following “assignment” and use the questions following the passage as well as the questions provided below as a guide around which to frame your journal reflection.

Please take into consideration that your responses for each component should be substantial, so plan and respond accordingly.

Reading Assignment #3:

Chisholm, L. (2000) Charting a Hero’s Journey. IPS-L Press: New York. p. 96-98.

Reading Assignment #4:

Chisholm, L. (2000) Charting a Hero’s Journey. IPS-L Press: New York. p.105-106.

Reading Assignment #5:

Chisholm, L. (2000) Charting a Hero’s Journey. IPS-L Press: New York. p.114-116.

**REFLECTION COMPONENT #3**

Now that you’ve been in the midst of the culture and society of your study abroad country for several weeks you may feel like you’re a part of the culture. The language is more familiar, the people are no longer foreigners to you, you are no longer just the foreigner to them and you are feeling more comfort and less apprehension about your new environment.

You are now able to view the community and its people from a different perspective. In doing so, what community program or service organization do you think would best benefit your host country?

In this reflection section, we would like for you to develop a complete community service program that you think would best benefit your community. (No need to actually start the program – a paper plan will work for now!)

Be creative but realistic. Research the issues in your community and the organizations already in place to address them.

For this component, there are really no guidelines but you may want to take steps like this:

1. Find a magazine article or newspaper article about the issue. Maybe this is the information you would have if you were still in the United States.
2. Visit an agency that addresses the issue (or some sort of tourist attract where this issue can be seen but maybe not as easily). This is the information you would have if you were only in country for a short visit on vacation.
3. Interview community members on their thoughts regarding this issue. This is really information that can only be gathered when you’ve become a member of the community yourself.
4. Using Steps 1-3 plus other information you’ve gathered dream about what you would like to do and show us! You can use art to illustrate your ideas or write a newspaper article about the ribbon-cutting or about how your program has changed life in the area a few years down the road.

**REFLECTION COMPONENT #4**

As this experience comes to a close and so does this chapter in your life you should realize that you have completed an amazing journey. Whether you were excited or apprehensive, anxious or hesitant, you made it through and that is a significant accomplishment.

Before you left Davidson you were asked to choose one of the following books:

* **Rule of the Bone by Russell Banks**

*This book details a captivating story about self-discovery narrated by a homeless youth living on the edge of society; a lost boy who maps the cruel world that surrounds him with mother-wit, humor and appealing honesty.*

* **Leading With Soul by Lee Bolman and Terrance Deal**

*This book reveals that a person path to leadership requires knowledge of self and a servant-leader mentality. Current issues such as the changing nature of work are raised.*

Now please read the book in its entirety and create discussion questions. You should be prepared to lead a thoughtful and engaging discussion about its content.

Also, please read one final excerpt and reflection upon the questions following the passage.

Reading Assignment #6:

Chisholm, L. (2000) Charting a Hero’s Journey. IPS-L Press: New York. p.244-247.

1. Even if you do have access to various technology, we still encourage you to write some portion of your reflection in an actual journal, using a real pen or pencil ☺ [↑](#footnote-ref-1)