International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement
Volume 11, Issue 1, Article 13 | 2023 | ISSN: 2374-9466 | https://ijrslce.scholasticahq.com/

IJRSLCE | International Journal of Research on Service-Learning & Community Engagement

Volume 11 | Issue 1 Article 13

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A Multisite, Mixed-Methods Study

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Recommended Citation
Kniffin, L. E., Clayton, P. H., Camo-Biogradlija, J., Price, M. F., Bringle, R. G., Botkin, H. M. (2023). Deepening community-campus relationships using a critical reflection tool: A multisite, mixed-methods study. *International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement*, *11*(1). Article 13. https://doi.org/10.37333/001c.91729

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Abstract
Critical reflection is a staple of service-learning, primarily as a meaning-making process for students. This article describes a critical reflection tool designed for all participants in community-campus relationships to generate actionable learning regarding their collective work and to serve as an intervention to deepen those relationships. This tool was designed to accompany the Transformational Relationship Evaluation Scale II (TRES II), which, on its own, has documented utility to enhance partnership inquiry and practice (Kniffin et al., 2020). The TRES II Reflection Framework broadens and deepens the scale with intentionally designed prompts structured using the DEAL model for critical reflection (Ash & Clayton, 2009). Members of 12 partnerships affiliated with five higher education institutions used the reflection framework in this mixed-methods inquiry into the utility and impact of the reflection framework. Key findings indicate that using the reflection framework is an effective intervention for improving aspects of community-campus relationships, such as participants' commitment to, clarity around, and perspectives on their relationships, as well as influencing practices within the relationships related to work, interactions, communication, and outcomes.

Keywords: *partnerships, critical reflection, capacity building, service-learning and community engagement, mixed methods*

Profundizar las relaciones entre la comunidad y el campus universitario utilizando una herramienta de reflexión crítica

Un estudio en múltiples sitios utilizando métodos mixtos

Lori E. Kniffin, Patti H. Clayton, Jasmina Camo-Biogradlija, Mary F. Price, Robert G. Bringle, and Haden M. Botkin

Resumen
La reflexión crítica es un elemento esencial del aprendizaje-servicio, principalmente como un proceso de creación de significado para los estudiantes. Este artículo describe una herramienta de reflexión crítica diseñada para que todos los participantes en las relaciones entre la comunidad y el campus generen aprendizaje práctico sobre su trabajo colectivo y sirva como una intervención para profundizar esas relaciones. Esta herramienta fue diseñada para acompañar la Escala de Evaluación de Relaciones Transformacionales II (TRES II), que, por sí sola, ha demostrado su utilidad para entender las relaciones comunitarias y la práctica en el campo de aprendizaje basado en la comunidad (Kniffin et al., 2020). El Marco de Reflexión TRES II amplía y profundiza la escala con indicaciones diseñadas intencionalmente y estructuradas utilizando como base el modelo DEAL para la reflexión crítica (Ash & Clayton, 2009). Los miembros de 12 asociaciones afiliadas a cinco instituciones de educación superior participaron en este estudio de métodos mixtos para determinar la utilidad y el impacto de este marco de reflexión. Los hallazgos clave indican que el uso del marco de reflexión es una intervención eficaz para mejorar aspectos de las relaciones entre la comunidad y el campus, como el compromiso de los participantes, la claridad y las perspectivas sobre sus relaciones, así como prácticas que influyen relaciones laborales, las interacciones, comunicación y resultados esperados.

Palabras clave: *relaciones con socios comunitarios, reflexión crítica, desarrollo de capacidades, aprendizaje-servicio y participación comunitaria, métodos mixtos*

Editors' Note: Translation provided by
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Hearkening back to the widely-held purposes of community engagement (Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, n.d.), the tenets of democratic values and civic responsibility inform an understanding of what characteristics a community-campus relationship needs in order for the goals of community engagement to be realized. The Carnegie Foundation (n.d.) describes the goals of community engagement as follows:

> The purpose of community engagement is the partnership of college and university knowledge and resources with those of the public and private sectors to enrich scholarship, research, and creative activity; enhance curriculum, teaching, and learning; prepare educated, engaged citizens; strengthen democratic values and civic responsibility; address critical societal issues; and contribute to the public good. (para. 4)

Given the central role of community-campus relationships in fulfilling these purposes, both in the United States and abroad, it is problematic that these relationships are an underdeveloped area of scholarship. In response to the complexity associated with processes and practices of community-campus relationships, Bringle et al. (2009) offered this clarion call: "The time has come to advance a richer, more nuanced, more precise, and more useful conceptual framework for the analysis of relationships and partnerships in civic engagement and service-learning" (p. 3).

Community-campus relationships form a key nexus around which the transformative power of service-learning and community engagement (SLCE) can emerge. Democratic approaches to community-campus relationships in SLCE run counter to normative values and approaches to teaching, learning, serving, and knowledge generation (e.g., Clayton & Ash, 2004; Howard, 1998; Saltmarsh et al., 2009). Conceptually, democratic orientations situate everyone involved in the relationships dynamically as teachers, learners, leaders, and knowers. Learning and working together through democratic processes is both an invitation and a challenge for collaborators to embrace counter-normative identities and expectations; it demands shifts in perspective as well as practice (Clayton & Ash, 2004).

Examining complex processes and fostering shifts in perspective and practice is the role of critical reflection (Clayton & Ash, 2004; Howard, 1998). Critical reflection has historically been used primarily as a process for service-learning students to recognize and make meaning of complexities within their experiences and to generate actionable learning (e.g., Ash & Clayton, 2009; Eyler & Giles, 1999). However, all partners can learn through critical reflection—not only students (e.g., Clayton et al., 2013). And reflection can lead to other outcomes. For example, drawing on and extending Ash and Clayton's (2009) purposes of critical reflection, Bringle and Clayton (2023) stated that well-designed critical reflection can not only "generate, deepen, and document learning" but also "improve the quality of practice, partnerships, and inquiry" (p. 480). This article adds to this discussion of the roles and value of critical reflection by gathering and examining evidence of its utility in deepening the quality of community-campus relationships.

This article describes a critical reflection tool designed for all members of SLCE relationships to generate actionable learning regarding their relationships and their collective work; the tool also serves as an intervention to deepen those relationships. Also a tool for research, it facilitates inquiry into the complex dynamics of interpersonal and interorganizational relationships and thus can help practitioner-scholars consciously design and enact the types of relationships required for fulfilling the purposes of community engagement. The Transformational Relationship Evaluation Scale II (TRES II; Kniffin et al., 2020) was incorporated into a broader reflection framework through the addition of reflection prompts that come before, during, and after the scale and are designed to both deepen the user's meaning making and generate actionable learning. The study reported here is an inquiry into—and an attempt to improve—the utility and impact of the TRES II Reflection Framework as an intervention to deepen relationships.

Following an overview of the conceptualizations and research that served as the background for this study, a description of the reflection framework is provided. We then describe the intervention and methods that comprised our inquiry. We summarize our investigation into the utility of the framework and discuss the significance of the results and implications. It is our intention that practitioners might learn

from this inquiry to deepen their practice and might build on this research to generate additional tools to continue building the field's knowledge base related to its central relationship practices.

Background

Community-campus relationships have long been considered hallmarks of SLCE. Relationships are often considered mechanisms through which institutions of higher education around the world can advance their civic mission (Bringle et al., 2009), deepen learning (Sandy & Holland, 2006) and address wicked problems alongside communities and organizations (Ramaley, 2014). Higher education institutions are actors involved in webs of relationships that are simultaneously multisite, multiscalar, intercultural, and bound up with legacies of colonialism (Sharpe & Dear, 2013). These facets add to the complexity of relationships, amplifying the promise and pitfalls noted in the SLCE literature. In this section, we summarize some of the works related to conceptualizing and assessing relationships that have influenced the development of the TRES II reflection framework.

Bringle et al. (2009) examined relationships in SLCE and introduced the SOFAR model to identify key stakeholders in these relationships: **s**tudents, community **o**rganization representatives, **f**aculty, campus **a**dministrators/staff, and community **r**esidents. As Kniffin et al. (2020) summarized, such relationships may include dyads, triads, networks, or partnership entities (the latter representing relationships with common activities and combined resources). Bringle et al. also called attention to the need to precisely define partnerships. They proposed that "relationship" be used as a broad term "to refer to all types of interactions between persons" and that "partnership" be used "to refer to relationships in which the interactions possess three particular qualities: closeness, equity, and integrity" (p. 3). Therefore, although we acknowledge that the field commonly uses the term "partnership," we use the term "relationship" to encompass SLCE relationships and partnerships.

Enos and Morton (2003) advanced a framework for examining relationships in SLCE. A central aspect of this framework is the distinction between *transactional* and *transformational* relationships. Transactional relationships are exchange based and typically feature short-term aims—contrasted with transformational relationships, wherein partners seek to grow and change themselves, their relationships, and the systems they are part of through deep, sustainable engagement. In a transformational relationship, stakeholders coalesce around a shared vision and "bring a receptiveness—if not an overt intention—to explore emergent possibilities, revisit and revise their own goals and identities, and develop systems they work within beyond the status quo" (Clayton et al., 2010, p. 8).

Building from Enos and Morton's (2003) work, Bringle et al. (2009) conceptualized an ETT continuum of relationships: **e**xploitative (costs exceed benefits; lack closeness, equity, and integrity; unrewarding or harmful outcomes), **t**ransactional (task oriented; mutual benefits exceed costs), and **t**ransformational (focused on growth and change). This framing of relationships provided the impetus for the development of the initial Transformational Relationship Evaluation Scale (now referred to as TRES I). Kniffin et al. (2020) expanded this continuum to include relationships that are unilateral, in which resources and benefits flow in one direction. The resultant EUTT (**e**xploitative, **u**nilateral, **t**ransactional, **t**ransformational) continuum is the conceptual framework underlying TRES II. This scale assesses relationship quality using the EUTT continuum across 10 domains of relationships: (a) goals, (b) conflict, (c) decision making, (d) resources, (e) role of the relationship in each partner's work, (f) role of this relationship in sense of self, (g) extent and nature of interactions, (h) power, (i) communication (formerly satisfaction, in a previous version of TRES II), and (j) outcomes.

To help facilitate learning related to enhancing relationships, users of the scale are directed to select a response option for each domain that best reflects the "current" and "desired" status of the relationship. Analysis can thus be undertaken regarding alignment across members of a relationship (Do they view the relationship in the same way currently? Do they share the same vision?) as well as within a single participant's responses (To what extent do their "current" and "desired" ratings align?). TRES II, along with a description of various practitioner and researcher uses of both TRES I and TRES II, was published in Kniffin et al. (2020). See Table 1 for a sample item with response options.

Table 1.

Sample Item From TRES II: Goals Domain

Current	Desired	Response
		The goals of at least one of the partners are not known and/or are hampered, and this causes harm.
		The goals of only some of the partners are acted on, but that is not harmful to anybody.
		The distinct goals of all the partners are important to and acted on by the partnership.
		We share common, integrated, and expanding goals that are "our" goals (not "mine" and "yours" separately).

Use cases summarized by Kniffin et al. (2020) call for reflective prompts to be incorporated with the scale that aid in meaning making and growth among partners. Although TRES II by itself has value for practitioners and researchers (Kniffin et al., 2020), we agreed with users of the scale that critical reflection prompts around TRES II could make the scale more consequential. Previous work set the stage for such a role for reflection. Clayton et al. (2013) explored how faculty can be learners in service-learning and how reflection processes can help to generate that learning. Bringle et al. (2009) asserted that there is potential value to stakeholders in any community-campus relationship of elevating the perspective and practice of each individual or all members of the relationship, in turn considering necessary changes or improvements and investing in the capacity building needed to pursue them. Yet, the literature on the use of reflection in SLCE relationships is limited. There is a documented need for reflection among practitioners in international service-learning (Sharpe & Dear, 2013) and an acknowledgment that shared reflection allows partnerships to "remain dynamic, attending to shifting needs" (Tinkler et al., 2014, p. 148). The current research attempts to further document the extent to which the collaborative examination of a relationship may develop the capacity of its members to move their relationship closer to their desired qualities, thereby inspiring intentional change.

In 2021, our team secured a research grant from the Community-Engaged Alliance (formerly Indiana Campus Compact; Price et al., 2021). Among the goals of the study were to cocreate with a wide range of community engagement practitioners a reflection framework designed to support deepening relationships and to inquire into the utility of that framework as an intervention to deepen relationships. We fulfilled the first goal by creating the TRES II Reflection Framework using an interactive process of seeking and incorporating feedback from 93 practitioners over six months. The resultant reflection framework, as used in this study, is described in detail in the next section.

The second goal is the focus of this article, as we present findings related to the utility and impact of the reflection framework from our study, which included multiple relationships across multiple academic and community organizations across the United States. Research questions included the following:

1. In what ways do participants utilize the reflection framework? (i.e., goal setting, facilitation strategies, level of collaboration, modality)
2. Does the reflection framework impact the perceptions or practices of community engagement relationships among participants?
3. Is actionable learning generated from using the reflection framework and then put into action?

TRES II Reflection Framework

Reflection is a crucial aspect of the body of work on TRES. Numerous empirical studies of the practice of critical reflection indicate its effectiveness and offer approaches to embedding and structuring reflection in experiential learning activities (e.g., Ash & Clayton, 2009; Eyler & Giles, 1999; Eyler et al., 1996). Multiple authors have conceptualized and operationalized the key dynamics of critical reflection; critical reflection is contextualized to the situation and challenging (Eyler et al., 1996); structured, occurs regularly, and connected to both values and practice (Bringle & Hatcher, 1999); and designed to generate actionable learning (Zlotkowski & Clayton, 2005). The reflection framework is intentionally designed to embody the characteristics of strong reflection as outlined by various scholars.

The reflection framework into which TRES II is embedded draws upon the scholarly work articulated above and explicitly employs the DEAL (**D**escribe, **E**xamine, **A**rticulate **L**earning) model for critical reflection developed by Ash and Clayton (2009). DEAL guides learners through a process in which they develop learning rather than reproduce information. Consisting of three sequential tasks, this model begins with **D**escribing the learning experiences in an objective and detailed manner in order to explore different dimensions of the experience, including where and when the activity took place, who was and was not present, what learners and others did and did not do, and what they saw and heard. The second step of the model is intended to move learners beyond mere synopsis of experiences to making meaning of them. To accomplish this, they are prompted to **E**xamine these experiences in accordance with the desired learning goals and objectives. Finally, as learners advance to the final stage, they are supported in their efforts to **A**rticulate the **L**earning that the two previous tasks have begun to generate, while continuing to deepen their understanding through exploring the sources and significance of this learning. This cumulative stage also promotes actionable learning in which learners consider what change and growth they will pursue as a result of their learning.

The TRES II Reflection Framework begins with a short overview that introduces key concepts related to relationships and asks users to identify the focal relationship for their reflection and to consider why reflecting on it might have value to them. The remainder of the reflection framework is structured as follows:

- **D**escribe a community-campus engagement relationship—prompts are aligned with seven "threads": (1) who, (2) purposes, (3) values, (4) activities, (5) support, (6) changes, and (7) what else (wildcard).
- **E**xamine the relationship described
  - Part I—guided by prompts to deepen thinking regarding the seven threads
  - Part II—TRES II, supplemented with additional prompts associated with each domain that are designed to ground and document users' reasons for their responses to each item
  - Part III—prompts that support *individual* meaning making of responses to Examine Parts I and II:
    - exploring what the process has made salient about the relationship; what questions were raised; and what surprised, pleased, or concerned respondents
    - exploring how the process has raised issues regarding potential changes aligned with the seven threads
  - Part IV—prompts that support partners in reflecting *collaboratively* on their similar and different responses to the TRES II items and to the prompts in Examine Part III
- **A**rticulate **L**earning—prompts that support users to identify and develop key takeaways and action steps that they or their partners can take to deepen the relationship.

See Clayton et al. (2022) for a complete copy of the TRES II Reflection Framework.

Methods

In order to examine the utility and impact of the reflection framework, a multirelationship, multisite study was implemented. A simultaneous mixed-methods approach (Morse, 1991) was used that integrate qualitative and quantitative components. Additionally, our research process embraced principles of participatory action research (PAR) as a means to aid the research team in developing the reflection framework collaboratively with users to support their learning and action, as well as to improve the tool. In this case, we were interested in the use of PAR to examine the process of designing and using reflection tools (e.g., Gennari et al., 2022; Sadowska & Laffy, 2015).

Site, Participant, and Intervention Selection and Characteristics

Due to the contextual nature of community-campus relationships, we wanted to invite others into the research who themselves might use the reflection framework in their own community-campus relationships. Therefore, our project included site liaisons who provided a connection between our research team and the individuals in the relationships who engaged with the reflection framework. Liaisons held a multifaceted position expressive of our PAR commitments and contributed significantly to advancing the goals of the study. They were recruited based on their own interests in relationship quality and on administrative or programmatic involvement with community engagement. Although liaisons could be affiliated with any type of organization or group involved in community-campus relationships, our liaison sample was limited to those employed at a higher education institution (community engagement professionals and one department chair)—primarily due to our ready access to this population. Five sites with a total of six liaisons were included in this study. Some liaisons also contributed data to the project as participants.[1]

Liaisons began by setting goals for their site and then identified relationships and associated participants for the study. We assumed that liaisons were in a good position, given their local ties, communication networks, and potential influence, to identify participants—across the SOFAR model—interested in investing time in the reflection process. Liaisons also codesigned how the reflection framework would be implemented, including choosing who would facilitate its use (liaison or research team member) and which modality seemed best for the participants (in-person, virtual, or hybrid).

Liaisons also helped design the level of collaborative reflection, including (a) *fully collaborative*, in which participants completed all sections of the framework together; (b) *collaborative sans TRES*, in which participants completed all sections of the reflection framework together except the TRES II scale, which they completed individually; and (c) *combination* in which participants started with a joint orientation to review the introductory materials and determined the focal point of the reflection together followed by individually completing Describe through Examine II then a collaborative Examine IV. These three levels of collaboration were not presented as options to the liaisons but rather emerged as approaches to the intervention that liaisons identified during the codesign process. Table 2 summarizes descriptive data for each site and its intervention type. Across the five sites, there were 12 relationships consisting of 47 participants. Nine participants identified as instructors, 17 as administrators, eight as students, eight as staff at community organizations, and one as a community resident; four participants did not self-identify.

[1] Both liaisons and participants consented to participate in this IRB approved study.

Table 2.

Site and Intervention Descriptions

	Site A	**Site B**	**Site C**	**Site D**	**Site E**
Institution type	Large, public, comprehensive urban-serving	Midsize, private, research intensive, urban-serving	Small, private, suburban, liberal arts	Midsize, public, regional comprehensive	Midsize, public research university
Number of relationships	1	1	3	3	4
Number of participants	7	3	15	16	6
Facilitator	Liaison	Research team	Research team	Research team	Research team
Approach to intervention	Fully collaborative	Collaborative sans TRES	Combination	Combination (2); Collaborative sans TRES (1)	Combination
Modality	In person	Virtual	Hybrid	In person	In person

Data Collection and Analysis

Several types of data were collected in this study. The sources of these data included the reflection frameworks, liaison post-session interviews, and one-week post-session surveys of participants (see Table 3).

Table 3.

Research Questions and Data

Research Question	**Data Source**	**Approach**
In what ways do participants utilize the reflection framework? (i.e., goal setting, facilitation strategies, level of collaboration, modality)	Interview	Qualitative
Does the reflection framework impact the perceptions or practices of community engagement relationships among participants?	Survey	Mixed
Is actionable learning generated from using the reflection framework and then put into action?	Survey Reflection Framework	Mixed Mixed

Reflection Framework

Completed reflection frameworks served as a key qualitative data source for capturing actionable learning that was generated by participants. One relationship submitted a collaborative reflection framework, and the other frameworks were submitted one per participant. Analysis in this study included analytic coding (Saldaña, 2021) the two main areas of Articulate Learning (key takeaways and actions steps), in which

codes were derived from the seven threads of the reflection framework and the 10 domains of the scale. Quantitative data were collected from Examine II in the form of scale responses to TRES II and from Examine I in the form of a rating in response to the question: On a scale of 1–10, how well is this relationship accomplishing its purposes?

Liaison Interviews

Liaisons participated in one-hour, semi-structured interviews before and after the intervention (i.e., use of the reflection framework by members of a relationship). A subset of the post-session interview questions was used to gain insight into our research questions. Those questions centered around the strengths and limitations of the reflection framework, recommended changes, and documenting the site's reflection framework process (i.e., facilitation format, participants' SOFAR status).

Survey

A survey was emailed to participants one week after they completed the reflection framework; it included both quantitative and qualitative questions. The one-week time frame allowed us to gather initial perspectives from participants without adding time to the final day of the reflection framework process.[2] The survey contained questions for each of the 10 domains asking if the TRES II reflection framework "influenced my *perspective* on the relationships in regards to [domain]" or "has influenced or will influence my *practice* in the relationship with regard to [domain]"; respondents could select from a seven-point scale ranging from *A great deal negatively* through *Not at all* to *A great deal positively*. Including negative points on the scale was important as we recognized it was possible that participating in such a reflection process could uncover issues (e.g., different goals, values, and expectations) or surface frustrations or microaggressions that had not been previously aired, which in turn could cause emotional or psychological harm. Thus, reflection can, in some cases, help facilitate the ending of a relationship. In addition, respondents were asked about the degree to which completing the reflection framework influenced their commitment to the relationship, their clarity regarding the nature of the relationship, how they think about others in the relationship, their ability to understand the perspectives of others in the relationship, their perspective on the relationship, and their sense of extant or future influence on their practice in the relationship. In addition to those questions focused on the specific relationship, they were also asked the extent to which using the reflection framework influenced their perspective and influenced or will influence their practice on community engagement relationships in general. Finally, the survey asked about the extent to which participants had followed through on identified action steps and the extent to which they had had conversations about the relationships with others in the relationship since completing the reflection framework.

Results

Analyses confirmed the conceptual coherence of TRES II. Responses had an acceptable alpha for the current items (Cronbach's alpha = .83) and desired items (Cronbach's alpha = .83), similar to the results, Clayton et al. (2010) found for TRES I.

TRES II Relationship Domains

Table 4 presents descriptive statistics for the TRES II part of the reflection framework. Visual inspection of the means indicates that goals and conflict were the domains for which there were the lowest ratings for current status and for which there were the biggest discrepancies between current and desired status. The other domains had relatively homogeneous difference scores, demonstrating lower discrepancies between current and desired. Resources, communication, and outcomes had the highest current ratings.

[2] A six-month survey has also been designed and sent to participants. Survey results from all sites were not yet available for analysis at the time of completing this article.

Table 4.

Mean and Standard Deviations for Ratings of TRES II Domains

	Current	Desired	Difference	Dependent *t*-test
Goals	2.71 (.76)	3.79 (.41)	1.08	9.95**
Conflict	2.71 (.91)	3.70 (.46)	.99	5.93**
Decisions	2.94 (.80)	3.74 (.58)	.80	6.51**
Resources	3.06 (.70)	3.85 (.36)	.79	5.14**
Work	3.00 (.66)	3.72 (.46)	.72	5.63**
Self	2.68 (.81)	3.39 (.75)	.71	5.22**
Interactions	3.00 (.79)	3.70 (.54)	.70	6.53**
Power	2.97 (.65)	3.72 (.54)	.75	5.00**
Communications	3.12 (.91)	3.89 (.32)	.77	5.65**
Outcomes	3.09 (.82)	3.85 (.36)	.76	5.40**

*Dependent *t*-test significant at $p < .05$.

**Dependent *t*-test significant at $p < .01$.

Table 5 summarizes descriptive statistics for the items on the one-week survey that asked about the influence of completing the reflection framework on the respondents' perspective and practice within each of the 10 domains. All of the means were significantly higher than the scale's midpoint (4 = *not at all*), indicating that the participants were identifying the process as contributing to their perspective and practice in the relationship.

Table 5.

Ratings of Effect of TRES II Reflection Framework on Perspective and Practice

	Perspective	Practice
Goals	5.87** (1.22)	5.91** (1.08)
Conflict	5.61** (1.20)	5.72** (1.18)
Decisions	5.95** (.93)	6.00** (.95)
Resources	5.78** (1.35)	5.87** (1.01)
Work	6.18** (.85)	6.22** (.85)
Self	5.39** (2.02)	5.27** (2.02)
Interactions	6.21** (.90)	6.04** (1.29)
Power	4.91** (1.93)	5.00** (1.93)
Communications	6.26** (1.01)	6.26** (.96)
Outcomes	6.09** (1.08)	6.17** (.89)

*Dependent *t*-test significant at $p < .05$.

**Mean was significantly higher than the scale midpoint of 4.0 at $p > .01$.

Changes to Participants' Approach to Partnerships

Table 6 summarizes descriptive statistics for additional items on the one-week survey that asked about the degree to which using the framework contributed to commitment, clarity, and other aspects of both the relationships being reflected upon and relationships more generally. All means were significantly higher than the scale's midpoint (4 = *not at all*), indicating that the process influenced important aspects of their thinking, perspectives, and practices about the focal relationship and about community-campus relationships in general.

Table 6.

One-Week Survey Items

Survey Item	
Impact on commitment	6.48** (.67)
Impact on clarity	6.57** (.59)
Think of others in this relationship	6.41** (.85)
Influenced my perspective of others in this relationship	6.56** (.84)
Influenced my perspective on this relationship now and in the future	6.38** (.74)
Influenced my perspective on community engagement relationships now and in the future	6.35** (.57)
Influenced my practice in this relationship	5.91** (1.13)
Influenced my practice in community engagement relationships	6.26** (.81)

**Mean was significantly higher than the scale midpoint of 4.0 at $p > .01$.

In open-ended survey responses, participants noted that, after completing the reflection framework, a key change in their approach would revolve around further reflection and discussion as a group, including internal team members and a broader range of partners. One respondent shared:

> [The reflection framework] shows the value of taking time for reflection with my partners. In the future, I hope to occasionally convene larger meetings with my community partners that include other stakeholders. My partners don't often have the chance to speak with faculty or students don't often have the chance to share their input. Providing this space will allow us to think bigger, find more opportunities for connection, identify any barriers or challenges to the partnership, and hopefully strengthen and grow the relationship.

Another key takeaway that surfaced in the qualitative responses in the survey was a desire to "make space for listening"—to facilitate the space for conversations, to be collaborative, and to be mindful of which SOFAR members are and are not represented in the relationship. As one respondent indicated: "The tool also reminded me that a great deal depends on who is in the room and the importance of full participation and representation." Another participant indicated that a clarifying aspect of completing the reflection framework had been "to appreciate that relationships need not be extravagant or have multiple objectives to be meaningful."

Purpose Fulfillment and Alignment of Current and Desired Status

Correlations were computed between (a) the degree to which the focal relationship was fulfilling its purpose (prompt in Examine Part I; mean response = 7.75 on a 10-point scale) and (b) the discrepancy between current and desired status of the relationship on each of the 10 domains. Table 7 summarizes the significant correlations. All other correlations were nonsignificant. The negative correlations indicate that

higher scores on the relationship fulfilling its purpose were associated with lower discrepancies between current and desired (i.e., current and desired were closer together). In addition, there were no significant correlations between fulfillment of purpose and any responses on the one-week survey. This indicates that ratings on clarity, commitment, or learning on any of the 10 domains were unrelated to initial ratings of purpose. Thus, these responses to the survey did not depend on where a participant started the process in terms of their view of their relationship. For example, ratings of clarity and commitment were equally distributed across relationships that varied on perceived fulfillment of purpose.

Table 7.

Significant Correlations Between Current Purpose and TRES II Discrepancies

TRES II Discrepancy (Current-Desired)	
Goals	$r(31) = -.68$, $p < .01$
Resources	$r(24) = -.69$, $p < .01$
Role of partnership in each person's work	$r(26) = -.66$, $p < .01$
Power	$r(22) = -.53$, $p < .01$
Outcomes	$r(23) = -.43$, $p < .05$

Note. Degrees of freedom vary due to missing responses.

Responses to TRES II were compared for campus-based respondents (faculty, administrators, students) and community-based respondents (community organization representatives, community residents). A significant difference was found for desired status in the domain of conflict, $t(23) = 1.51$, $p < .01$. Campus-based respondents reported lower scores (mean = 3.65) than community-based respondents (mean = 4.00), indicating that campus respondents desired more transactional approaches to conflict than did community respondents. A significant difference was found for desired status in the domain of decision making, $t(27) = 1.30$, $p < .01$. Campus-based respondents scored lower (mean = 3.65) than community-based respondents (mean = 4.00), indicating that campus respondents desired more transactional approaches to decision making than did community respondents. A significant difference was found for desired status of the domain nature and type of interactions, $t(24) = 1.27$, $p < .05$. Community-based respondents aspired to more transformational interactions (mean = 4.00) than did campus-based respondents (mean = 3.62).

Key Takeaways and Action Steps

The reflection framework includes space for identifying three key takeaways as part of the Articulate Learning section; the majority of respondents listed only one. The key takeaways were analyzed through analytic coding (Saldaña, 2021), applying the seven threads introduced in Describe and built upon in Examine I, III, and IV (i.e., who, purposes, values, activities, support, changes, and wildcard) and the 10 domains of TRES. Ten of the takeaways were related to domains: communication (4), goals (2), conflict (1), role of the relationship in work (1), and interactions (1). The takeaways around communication included phrases such as "Partnership without communication both ways usually will fail" and "Communication is key, but the other domains are what to communicate about."

The threads were mentioned with more frequency (14 times) than domains, including who (5), purposes (3), activity (3), and changes (3). Some of the takeaways related to the "who" thread included reference to groups of people such as "We need to include some groups not currently represented:

students, residents, county." Others specifically named individuals and community organizations and their involvement. For example, "Partnership is really limited to [name] and I and not reflecting students" and "Faculty are less connected to the work of the [community organization]." Also noteworthy was one comment about connectedness among the threads: "For me the take-away was to think about how the purpose, activities, and values are interconnected."

Additionally, a code named "partnerships/reflection" emerged as an open code (Saldaña, 2021) throughout the process and occurred 12 times. Although it would be expected that participants have takeaways on the threads and domains as the tool is designed to generate them, it seems there was also another impact: the awareness of relationship quality and the ability to change that quality through reflection. Participants noted their overall thoughts on the relationship quality such as identifying the relationship as "positive" or noting "how much work [we've] done together." Others used the word "transformational," for example noting the "potential to become more transformational" or that "it's okay to not be at the transformative level as long as there is awareness."

The reflection framework invites participants to identify three action steps collaboratively as part of Articulate Learning. An analytic-coding process (Saldaña, 2021) was used to apply the seven threads (i.e., who, purposes, values, activities, support, changes, wildcard) from the reflection framework to the identified action steps. The most common threads of action included the "who," activities, and support. The "who" included a broad expression of desire for more engagement across SOFAR categories, including ways to engage more students, faculty, and community partners. Others identified specific community partners or students in specific courses to further engage. Activities included broad goals such as "revisiting the training" and "explor[ing] possibilities for more year-round engagement." Others named specific activities to create such as a celebration and awards ceremony for students and discussion sessions around specific topics. Support actions included creating communication tools, creating protected time for the partnership, and creating a new position. Coded in the "wildcard" category were three instances of action steps directly related to engaging in further reflection as a partnership, with two referencing sharing the reflection framework itself with other partners.

In the one-week survey, participants were asked about any progress they made on the action steps they identified in the reflection framework. Table 8 summarizes the frequency with which completing the framework resulted in conversations within the relationship and the degree to which steps identified in the framework had been acted on. The majority of respondents indicated that conversations had occurred and actions had been initiated during the intervening week.

Table 8.

Frequency of Conversations and Follow-Through on Action Steps

	None	**A few**	**Several**	**Many**
Since you engaged with the TRES II Reflection Framework, to what extent have you had conversations about the relationship with others involved in the relationships?	7	11	2	3
As a result of engaging with the TRES II Reflection Framework, to what extent have you followed through on action steps that you identified?	5	10	6	1

Several participants reported taking practical steps to further their relationship, including applying for interns, engaging graduate assistants, and purchasing supplies. Others had reached out to partners, scheduled meetings, and planned on having broader conversations, including asking additional partners to complete the reflection framework together in the coming months.

Responding to a survey prompt that solicited additional information regarding the conversations they had as partners since completing the framework, participants' answers were grouped into three categories: (a) conversations occurring with the team internal to their organization, (b) conversations with partners external to their organization, and (c) future plans to engage in conversations. Discussions with internal team members included further debriefing the reflection framework and planning for next steps. Conversations with partners external to the organization focused on continuing to reflect and discuss their experiences with the framework. Several respondents described reaching out to their partner to discuss "the process and our next steps with the relationship." In terms of planning for future conversations, most respondents suggested that partnership conversations happen at specific points in the year, and that completing the reflection framework "will certainly influence the conversations I have in the future."

Utility of the Reflection Framework

In evaluating the strengths of the reflection framework, liaisons cited the robustness of the tool, particularly the conceptualization of relationships and their dimensions. The liaisons appreciated that the reflection framework encourages more than superficial reflection. One liaison shared this reflection:

> To me, the value is in the conversation both in terms of building a process, building relationships. Even in coming to outcomes and conclusions, I'm more interested in the outcomes that we arrived at from the conversation we had, than the outcomes of let's look at what everybody wrote down.

The liaisons also spoke highly of both the overarching logic and the flow of the reflection framework, which encouraged deeper reflection, and the importance of holding space for broader conversations, not only narrow instrumental, project-focused discussions. One liaison described the framework as "forcing conversations in really useful ways … to be more thoughtful about imagining what the partnership could be offering to all of us."

In terms of the limitations of the reflection framework, liaisons and participants referenced the length of the reflection framework and the time needed to complete it as limiting its utility. They faced challenges in "mov[ing] through together with … partner[s]." This also raised concerns about the scalability of the reflection framework, as participants were unsure of their ability to facilitate the framework with other stakeholders, particularly in relationships with multiple ongoing projects and initiatives involving overlapping or different personnel and divergent interests at stake.

Participation in the study on the reflection framework was not contingent on all members of a relationship participating. Several participants noted that completing the reflection framework without one or more partners present for the final gathering was a missed opportunity. For example, one noted:

> This is just making me want to have the conversation with [partner]. And by the time I got to page, you know 30 or so I was like, "Goodness gracious. I just need to put this down and give [partner] a call." You know, like I could see how I was so hungry for that conversation, that I knew that things would change and be more interesting when she was involved.

Discussion

Cruz and Giles (2000) noted the field's emphasis on student outcomes in service-learning research and proposed that partnerships be a unit of analysis; in doing so, they presented the challenge: Can service-learning relationships be measured, conceptualized, and analyzed? Kniffin et al. (2020) offered extensions of existing scholarship on relationships, developed TRES II, and envisioned facilitation of critical reflection with collaboration among members of the relationship. This article describes a critical reflection tool that can be used for collaborative reflection, and this current study illuminates ways in which participants used it and benefited from its use. Ultimately, we found the reflection framework had utility across a diverse set of sites including institution type, size, and location. It is important to acknowledge that the implementation at each site was unique to its local context based on liaison goals

and planning. Partnership work is highly contextual, and implementing the reflection framework in each context ought to begin with an acknowledgment of the unique context (i.e., goal setting and planning). We encourage others to use the reflection framework in new contexts and contribute to the practice and study of critical reflection in community-campus relationships.

Liaisons helped imagine and implement diverse approaches to using the reflection framework, and observing these various approaches and talking with liaisons in the post-session interview led us to these takeaways regarding the use of the reflection framework:

- A facilitator's guide should be developed.
- The facilitator's guide should include a section on planning the use of the reflection framework to replace the presession liaison interview in guiding choices about how the tool will be used.
- Including individual and collaborative components is preferred and allows a balance of individual thought and collaborative meaning making.
- Options for virtual and hybrid work can facilitate the inclusion of more individuals in the relationship who might be excluded from in-person meetings.

The results of the research support the conclusion that, for the first time, there is evidence that an intervention across multiple partnerships can lead to expecting improvements in relationships (perceptions and practice) and taking steps to improve relationships across multiple contexts. The relationships in this sample were relatively high functioning; participants gave rather high ratings (mean = 7.75 on a 10-point scale) on the degree to which their focal relationship was fulfilling its intended purpose. The results also demonstrated that these relationships were not static. All of the ratings across the 10 domains demonstrated an aspiration for growth in the direction of transformation. The finding that all domains had significant differences between current and desired corroborated Clayton et al. (2010), whose earlier research using TRES I documented that more transformational outcomes were generally attractive to participants.

Although goals and conflict were the two domains for which there was the largest discrepancy between current and desired, these were not the highest-rated areas after one week for which respondents indicated that their perspective and practice had been influenced. This demonstrates the potential desirability for subsequent interventions focused on these two areas, or any area with a large discrepancy. Respondents attributed increased clarity and commitment to the relationship as a result of completing the reflection framework. Although long-term assessment of the effectiveness of the intervention might yield evidence that a relationship moves toward greater transformation, the enhancement of clarity and commitment represents important outcomes even in the absence of such evidence of movement in the transformational direction. Other than case studies, intentional interventions to improve the quality of community-campus relationships are conspicuous by their absence in the literature, especially across a wide sample of relationships. That the reflection framework had the capacity to produce these outcomes across a variety of relationships in different institutional contexts is noteworthy. Furthermore, the results support the conclusion that the process helped educate practitioners' thinking, perspectives, and practices about the focal relationship in the future as well as about community-campus relationships more generally. Thus, the reflection framework is not only an intervention that can improve the quality of relationships, but it can also constitute an educational tool for learning *about relationships* among SOFAR participants.

The 10 domains identified in TRES II are not presumed to be an exhaustive list of important aspects of a relationship. Rather they are viewed as a sample of meaningful domains for use in examining a relationship. TRES II. The current research had a wildcard option, which offered the opportunity for respondents to identify any additional domains to speak to additional questions they had about the relationship (but only one respondent did so). Thus, it seems that the domains serve their purpose of stimulating reflection on important aspects of relationships, producing learning about relationships, enhancing the quality of the focal relationship, and resulting in behaviors that can contribute to the future functioning of the relationship.

Goals was one of the areas that was rated rather low on current status and evinced a large difference between current and desired ratings. Practitioners can consider how further activities can be structured to assist partners in the relationship in further clarifying the goals of the relationship, especially when those goals might be different for different partners. Clayton et al. (2010) found that the domains conflict and resources had the highest ratings for both current and desired (along with satisfaction, which is not included in the current version of TRES II). Furthermore, they found that the largest discrepancy between current and desired status occurred for power. The domains in this research with those characteristics (i.e., communications and outcomes had the highest ratings, and goals and conflict had the largest discrepancies) were somewhat different, illustrating that there is variability in terms of what matters to specific relationships and that strengths and concerns may be idiosyncratic to particular relationships. Thus, practitioners will need to consider these differences and allow opportunities for subsequent work on those areas that are salient in different relationships and to different partners.

Embedded in TRES II is the distinction between transactional and transformational relationships. The ratings of current status hovered around the transactional scale value of 3, but aspirations for the relationship were significantly closer to the transformational scale value of 4. These results are similar to Clayton et al. (2010), although the metric of TRES I used in that research was different (with variable numbers of response options). Clayton et al. only obtained ratings from service-learning instructors, whereas this study included other SOFAR partners. Community-based respondents in particular aspired to deeper levels on a more transformational approach to conflict, decision making, and the extent and nature of interactions.

The reflection framework was effective at getting participants to collaboratively name action steps. In as little as one week, participants began following up on action steps, and they reported that the reflection framework "will influence" their practice moving forward. Future research should be conducted to better understand if this critical reflection process and subsequent action steps move relationships toward transformational (and otherwise desired) aspects. For example, after completing the reflection framework and having time to implement action steps: Do participants rate the TRES II domains higher? Do current and desired states of the domains more closely align? It would also be worthwhile to explore the outcomes of regular reflection (vs. one-time reflection), including what other tools can support members of relationships in ongoing reflection after use of the reflection framework or other interventions.

This study built on previous work that demonstrated the value of critical reflection for student learning (e.g., Ash et al., 2005) and faculty learning (Clayton et al., 2013). We developed TRES II and used it across various contexts in which participants suggested developing reflective prompts around the scale (Kniffin et al., 2020). As we noted in our previous work (Kniffin et al., 2020), "integrating the full range of SOFAR perspectives is perhaps the single most important commitment that must ground ongoing evolution of inquiry and practice related to partnership work in SLCE" (p. 21). In this study, we were able to test the assertion that Bringle et al. (2009) posited: that there is potential value to stakeholders in any community-campus relationship of elevating the perspective and practice of each individual or all members of the relationship in hopes of improving that relationship. This research on an intervention that can be used by all SOFAR partners provides a fledgling start to responding to that challenge. Subsequent work, both research and practice, will need to continue to develop approaches to relationships that are inclusive, participatory, democratic, and collaborative.

Conclusion

This article provides an in-depth example of the value of developing and enhancing extant tools with intentionally designed critical reflection prompts to increase the tools' utility and impact. Adding a set of critical reflection prompts before, during, and after TRES II provided an opportunity for partners to learn more about their relationships and to generate actionable learning to improve those relationships. Our results demonstrated that the TRES II Reflection Framework was an effective intervention for improving participants' commitment to, clarity around, and perspectives on their relationships as well as for influencing planned practice enhancements within the relationships related to the role of the relationship

in work, nature, and type of interactions, communication, and outcomes. In future research, our team plans to collaborate with a larger and more diverse set of community-campus partners and to use a more consistent intervention to better understand how the tool supports collaborative critical reflection to enhance relationship quality. Our questions for future research include: Does using the reflection framework lead to partnerships becoming more transformational over time? If so, how? And what distinguishes those that do from those that do not? Does the combination of participants (e.g., SOFAR roles) influence the changes in partnership quality? We also want to better understand the process that community-campus partners undertake (subsequent to completing the reflection framework) in deepening their partnerships to become more transformational.

The reflection framework is freely available so others may contribute to the inquiry about its potential uses, opportunities for improvement, and exploring questions related to practice and research. Recognizing this is only one tool for intervening in community-campus relationships to strengthen them, we invite others to share their interventions and bring them into conversation with the reflection framework. Relationships are a central aspect of quality SLCE, and knowing more about how to evaluate and strengthen them can lead to better processes and outcomes for community and campus partners.

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