

## Example of Reflection with ABC123 Method

**Exercise and Goal:** *In-class activity in which the students were required to collectively develop evaluation criteria to be used to evaluate a project to occur later in the quarter. The purpose was to demonstrate the complex dynamics of democratic decision-making using an issue that is often personal and volatile – their grade.*

We were supposed to take some task that was really easy and define a very basic rubric. Well I [LEVEL 1] was very frustrated with the whole process [AFFECT]. First we were sitting there discussing and we found what I thought was a good rubric. And all of the sudden one person raises his hand and says, “I don’t like this, it’s too much like this or that” and we spent at least half an hour trying to figure out something that was really easy. In the end, I think everyone just gave up and said, “you know what, I’m tired of talking about this, let’s just do it.” But as frustrated it made me feel, I actually understood much more about our government. What we practiced in our exercise was what we could call an example of participatory democracy [COGNITION]. The book says [citing from the textbook Rimmerman, 2001] *it is the idea that embraces active participation by the citizens in the community and workplace decision-making at a local level – it is rooted in the notion that whatever touches all should be judged by all. It requires much more than just voting for competing elitists. Through a process of decision, debate, and compromise, they link their concerns with the needs of the community.* It all sounds great in theory but when you actually try to and do it, it gets really frustrating. I don’t even know if we had the best rubric that we could’ve had. I don’t think anyone got what they wanted which could be bad or could be good. To contrast that with the democratic theory of elitism, I’m saying it is probably a whole lot easier if just did what a couple of people thought was OK. [Citing from the textbook, Rimmerman, 2001] *The democratic theory of elitism theorizes that elites in power should make all the crucial decisions facing society and citizens should be rather passive in politics, generally participating for voting and competing elites, and periodic elections. Democratic elitists argue that the role expected of the citizen in a participatory setting is unrealistic and that too much participation will contribute to the instability of the political and economic system.* This theory is normally something we look down on. And after doing this exercise and going over this, it really surprised me that I was like, “Yeah, we should do something more like that.” So it really helped me see where a lot of our law makers are coming from when they don’t want to listen to all these people – especially a lot of people I know in our class have a lot of views that aren’t the most popular – it isn’t what mainstream society is talking about [SHIFT TO LEVEL 2]. We get really upset or get really frustrated when we go to talk to these politicians and we say, “Look, what about this?” and “Who cares about this little group of people over here?” We all get really frustrated when we feel the government is not addressing our needs. But when we did this exercise I could see how they view us. It’s that one person who raises their hand and they think they have the perfect policy or the policy they think will please a lot of groups and then there’s that one person who is the corner saying, “I don’t like it because of this.” [BEHAVIOR] I guess I’m normally that person – that one person who says, “No, no, you forgot about these people.” It really surprised me that when it happened in a big group, it was so easy for me to say, “Forget the little person, let’s just move on, let’s just do what everyone likes.” It really surprised me how quickly I switched. It helped me understand why politicians do what they do. I learned how frustrating it can be. As I go and try to do more things I hope to take that understanding with me. I hope to try and show politicians that it’s not just one person bringing up a concern that only effects a minor part of the population, but try and show them the idea that these decisions benefit everyone, that helping the poor will make the whole community stronger [SHIFT TO LEVEL 3]. In addition to that, this spring I’ll be doing an internship at the state capitol building and I’m sure I’m going to get to see a lot of people and I’ll probably get frustrated with all these people who care about this or that. I’m sure I’m going to get frustrated with all of these interest groups. But I hope to keep this exercise in mind. I want to have it help me have patience when I’m listening to these people. It just really blew my mind. I definitely think I have to take this with me when I go before Congress or push any issue – this will be very important to keep in mind.

**Student score (despite the stream of consciousness format): 9/9**

Dubinsky, J., Welch, M., & Wurr, A. (2012). Composing Cognition: The Role of Written Reflections in Service-Learning.