

50. Guidelines for Research Journal

If you are doing a community-based research project this summer, please carve out the time during your weekly schedule--as part of your project--to reflect critically about how your research methods and process are working.

I recommend that you record your thoughts on a regular basis in a research journal. *Two times during the summer, as an addendum to a letter home, please post your research reflections on our SOL blackboard website. (Letters home are due on June 14, 21, 28 and July 19.)*

Incorporating critical reflection into your work this summer is important. Your reflections become a record of the iterative process of framing, pursuing, and refining your research and exploring what you are learning in the process. Think of your research journal as a sort of “lab notebook with commentary.” It should focus both on research *processes* and *outcomes*, and it should address the intellectual, ethical, and civic issues posed by your community-based research experience.

These are some questions and issues to consider in your research journal:

Research Question:

- What is your research question? Has it evolved over time, and if so, why?
- How is answering this question helpful to your community partner? Who might benefit from the results of your research, and how?

Research Methods:

- What methods are you using to answer your question? Are your methods evolving, and if so, why?
- What are you learning about the power and limitations of your research methods?

Research Process and Outcomes:

- Who are you collaborating with on this research? What are the challenges of this collaboration? What are you learning about effective collaboration with organizations and/or complex communities?
- What ethical concerns do you need to be attentive to in pursuing your research?
- What are the results of your research? How would you evaluate the scholarly rigor and validity of these results? How would you assess their potential value to your community partner?
- How will you share your results with your community partner?
- What intellectual, ethical, and civic skills are you gaining from this experience?
- What have you learned about your own strengths and weaknesses from doing this CBR project? About your core values and ideals?