

The Transformational Evaluation Relationship Scale II (TRES II) Reflection Framework: Version 2

Authors' Note: This version of the TRES II Reflection Framework was last updated in April, 2022, and a PDF file can be accessed at the link provided in the recommended reference. Contact Patti Clayton, patti.clayton@curricularengagement.com, for an editable Word file and/or future versions. The creation of this Reflection Framework was partially supported by a "Research with and about Community Engagement" grant from the Community Engaged Alliance (formerly Indiana Campus Compact)—a sub-grant of the Lilly Foundation.

Introduction to the TRES II Reflection Framework

How can relationships and partnerships in service-learning and community engagement be thoughtfully examined and potentially deepened?

Relationships are the lifeblood of service-learning and community engagement (SLCE). But how do we know that we are working together in ways that embody oft-cited values such as reciprocity and shared decision-making so as to advance both learning and change? The TRES II Reflection Framework was designed to support thoughtful reflection on and inquiry into relationships.

“TRES” (pronounced “trees,” like in the forest) stands for Transformational Relationship Evaluation Scale. TRES II is the second version of a scale that was initially created in 2009 as a tool to support reflection on, assessment of, and research into the qualities and dynamics of relationships in SLCE. The TRES II Reflection Framework was built around the scale as its users and developers realized the value of additional support for turning responses to the scale into concrete action to deepen relationships. The Framework is thus a series of prompts for critical reflection on relationships designed to lead users to deeper understanding and deeper practice.

Two Underlying Conceptual Frameworks

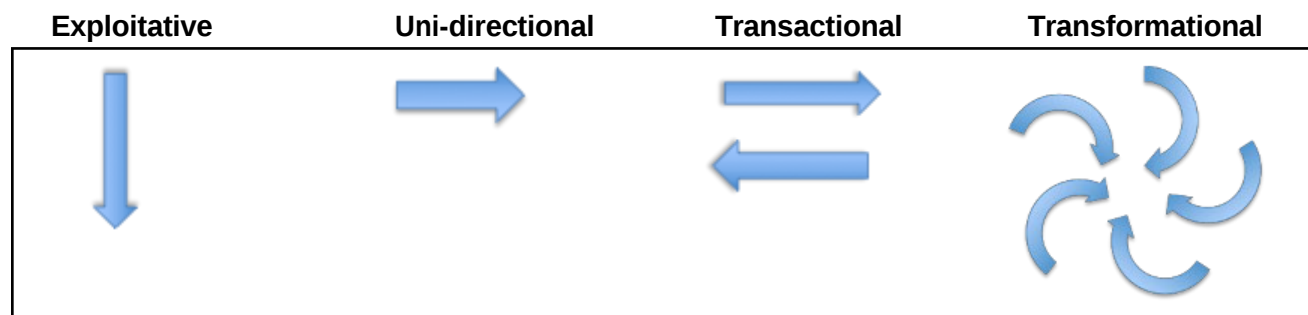
First, work on TRES grew out of and further developed distinctions between **transactional** and **transformational** relationships (for early work on this distinction, see Enos & Morton, 2003). As we have written of this distinction:

Transactional relationships aim for outcomes that are net positive (benefits exceed costs) for all members, with interactions grounded in exchanges that are often short-term, close-ended, and context-bound (i.e., concerned with the objectives of a particular activity). In transformational relationships ... individuals do not merely benefit but also grow as they question established norms, and this may in turn lead to change in the partnerships and systems they are part of as well. Members of transformational relationships adopt longer-term and more open-ended perspectives, their identities are defined at least partly in terms of the partnership ... and its broader goals, and those goals evolve as new meanings and possibilities emerge. (Kniffin et al., 2020, pp. 6-7)

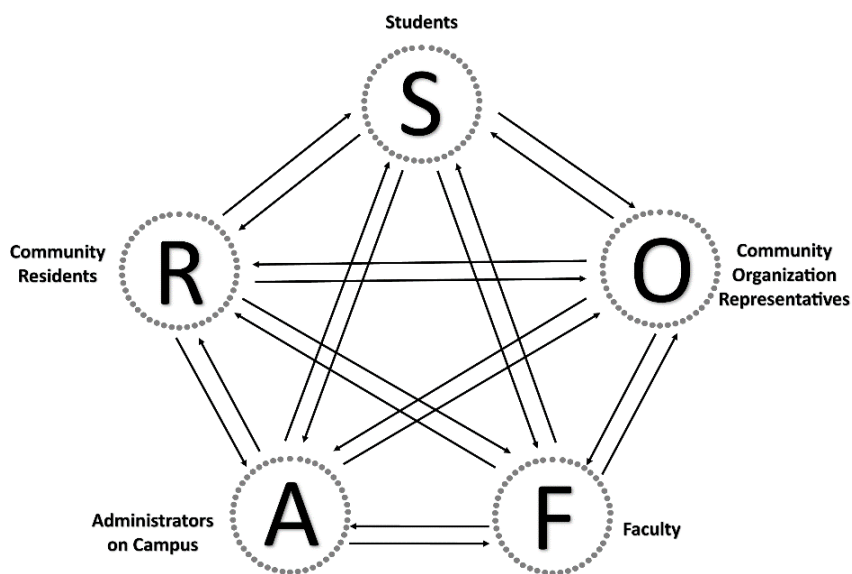
Over time (see Kniffin et al., 2020 for an overview) work on TRES came to encompass the realities of **exploitative** and **uni-directional** relationships as well. Exploitative relationships have net negative outcomes (costs exceeding benefits) for at least one member; and in uni-lateral relationships value (e.g., resources, knowledge) is not exchanged but rather flows in only one direction. We now use the visual below to express these four types of relationship, noting that relationships may exhibit characteristics associated with more than one of these types (i.e.,

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they may be transactional in some aspects and transformational in others), and they may shift among these types across time and across contexts.



Second, relationships in SLCE generally include some combination of people from the five categories conceptualized in the **SOFAR** model visualized below (see Bringle et al., 2009; Kniffin et al., 2020):



SOFAR illustrates how “community–campus” relationships and partnerships can be differentiated into representatives of community **O**rganizations and **R**esidents (community stakeholders) and **F**aculty, **S**tudents, and institutional **A**dministrators (including professional staff) on campus (campus stakeholders). Any given individual may be associated with more than one SOFAR category (e.g., an instructor or student may also have an administrative role, be a board member of a community-based organization, and be a resident of the community). And potential partners may represent other categories (e.g., funders, municipalities,

neighborhood associations) that are not expressed in this simple visual. As you use the SOFAR model, please customize it as appropriate for your context.

Relationships in SLCE may occur between and among individual persons and/or collectives (e.g., nonprofit organizations, government agencies), taking the form of either:

- **dyads** (i.e., between 2 individuals),
- **triads** (i.e., among 3 individuals),
- **networks** (i.e., for the purposes of this framework, loose ties among more than 3 individuals within a single or among multiple organizations/groups), or
- **partnership entities** (i.e., “structured, enduring association[s] of individuals, groups, and organizations that engage in common activity and combine resources to achieve common goals” (Kniffin et al., 2020, p. 5))

The Reflection Framework

The reflection process that is supported with the prompts that comprise the TRES II Reflection Framework encourage users to clarify their understandings of, assumptions about, and commitments to relationships. It should raise questions and generate ideas that can be used to deepen relationships in SLCE. The Reflection Framework provides an opportunity to look at and critically examine the quality of a relationship and evaluate where it has been and where it can go. It does not assess other types of outcomes that can result from an SLCE relationship--different tools do that.

This framework has three (3) primary sections--each with prompts that build on the previous section--and is structured using the DEAL Model for Critical Reflection (Ash & Clayton, 2009), as follows:

1. **Describe** the factual details of the relationship you want to deepen understanding and practice of (e.g., its participants, purposes, activities, history)
2. **Examine** the relationship (e.g., implications of who is and is not part of it, success in achieving its purposes) including using the TRES II scale itself and then re-considering your (and your partners') thinking about the relationship accordingly
3. **Articulating Learning** about the relationship (i.e., key take-ways, their implications, associated questions for further thought), which includes determining specific actions you and your partners can take to deepen your relationship.

Using the Reflection Framework

Before you begin to reflect using the DEAL structure, you will first need to determine a particular focal relationship. The first section below provides prompts to help you think about both which relationship you want to reflect on and why that reflection might matter to you and to the relationship. Once you have determined the specific relationship, it is important that you keep your focus on it throughout the reflection process, not slip back and forth between multiple relationships.

If you are doing this reflection by yourself, then after you bullet or write out your responses in each section simply move to the next; after you complete the TRES II scale you will complete

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EXAMINE Part III and then skip EXAMINE Part IV (although we strongly encourage you to connect with other partners, sharing your thinking, inviting theirs, and determining action steps together).

If you are doing this reflection with others then you may decide to work together throughout (e.g., one combined Description) OR to respond to each section individually and then share and discuss your responses before moving on to the next section. If you are working together throughout, after you complete the TRES II scale you will skip EXAMINE Part III and move on to EXAMINE Part IV.

NOTE: These icons represent thinking threads that will be utilized through the entirety of the framework. Please refer to this legend for icon identification.

Icon Legend for Reference			
	"the who"		"the activities"
	"the purposes"		"the support"
	"the values"		"the changes"
			"the what else"

References

Ash, S. L., & Clayton, P. H. (2009). Generating, deepening, and documenting learning: The power of critical reflection for applied learning. *Journal of Applied Learning in Higher Education*, 1(1), 25-48.

Bringle, R. G., Clayton, P. H., & Price, M. F. (2009). Partnerships in service learning and civic engagement. *Partnerships: A journal of service-learning and civic engagement*, 1(1), 1-20.

Enos, S., & Morton, K. (2003). Developing a theory and practice of campus community partnerships. In B. Jacoby (Ed.), *Building partnerships for service-learning* (pp. 20–41). Jossey-Bass.

Kniffin, L., Camo-Biogradlija, J., Price, M. F., Kohl, E., Williams, J., Dickovick, A. D. C., Goodwin, J., Johnson, K. V., Clayton, P. H., & Bringle, R. G. (2020). Relationships and partnerships in community-campus engagement: Evolving inquiry and practice. *The International Journal of Research on Service-Learning and Community Engagement*, 8(1), Article 15.

Focal Relationship for this Reflection

INSTRUCTIONS

Think about an SLCE relationship you want to deepen and respond to the questions below.

PROMPTS

A. **WHICH** RELATIONSHIP IS THE FOCUS OF MY / OUR REFLECTION HERE? WHICH RELATIONSHIP IS IT THAT WE WANT TO DEEPEN? (in other words, what is the unit of analysis for this reflection?)

My/Our WHICH:

- Which specific type of SLCE relationship is the focus of my/our reflection (see definitions in the Introduction above)? Circle one:
 - A dyad that consists of me and who?
 - A triad that consists of me and what other 2 people?
 - A network (i.e., for the purposes of this framework, loose ties among more than 3 individuals within a single or among multiple organizations/groups)
 - A partnership entity (i.e., “structured, enduring association[s] of individuals, groups, and organizations that engage in common activity and combine resources to achieve common goal” (Kniffin et al., 2020, p. 5))
- If this relationship encompasses more than one SLCE context (e.g., more than one course, a course and a research project) which context(s) am I / are we focusing on here?
- Which, if any, of the people in this relationship are also using this Reflection Framework currently? Are we working individually or together on it, or some of both? Also, what is most notable about the gaps (i.e., those partners who are not joining me in this reflection)?

B. WHY SHOULD I/WE UNDERTAKE REFLECTION ON THIS RELATIONSHIP?

My/our WHYs:

- Am I (are we) reflecting on relationships in the context of research, program evaluation, teaching, community development, social justice work, or something else?
- Why might this process of reflecting on a relationship be valuable to me? To others in this relationship? To the relationship itself? To the work we do together?
- What do I/we hope might be different after undertaking this reflection?
- What learning, outcomes, plans, or products do I/we hope this reflection process leads to?

DESCRIBE this Relationship

INSTRUCTIONS

This is “just the facts,” not interpretations or judgments. What does a “fly on the wall” know about this relationship: that is what you should include here. If you don’t know any of the information, just note that and move on.

PROMPTS



A. Who does this relationship consist of at present (e.g., what individual and/or organizational partners)? Who else *affects and/or is affected* by this relationship?



B. Overall, what are the purposes of this relationship?



C. What are the values that drive / ground this relationship?

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D. Overall, what activities does this relationship include? In other words, what do we do together?



E. What specific resources support this relationship?



F. Historically, since this partnership began, what have been some changes that are particularly relevant to the state of the partnership today? What have been some key milestones in its development?



G. WILDCARD: What else do I / we think is important information to bring to mind when describing this relationship? [Make notes here with your description of these other elements of the relationship.]

EXAMINE this Relationship, Part I

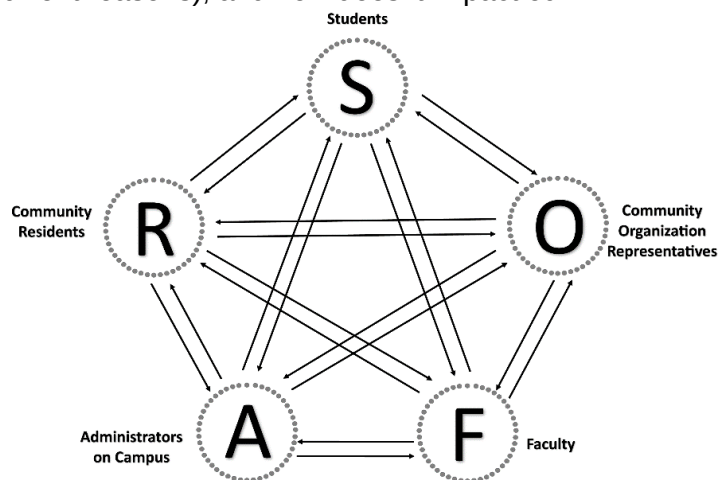
INSTRUCTIONS

The questions that follow support you in beginning to make meaning of the relationship you just described. You will build on and begin to interpret the significance of those details here.

PROMPTS



- A. Looking back at my / our description of the who of this relationship (DESCRIBE, PART A), which of the SOFAR categories are *most* and *least represented* in this relationship? Why is that the case (consider both historical and current reasons), and how does it impact our work together?



- What dynamics of this relationship might be related to other similarities and differences among us (besides SOFAR role; e.g., age, ethnicity, gender, level of experience, commitment)?



- B. Looking back at my / our description of the purposes of this relationship (DESCRIBE, PART B): On a scale of 1 to 10, how well is this relationship accomplishing these purposes?

(not at all)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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(completely)

- Why do I / we rate it this way?



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C. In what ways do the activities and supports (DESCRIBE, PART D & E) noted in the description above align with or live out the values (DESCRIBE, PART C) and in what ways do they not?



D. What do I / we see as the most important *strengths* and *growth areas* of this relationship? Consider the historic changes and milestones you noted in the description above (DESCRIBE, PART F) as well as recent and emerging characteristics of the relationships.



E. WILDCARD: What else do I / we want to think about regarding this relationship? Consider, but don't be limited to, the additional aspects of the relationship you noted in the description above (DESCRIBE, PART G). [Make notes here with your reflection on these other elements of the relationship.]

EXAMINE the Relationship, Part II

INSTRUCTIONS

This section consists of the TRES II scale. These prompts support you in continuing to make meaning of your relationship.

How to complete the scale:

Please indicate your general impressions about your relationship, selecting the alternatives that best represent the relationship, as follows.

- ❖ Mark with an “X” the alternative that best characterizes the *current* state of the relationship from your point of view.
- ❖ Mark with an “X” the alternative that best characterizes the *desired future* state of the relationship from your point of view.

NOTE: For simplicity of language, the items in the scale refer to “the partnership”; please translate that to indicate which type of relationship you are reflecting on (i.e., a dyad, a triad, a network, a partnership entity).

NOTE: You may or may not believe your desired future state is likely in your context, given the range of constraints associated with the systems you are part of. While honoring the reality of limitations and the potential frustrations of desiring a state you deem unlikely, please indicate the state you desire and, as you wish, add notes to express any concerns. Naming your desired state is an important step in moving toward it, and those you are in relationship with may well be able to co-create possibilities with you that otherwise elude you.

PROMPTS

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1. **Goals:**

Current	Desired	
		The goals of at least one of the partners are not known and/or are hampered, and this causes them 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).

When it comes to GOALS in this partnership:

- I am / we are thinking about goals such as:
- Who contributes / contributed to establishing these goals? Who does / did not?
- Whose goals are prioritized? Whose are not? Why?

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2. **Conflict:**

Current	Desired	
		Conflict remains unacknowledged or is avoided, and this causes harm to the partners
		Conflict is acknowledged and partly managed such that underlying issues are unresolved but neither the partners nor partnership is harmed.
		Conflict is successfully resolved by the partners.
		Conflict is embraced by the partners as a catalyst to generate new possibilities for the partnership.

When it comes to CONFLICT in this relationship, I am / we are thinking about:

- Conflict between whom (look back at the earlier description of the WHO's of the relationship)?
- Conflict about what?
- Why did I / w rate "current" as I / we did?

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3. Decision-making:

Current	Desired	
		At least one of the partners makes decisions in ways that do not involve all of us, and those decisions disadvantage at least one of us.
		Decisions are made in isolation but with consideration of the other partners.
		Partners make decisions through a means acceptable to all, and the decisions reached serve us individually.
		Partners carefully weigh possibilities and determine together how decisions are made, and the decisions we make benefit the partnership as well as the individual partners.

When it comes to DECISION-MAKING in this relationship, I am / we are thinking about:

- Decisions about what / on what types of questions or issues?
- Who as the decision makers?
- Why did I / we rate “current” as I / we did?

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4. Resources (e.g., material goods, time, expertise, money):

Current	Desired	
		At least one partner takes resources from others, and/or there is no consideration of what is appropriate for each to contribute; some partners are harmed as a result.
		At least one partner contributes resources to and for other partners, who are not thought to have resources to contribute themselves.
		All partners exchange existing resources for mutual benefit.
		Investment of resources is equitable (even if unequal, our contributions are proportional to our means), new resources are generated, and resources are understood to be collective (not “mine” and “yours”).

When it comes to RESOURCES in this partnership:

- What am I / are we thinking of as “resources”? What am I / are we not thinking of?
- What resources are necessary for the partnership? Do we all agree on this?
- How does the partnership approach conversations about resources?

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6. Role of this partnership in sense of self (for example, confidence, agency, voice):

Current	Desired	
		The sense of self of one or more partners is weakened by participating in the partnership.
		The partnership contributes to the distinct sense of self of one or more partners through the contributions of others.
		The distinct sense of self of all partners is strengthened through the contributions of others.
		The sense of self of all partners is deepened by developing a joint sense of self (as members of the partnership).

When it comes to ROLE OF THIS PARTNERSHIP IN SENSE OF SELF:

- How, specifically, has this partnership changed each of our sense of self? Has this influence changed over time?
- How has our sense of self not been changed by this partnership? In what ways, if any, do we want this partnership to have more / different influence on our sense of self?
- Why did I / we rate “current” as I / we did?

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7. Extent and nature of interactions:

Current	Desired	
		Interactions among partners are negative for at least one of us.
		One or some partners control the extent and nature of interactions, but the intent is for them to be positive for everyone.
		A range of interactions is designed with contributions by all partners.
		The variety of frequent interactions that partners design goes beyond what any of us would otherwise do on our own and support the growth of partners (and the partnership).

When it comes to INTERACTIONS in this relationship, I am / we are thinking about:

- Interactions among whom?
- Interactions around / about what?

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8. Power (in other words, the ability to have influence):

Current	Desired	
		At least one partner is taken advantage of through others' uses of power, and their own power is not recognized.
		Some partners use their power for the benefit of (some) others as those others have defined it.
		The power of all partners is combined, and all of us have the power to enhance the equity of power distribution.
		The joint power of all partners generates new sources of and ways to use power, within each of us and as a partnership.

When it comes to POWER in this relationship, I am / we are thinking about:

- Power held by whom, from what sources?
- Power used how?
- Why did I / we rate "current" as I / we did?

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9. **Communication:**

Current	Desired	
		At least one of us is left out of communication within this partnership, to our detriment.
		Communication in this partnership includes all of us as recipients but is mostly one-way.
		Communication in this partnership includes all of us as both initiators and recipients and is effective in helping us get our work together done.
		Communication in this partnership includes all of us as both initiators and recipients and often generates new possibilities for our work together.

When it comes to COMMUNICATION in this relationship, I am / we are thinking about:

- Communication among whom?
- Communication about / around what?

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10. **Outcomes:**

Current	Desired	
		This partnership undermines outcomes that matter to at least one partner.
		This partnership advances outcomes that matter to some (but not all) partners individually.
		This partnership enables all partners to attain outcomes that matter to us.
		This partnership cultivates individual and collective growth while allowing everyone to attain outcomes that are individually and jointly meaningful.

When it comes to OUTCOMES in this relationship, I am / we are thinking about:

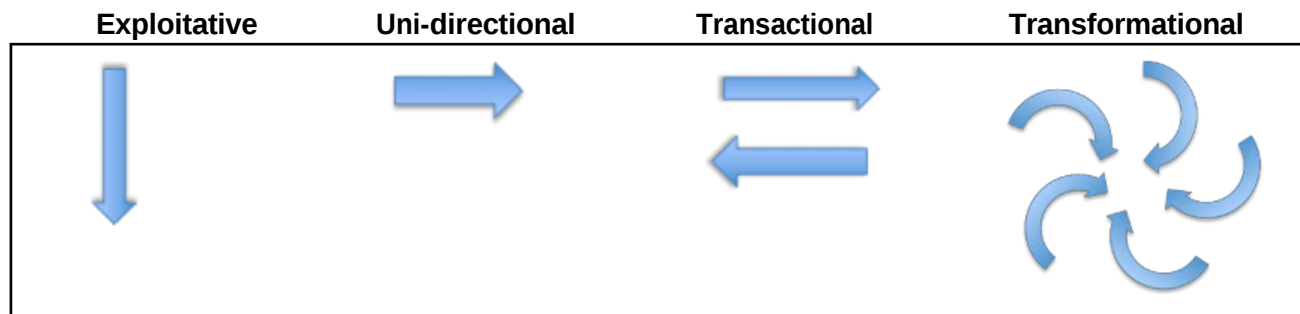
- Outcomes such as?
- Outcomes produced how?

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11. Wildcard: What else do I / we want to think about regarding this relationship?

Current	Desired	

As you write items for your wildcard domain, remember the underlying conceptual framework:



Directions for EXAMINE Part III and IV

EXAMINE, PART III and PART IV support you in continuing to make meaning of your relationship.

If you are...	Complete EXAMINE Part III	Complete EXAMINE Part IV	Complete ARTICULATE LEARNING
The only person from your partnership using the reflection framework	✓		✓
Using the reflection framework individually <u>and</u> others members of the partnership are also using it individually	✓ Now	✓ Later, with partners	✓ Now
Working jointly (all together at the same time, e.g., one joint DESCRIBE)		✓	✓

EXAMINE the Relationship, Part III (individual)

INSTRUCTIONS

The questions that follow support you in continuing to make meaning of your relationship. You will build on and begin to interpret the significance of your responses to the questions in the TRES II scale (EXAMINE, PART II) here.

PROMPTS

A. Having just completed the TRES II items (EXAMINE Part II):

- Right now, I am particularly *aware* of what about this relationship? (What stands out most?)
- Right now, I am particularly *surprised* about

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- Right now, I am particularly *pleased* about
- Right now, I am particularly *concerned* about
- Right now, I particularly have *questions* about

B. Unpack responses across domains in TRES II (EXAMINE PART II)

- For which domains did I *mark the same option* for CURRENT and DESIRED? What supports the relationship in being where I want it to be?

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- For which domains were my responses for CURRENT and DESIRED *furthest apart*? What is getting in the way of the relationship being where I want to be?
- Which domains did I find *easiest* to respond to? What made responding easy?
- Which domains did I find *hardest* to respond to? What made responding difficult?
- WILDCARD: In what other ways do I want to examine responses to the domains in the TRES II scale?

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C. Looking back at responses in DESCRIBE and EXAMINE PART I (my/our earlier thinking about the who, purposes, activities, supports, grounding values, strengths, growth areas, wildcard(s))



- What does my thinking just above in this section suggest might be good changes to the who of this SLCE relationship?



- What does my thinking just above in this section suggest might be good changes to the purposes of this relationship?



- What does my thinking just above in this section suggest might be good changes to the activities included in this relationship?



- What does my thinking just above in this section suggest might be good changes to the supports for this relationship?

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- What does my thinking just above in this section suggest might be good changes to the values that drive/ground this relationship?



- What does my thinking just above in this section suggest might be good changes to my / our sense of the most important *strengths* and *growth areas* of this relationship?



- What does my thinking just above in this section suggest might be good changes to what else (“wildcard”) I / we wanted to think about regarding this relationship?

D. To what extent and in what ways does this SLCE relationship have the capacity to move in desired directions? What might enable that movement?

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- Right now, we particularly have *questions* about

B. Unpack responses across domains in TRES II (EXAMINE PART II) (NOTE: You may find the notes you made in the boxes in the last section particularly useful here as you and your partner(s) unpack your responses to the scale):

- For which domains did we all *mark the same options* for CURRENT and for DESIRED?

- Why did each of us respond to those domains as we did? What explains similarities in our responses? [In other words, what do we collectively think is helping us be on the same page?]

- For which domains were our responses for CURRENT and for DESIRED *furthest apart from one another*?

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- Why did each of us respond to those domains as we did? What explains differences in our responses? [In other words, what do we collectively think is getting in the way of our being on the same page?]
- Which domains did we all tend to find *easiest* to respond to? What helps us find those easiest to respond to?
- Which domains did we all tend to find *hardest* to respond to? What makes us find those difficult to respond to?
- WILDCARD: In what other ways do we want to examine responses to the domains in the TRES II scale?

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C. Looking back at responses in DESCRIBE and EXAMINE PART I (my/our earlier thinking about the who, purposes, activities, supports, grounding values, strengths, growth areas, wildcard(s))



- What does our thinking just above in this section suggest might be good changes to the who of this SLCE relationship?



- What does our thinking just above in this section suggest might be good changes to the purposes of this relationship?



- What does our thinking just above in this section suggest might be good changes to the activities included in this relationship?



- What does our thinking just above in this section suggest might be good changes to the supports for this relationship?

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- What does our thinking just above in this section suggest might be good changes to the values that drive/ground this relationship



- What does our thinking just above in this section suggest might be good changes to my / our sense of the most important *strengths* and *growth areas* of this relationship?



- What does our thinking just above in this section suggest might be good changes to what else (“wildcard”) I / we wanted to think about regarding this relationship?

D. To what extent and in what ways does this SLCE relationship have the capacity to move in desired directions? What might enable that movement?

ARTICULATE LEARNING(S) about the relationship

INSTRUCTIONS

The tables that follow support you in grabbing hold of some of what you are learning about your SLCE relationship through this reflection. You will synthesize and begin to determine how you might act on your learning here and then develop some specific action steps in detail.

PROMPTS

- A. Key take-aways from this reflection. (NOTE: Think about, but do not be limited to the categories that have run through Describe and Examine: who, purposes, activities, supports, values, strengths, growth areas, wildcards)

Key Take-Away 1	
A key take-away is...	
It is important because...	
Potential implications are...	
A question about it is...	

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Key Take-Away 2	
A key take-away is...	
It is important because...	
Potential implications are...	
A question about it is...	

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Key Take-Away 3	
A key take-away is...	
It is important because...	
Potential implications are...	
A question about it is...	

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B. Action planning (specific actions to deepen my / our relationship in light of this reflection, building on the implications / questions / potential actions associated with my / our key take-aways just above)

Action Item 1	
Action (what I/we <u>will</u> do to deepen this SLCE relationship)	
What tensions or trade-offs might be involved?	
Who should be involved (consider SOFAR)?	
What resources are available? Needed?	
What are short-, medium-, and long-term steps to take?	
How will we know if we are making progress?	
What very specifically is the first step to take?	

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Action Item 2	
<i>Actions (what I/we <u>will</u> do to deepen this SLCE relationship)</i>	
<i>What tensions or trade-offs might be involved?</i>	
<i>Who should be involved (consider SOFAR)?</i>	
<i>What resources are available? Needed?</i>	
<i>What are short-, medium-, and long-term steps to take?</i>	
<i>How will we know if we are making progress?</i>	
<i>What very specifically is the first step to take?</i>	

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Action Item 3	
<i>Actions (what I/we <u>will</u> do to deepen this SLCE relationship)</i>	
<i>What tensions or trade-offs might be involved?</i>	
<i>Who should be involved (consider SOFAR)?</i>	
<i>What resources are available? Needed?</i>	
<i>What are short-, medium-, and long-term steps to take?</i>	
<i>How will we know if we are making progress?</i>	
<i>What very specifically is the first step to take?</i>	