

Reflection Activities and Questions



Service-Learning Made Simple in Collaboration with Public Schools

Effective reflection ...

- links service objectives to the course objectives by integrating the service experience with course learning;
- occurs regularly within the course;
- includes components that can be evaluated according to well-defined criteria;
- provides opportunities for both private and public reflection; and
- fosters civic responsibility.

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Group Discussions | The groups may involve either the entire class or just small numbers of students. If they are small groups, the instructor may allow students to choose their own group members, or set criteria for group composition, or assign students to groups. The group members exchange ideas about the course topics and/or the service experiences. A teaching assistant may be assigned to submit a summary of the discussion to the instructor and service-learning staff. |
| Journals | Students may be asked to keep a journal as they engage in the service experience. The journals should not merely be simple accounts of events. They should address situations objectively, subjectively, and analytically. Instructors may provide questions to guide students in addressing issues and should review the journals periodically. It is helpful to offer written comments, questions and feedback that will encourage, challenge and essentially provide a dialogue that deepens the students' thought process. |
| Analytic papers | These provide students with an opportunity to describe their service experience; to evaluate the experience and what they learned from it; and to integrate their experiences with course topics. If the papers are assigned at the end of the course, students can make use of ideas derived from class discussion, journals, and other reflective activities provided during the course. |
| Portfolios | Students may be asked to compile materials relevant to the service-learning experience and the course of which it is a part. These materials may include: journals, analytic papers, scripts/notes for class presentations, items created as part of the service, pictures, agency brochures, handbooks, time-sheets, service agreement and training materials. |
| Presentations | Students may be asked to make presentations to their classmates (and/or to broader audiences) describing their service-learning experiences, evaluating them and integrating them with the course topics. |
| Electronic forum | Students may be asked to contribute to electronic discussion on the service-learning and course topics using email or a listserv. They may respond to either questions posed by the instructor or to points raised by other students |

Examples of Reflective Questions

- What (will/have you been doing)? Who have you been serving?
- So what (will/have you been learning)? Why is your service work needed?
- Now what (should others do about it)? What are you going to do about it?
- Can you talk more about that? Why do you think that happens?
- What evidence do you have about that? What does this remind you of?
- Do you see a connection between this and ___?
- How else could you approach that? What do you want to happen?
- How might you do that?