

Service-Learning Reflection Activities

Reflection allows students to react, elaborate and contemplate on the nature of their experience while drawing connections between their service project and the “big picture.” Through reflection, students are able to absorb what they learned and relate it to how their project impacted the community. Below are some examples of meaningful reflection strategies that can be used to enhance the overall service-learning experience.

ASK YOUR STUDENTS

Before employing any of the examples below, encourage students to create a meaningful reflection method of their own that displays their interests and the service-learning activities they carried out.

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Students share ideas about the course topics and/or the service experiences with the assistance of a facilitator. Develop questions, objectives, and strategies to help students process what they have learned and done through the service-learning unit.

JOURNALS

Students keep a journal as they engage in the service experience. The journals can 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 provide a dialogue that deepens students’ thought process.

ANALYTIC PAPERS

Papers allow students an opportunity to describe their service experience, evaluate the occurrence and what they learned from it, and to integrate their experiences with academics. 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 compile materials relevant to the service-learning experience. 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 agreements and training materials. Portfolios can provide a focus for reflection on the service experience and its documentation.

PRESENTATIONS

Students make presentations to their classmates or to other audiences describing their service-learning experiences, evaluating them, and integrating them with course topics. Presentations can be as simple as a poster presented to the class, or as complicated as a mini-lesson taught by students.

READING RESPONSES

Students write responses to course readings. Instructors may provide guiding questions that pupils then respond to while keeping service-learning objectives in mind.

ELECTRONIC FORUM

Students may be asked to contribute to electronic discussion on the service-learning and course topics using email or social media. They may respond to either questions posed by the instructor or to points raised by other students.

PERFORMANCES

Using their creativity and natural talents, students may perform skits, musical numbers, or talent-based presentation to display their thoughts on their service-learning experience. Performances can be given to their classmates or other audiences, and can be as extensive as school-wide assemblies or as intimate as classroom shows.