

## GUIDED REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Reflection is a guided process of exploring and clarifying values identified during service-learning experiences. Reflection provides the student and faculty with the opportunity to state ideas as well as hypotheses and feelings that develop based on the service-learning experience. It can help students make meaningful connections between their service experience and course content, and in the process help them to develop critical thinking skills.

Critical reflection that includes examining social, economic, and cultural factors can also help students clarify and deepen their understanding of community issues and the role students may have as active, socially responsive citizens.

In most cases, faculty do not accompany students during their service-learning experiences. Reflection therefore can facilitate the exchange of information between students, faculty member and community partner.

Regardless of the reflection method chosen, students should gain

- A connection between the service experience and the course work
- Better developed critical thinking skills about themselves, the community, and civic responsibility
- An opportunity to assess and review their project's effectiveness
- An opportunity for feedback on what they have seen, felt, and experienced

### TYPES OF REFLECTION ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

- Journals
- Essays
- Directed writings
- Experiential research paper
- Service log
- Service-learning portfolio
- Email discussion groups
- Ethical case studies
- Directed readings
- Personal narratives
- Story writing/telling
- Class presentation
- Photo essay
- Structured class discussion
- Group reflection

For further descriptions on the various reflection activity types, download [“Tried and True Teaching Methods to Enhance Students’ Service-Learning Experience”](#) compiled by Professor Diane Sloan (Miami Dade Community College) and based on the work of Julie Hatcher and Robert Bringle in

“Reflection Activities for the College Classroom” (Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis) from the faculty resources section.

## GUIDED REFLECTION QUESTION EXAMPLES

Below are examples of questions that can be used to guide the reflection activities.

### BEFORE STUDENTS BEGIN THEIR SERVICE-LEARNING ASSIGNMENT

1. What do you imagine your community partner site is like?
2. What are some personal perceptions that you have about the agency you will be working with?
3. What are some of your perceptions or beliefs about the population you will be serving?
4. What is the identified problem/community need?
5. How is your community partner site addressing that need?
6. Why are you needed?
7. What fear, if any, do you have about working in the community?
8. What do you hope to gain from this experience?
9. How does your service-learning experience relate to the learning objectives of the course?
10. What would you like to change about your community?
11. Report a civic experience you have had in the past. Include comments about what type of difference you made to those you served. How did you feel about your service? What if any attitudes or beliefs changed for you as a result of your service?
12. What communities/identity groups are you a member of? How might this be related with your commitment to service?

### DURING THE SERVICE-LEARNING ASSIGNMENT

1. How is your service-learning experience related to the readings, discussions, and lectures in class?
2. What have you done this week to make a difference?
3. What happened?
4. What did you observe?
5. What issue is being addressed or population is being served?

6. How do you motivate yourself to go to your site when you don't feel like it?
7. Why does the organization you are working for exist?
8. Did you hear, smell, or feel anything that surprised you?
9. How is your experience different from what you expected?
10. Identify three areas where you feel you could use additional guidance and learning in order to be more effective.
11. Identify three strengths you demonstrated in your service placement.
12. Relate your service experience to the text/reading/chapter.
13. What resources are missing from the volunteer site, and how can we as students remedy this situation?
14. Is there any way to prevent people from needing the services of this agency? What can we do to engage in prevention?
15. How can we help people to better understand the nature of the circumstances facing the people at the service site, both staff and the population served?
16. What is the relationship of your service to the "real world"?
17. How have you been challenged?
18. During your community work experience, have you dealt with being an "outsider" at your site? How does being an "outsider" differ from being an "insider"?
19. What sorts of things make you feel uncomfortable when you are working in the community? Why?
20. What new questions do you have?
21. What did you do at your site since the last reflection discussion?
22. What did you observe?
23. What has worked? What hasn't?
24. What do you think is (will be) the most valuable service you can offer at your site?
25. Is there something more you could do to contribute to the solution?
26. How does the service-learning experience connect to your long-term goals?
27. What new skills have you learned since beginning your service?
28. What characteristics make a community successful?
29. Have you ever felt hopelessness, despair, discouragement or burnout related to your service? How have you dealt with this?
30. Identify a person, group, or community that you got to know this semester, who is significantly "other" for you. What are the needs or challenges facing them that particularly got to you?
31. What is one way in which you've allowed yourself to be changed as a result of knowing these folks?
32. What impacts the way you view the situation/experience? (What lens are you viewing from?)
33. What did you like/dislike about the experience?
34. What did you learn about the people/community?

35. What are some of the pressing needs/issues in the community? How does this project address those needs?
36. What should others do about this issue?
37. What seem to be the root causes of the issue addressed?
38. What other work is currently happening to address the issue?
39. What would you like to learn more about, related to this project or issue?
40. What information can you share with your peers or the community?
41. What did you do that seemed to be effective or ineffective in the community?

## **AFTER STUDENTS COMPLETE THE SERVICE-LEARNING ASSIGNMENT**

1. What have you learned about yourself?
2. What have you learned about your community?
3. What have you contributed to the community site?
4. What values, opinions, beliefs have changed?
5. What was the most important lesson learned?
6. What impact did you have on the community?
7. What are the best things you discovered about your community?
8. Do you have a different picture of your community than you had before you began your project?
9. Did you learn a new skill or clarify an interest?
10. What learning occurred for you in this experience? How can you apply this learning?
11. What follow-up is needed to address any challenges or difficulties?
12. If you could do the project again, what would you do differently?
13. What specific skills have you used at your community site?
14. Describe a person you've encountered in the community who made a strong impression on you, positive or negative.
15. Talk about any disappointments or successes of your project. What did you learn from it?
16. Complete this sentence: Because of my service learning, I am....