



## Step-by-Step Walkthrough

### Your Role in the Community

Reflecting on what you brought to a service-learning project can be helpful as you begin to think about designing future projects. Think about your community and the role you play as a member and/or as a student. Use the questions below to drive your reflection process.

#### Community

How would you describe your community? What makes your community special?

What questions do you have about your community?

In what ways are you already involved in your community?

What does your community expect from its members? What does it need?

## **Personal Relationship**

What do you care most about in your community?

What skills and qualities do you have or would you like to develop to give to your community?

I believe that...

## **Obligations**

What are your obligations to your community?

How do your values fit in with your community obligations?

How can you meet those obligations?

## **Partners**

Who in your community shares your ideals and values?

Who might help you meet your obligations to your community?

## **Your Classroom**

How do you contribute to your classroom community?

How do your classmates contribute?

What are your obligations to your fellow students and your classroom?

How can you meet those obligations?

## Open-Ended Questions

One of the most elusive teaching skills is asking meaningful, open-ended questions. Though these skills are elusive, they are essential to help young people process their service-learning experiences and to move beyond the “feel good” results of the experience to cognitive gains.

High-quality reflection challenges students to think deeply about their service-learning experiences. By encouraging multiple methods of reflection throughout the experience — before, during, and after — teachers can help students reach intended academic, civic, and social outcomes. The goals of the questions listed here are to encourage students to examine their preconceptions and assumptions, generate solutions to local and global problems, and determine roles that they can play to realize these solutions.

### Journalistic Questions

- Who was involved in the project? What were their roles?
- What was the issue addressed? How did you decide to address this issue?
- When did the service-learning project take place?
- Where were the service-learning project sites?
- Why was this issue critical to the community?
- Why did you choose to address this issue?
- How did you address the issue?

### Questions Encouraging Critical Thinking

- What did you see, hear, read, or notice on-site?
- How is what you observed similar or different from your pre-service assumption?
- Do any of these assumptions belong together? Why?
- Could some of these assumptions belong in more than one category?
- How do you explain what is going on?
- What did you see or hear that agrees with this explanation?
- Is there any evidence that refutes this explanation?

## Questions Encouraging Symbolic Thinking

- What object would you use as a symbol of this experience?
- Why would you choose this symbol?
- How does what you are doing make you feel like a garden (or a book, a river, etc.)?
- How are parts of your experience like parts of a garden (book, river, etc.) and why?

## Questions To Help Process Emotions

- What bothers you about the issue?
- What do you think about the people or things involved?
- Are your thoughts about the issue facts or opinions?
- Why do you have the opinion that you do?
- What other ways can you view the issue?
- What other facts and opinions might be important to consider?
- How would the issue change if viewed from another perspective?

## Extension Questions

- What does this service-learning project mean to me?
- What does this service-learning project mean in terms of other people my age?
- Why should people my age be concerned with the issues that arise from this project?
- What does this service-learning project mean to my community? How do the ideas that arise from this service-learning project affect both my community and other communities?
- What does this service-learning project mean in terms of my country?

## Reflection Activities

- Journal-writing, creative writing, personal essay, or op-ed article
- Article for newsletter
- Podcast or public service announcement
- Online discussion groups
- Summaries of group learnings
- Presentations during or after the project, which may include video, computer slide shows, bulletin boards, panel discussions, websites, or persuasive speeches
- Directed reading on complementary topics
- Library research individually or in teams
- Research projects in which students analyze an issue and make recommendations for change
- Creative writing projects
- Discussion in pairs or small groups
- Murals, collages, banners, or musical displays
- Individual or small-group presentations of objects that symbolize the service-learning project
- Poster ad or PSA using a symbol to bring awareness to the issue

- Essay presenting the issue from several points of view
- Visual representations of the issue and the emotions it elicits: cartoons, collage, photos
- Interviews of community partners and beneficiaries of services
- Skit or dance that explains perceptions
- Dialogue journals, in which students are paired and discuss their experiences

## Final Steps

Review reflection that you did during the course of your project. What changes do you see in your attitudes, knowledge, or skills?

Think about the people you encountered during your service. What actions or words from them are the most memorable to you?

What did you learn from the people you worked with? What do you think they learned from you?

What was the most interesting part of this experience for you?

How do you think about your community differently as a result of this project?

Share three wishes you have involving your project or the issue you addressed.