

SECTION IV REFLECTION



Reflection is the use of **creative and critical thinking skills** to **help prepare for, succeed in, and learn** from service experience, and to **examine the larger picture** and context in which service occurs. (Source: Jim and Pam Toole, Compass Institute)

Reflection can be meaningful, harmful, or meaningless. Its impact depends on how it is presented, when it is done, and what is done with the insights and thoughts.

Reflection allows for:

- ☞ on-going education and learning experiences
- ☞ discussion, exploration, and resolution of difficult or challenging circumstances
- ☞ understanding the larger scope of issues and impact of service
- ☞ self-examination and thoughtfulness
- ☞ thinking about the future
- ☞ problem-solving with peers
- ☞ team and community building
- ☞ reality checks on inaccurate assumptions and biases

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When carefully and thoughtfully structured, reflection can be a powerful tool that turns service experience into learning experience.

REFLECTION | Modes of Reflection

There are many different activities through which students can reflect on their service and classroom experiences. When choosing an activity, think about what you want students to learn. If you want students to individually consider their responses and growth due to particular events, choose journal entries. If you want students to share their impressions about their individual experiences and discuss different approaches or solve problems, choose a group discussion.

Allowing for different ways of processing experiences helps ensure that all students can engage in thoughtful consideration of their activities and roles. While some may be more comfortable writing, others may have the most significant things to say through music, a collage, or presentation.

Reflection can occur through:

- **WRITING**
 - journals
 - writing in response to readings
 - newspaper articles
 - research papers
- **SPEAKING**
 - public presentations
 - oral report to class
 - group discussion
- **ACTIVITIES**
 - role playing
 - planning new or follow-up project
 - teaching others what they learned or did
- **MULTI-MEDIA**
 - slide shows
 - Web page or document
 - video

Reflection Before, During, and After Service

Reflection doesn't have to happen only at the end of a service project. In fact, it shouldn't. For students to optimize their learning and to get the most out of the service project, reflection should occur before, during and after service. We can use Cooper's three levels to help write or plan reflection guidelines or prompts.

Before Service

Pre-assessment surveys or inventories help prepare students for the coming project. After the project has been completed, they provide an important reference point for the student and teacher that shows how the student has developed, progressed, and changed.

Consider these questions to guide reflections in any form:

- What role do you want to have? (self)
- What preconceived notions do you have about the project and the people involved? (self)
- What do you need to do in order to prepare and implement the project? (self, microscope)
- What in the community needs to be done? (microscope)
- What do you anticipate will happen? (microscope)
- Why does this problem exist? (binoculars)

During Service

Practicums or organized group discussions are excellent ways to structure student reflection during a service-learning project. Together they can discuss what is happening, what problems have arisen, and how they want to solve those problems as a group. Facilitate these discussions so that students can respond to each other and productively deviate from the original question. Asking probing questions can help students reach beyond their initial thoughts and immediate impressions to get at deeper issues.

Consider these questions to guide reflections in any form:

- What role are you taking? (self)
- Is this role what you anticipated? (self)

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- Is the project unfolding the way you thought it would? (self, microscope)
- What's happening? (microscope)
- What issues have arisen, and what are some ways of addressing them? (microscope)
- Does the project need to be changed? Why? (microscope)
- How is the project connecting with what's happening in the classroom? (microscope, binoculars)
- Is your view of the problem changing? How? (binoculars)

After Service

With the entire project to think back on, students can produce significant reflective projects such as oral presentations, reports, and multi-media impressions of their service experience.

Have students fill out a post-service assessment that has them rate their experience, knowledge of a topic, interest in the community, etc. Comparing this against the pre-service assessment will help them see how they have developed.

- Consider some of these questions to guide student reflections in any form:
- What did you learn? (self, microscope)
- What did you learn about yourself? Your peers? The community? (self, microscope)
- Where can you apply this knowledge in other parts of your life? (self)
- Did things turn out the way you anticipated? (self, microscope)
- What was different and why? (self, microscope)
- Would you do anything differently? (self, microscope)
- What happened during the project? (microscope)
- What difference have you really made? (microscope)
- What are your views on the subject/issue now? How have they changed? (binoculars)

Reflective Journal Writing

Mark Cooper at Florida International University identifies three levels of reflection for journal writing. The levels act as guides for all modes of reflection, helping students, teachers, and community partners shape their thoughts and make sense of the service experience. Consider the questions under each level as guides for reflection responses in any form—writing, speaking and discussion, multi-media, and activities.

The Mirror: The Self Becomes Clearer

Reflection as a mirror helps you understand yourself, your values. It helps you begin to see how the service experience has helped you learn more about these aspects of yourself.

- What have I learned about myself from this service experience?
- How has the experience affected my understanding of the group I'm working with? of the community? of my own role in the community?
- How has this experience challenged my assumptions or biases?
- How has it challenged me physically?
- How will these experiences change the way I act or think in the future?

The Microscope: A Small Experience Becomes Larger

Reflection as a microscope helps you understand the impact of individual activities on the people or community served, on yourself, and on the project as a whole. It allows you to reflect on events that occurred, your role in them, and their impact.

- What happened today?
- What would I change about the situation if I were in charge, and why?
- What have I learned about the people I work with?
- Were there moments of failure, success, indecision, humor, happiness, sadness?
- Do I feel my actions had an impact? On whom?
- Does my experience complement or contrast to what I'm learning class?
- Has the learning I've gained from this experience taught me more, less, or the same as in class? In what ways?

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Service learning activities often place students in challenging and complex situations.

Reflection is their opportunity to process and come to an understanding about their thoughts and experiences.

REFLECTION | **The Binoculars: The Distant Becomes Closer**

Reflections as binoculars helps you identify larger issues that surround the service project in which you're engaged. It can expand your vision and understanding of causes, effects, and impacts, and help you envision future developments.

- Are there underlying or over-arching issues that influence the problem or need our service project is addressing?
- What are they? How did I identify them?
- What could be done to change the situation?
- How will this realization change my future behaviors and decisions?
- How have others in the community addressed and impacted these issues at larger levels (politically or socially)?
- What does the future hold? What can be done?

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REFLECTION | Assessing Reflective Responses

Assessing reflective responses can be challenging, even difficult, but being able to do so separates effective and quality reflection from simple responses. Student reflections are manifestations of their learning and development—what students say, write, and otherwise show in their reflections demonstrates what they have learned and how effectively they have applied it to classroom work and real-life.

The following rubric was developed by Marilyn Olson at the Lane County Educational Service District in Oregon. It lists possible traits of student reflections on service projects by instructional areas (content, reasoning, etc.). High quality reflections will show many of these traits.

Content (factual/inferential)

- general observations
- specific examples
- criteria comparisons
- positive/negative observations
- problem-solving

Reasoning (analytic/evaluative)

- meaning/usefulness
- adjustments for future
- comparisons to prior work
- reasons for decisions, choices
- generalized meaning

Generative (creative/productive)

- new methods
- new topics
- new treatments
- new skills
- new meaning

Expression (language control)

- vocabulary
- fluency
- mechanics

This rubric was developed by Pearl Polson of the Beaverton School District in Oregon. It was designed and used for student reflections on their portfolios.

Off-Track

The portfolio is little more than a depository of work. All decision making is made by those other than the student.

Emergent

Student make intuitive selections.

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REFLECTION ACTIVITIES



Activity: Mission to Mars

Purpose: To discuss what characteristics are valued and why.

Grade Level: Middle School and High School

Time: 20-35 minutes

Of Participants: 5 to 30

Setting: Indoor

Energy Level: Low/medium

Description

Mission to Mars is a way for participants to discuss the qualities that they value in others, both personally and in society.

Break into small groups suitable for good discussion. Give each group a copy of the “Mission” with the list of candidates. Allow for 15 minutes of discussion and then have each group create a list. Provide time for each group to share their list.

Discussion

Discussion should center around what different individuals contribute to the mission. What qualities will be needed once on Mars? Leader’s Note: Ask probing questions regarding the group’s choices. Focus the question to the group and not to an individual. Allow others to ask questions regarding choices. Unlike “Lifeboat” the focus of this activity is on contributing qualities and no one’s life hangs in the balance of the participants’ decision. However, many deeper probing questions might emerge. The discussion could shift to questions of worth apart from particular skills or qualities.

Materials

Handouts ((Final Candidates)

Variations

Once groups have discussed options, the facilitator could ask for any additional candidates that are on the list. Leader’s Note: Make certain that groups have thoroughly discussed each of the candidates before you open it to additional candidates.

Once all of the small groups have shared their lists, see if the entire group can come to a consensus on one list of five.

Mission To Mars**Final Candidates**

By the year 2050 the world’s population is estimated to have topped 8 billion people. Many are concerned the world’s resources will not be sufficient for that many people. In anticipation the United Nations has decided to send five

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people to Mars to start a new colony. Your group has been assigned the task of choosing who will go. Using the finalists list of candidates below your group must choose only five that will go on the Mars Mission.

A Religious or Spiritual Leader

An Infant

The President of the United States

A Musician

An Environmentalist

A Professor of History

A Teenage Male

A Teenage Female

A Millionaire

A Homeless Person

A Farmer

A Doctor

A Political Leader

A Teacher

A Second Grader

A Carpenter

A Bus Driver

Activity: Out of the Box**Purpose:** Challenge Stereotypes**Grade Level:** Middle school and above**Time:** 15-30 minutes**# of Participants:** Minimum of 5**Setting:** Indoor/Outdoor**Energy Level:** Low/Medium (can range from fun to emotionally intense)**Description**

Select 3 individuals from the larger group. Explain that two of individuals will be dressing the third (allow the volunteers to choose who will dress and who will be dressed. Items can be held up instead of being put on). Leader's Note: The character can be pre-selected (homeless person, professional, etc.) or the character can be drawn from a variety of possible characters available.

Place a box full of clothes and other items in a place accessible to the two dressers and visible to the rest of the group. Explain that in the box is a large assortment of clothing and other items. The dressers will then pull items out of the box, examine them in front of the group and, without speaking, "dress" the third person appropriately.

Once the third person has been completely "dressed" as the group which character this individual is dressed like. Ask the dressers if answers are correct. Then ask the two dressers to explain why they chose certain items and not others. Ask the one dressed how it felt to be dressed.

Then focus the discussion more seriously on whether these stereotypes are correct. Ask, "Are they helpful or harmful?" What other stereotypes might exist. Leader's Note: Try to ask probing questions regarding the existence of stereotypes and the possible consequences for you participants.

When done, ask how the negative impacts of stereotypes can be reduced.

Materials

A box containing a variety of the following: different clothing (from good items to very worn and dirty), professional items (cell phone, pager, brief case), sports items (water bottles, small aerobic weights) miscellaneous items (paper bags, hats, glasses, jewelry, wallet and anything that could be used to identify a particular character.

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Variations

Divide the group in small groups of three. Have each group discuss and identify a stereotype that they will present to the rest of the group using the items in the box.

Out of the Box

List of Potential Characters

Environmentalist

Business Professional

Welfare Mother

Political Activist

Drug user

Homeless Person

Drug Dealer

Librarian

Politician

Single Father

Alcoholic / wino

More...

Activity: Get A Clue

Purpose: Challenge Stereotypes. Goals: Through a fun drawing exercise participants will explore common stereotypes associated with various categories of people.

Grade Level: All

Time: 15-30 minutes

of Participants: 5 to 50

Setting: Indoor

Energy Level: Medium/High

Description

Break up into small groups (ideally 4-6). Explain that each small group will have 15 - 20 minutes to draw a picture that will be shown to the rest of the large group. Each small group will receive a piece of paper identifying their subject for the drawing. The goal is to draw a picture that provides clues to the rest of the large group so that they will be able to identify the subject.

Encourage people to have fun.

Once the drawings are complete have each group display their drawing for the rest of the groups to see. Ask the larger group:

“Who do you think they have drawn?”

“What about this picture made you think this?”

Ask the members of the presenting group: “Why did you pick each of these items?”

Let them explain how they came to the conclusion to include the specific items or characteristics as clues.

When all pictures have been presented and hung on the wall where everyone can see them begin the reflection review.

Discuss the stereotypes contained in each drawing. Ask questions like:

What stereotypes are presented here?

Are stereotypes helpful? Harmful? How? Where do they come from?

Are they always true? Are there exceptions?

The goal is to get participants to gain an understanding of the prevalence of stereotypes and to realize that we all not only have stereotypes but we readily recognize stereotypes as well.

Reflect on how the members of the group might reduce negative aspects of stereotypes.

Materials

Large piece of paper (flip chart paper works best)

Color markers

Tape

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Get a Clue

List of Potential Characters

Teacher	Service-Learning Practitioner
Environmentalist	Biker
Business Professional	Interior Decorator
Welfare Mother	Librarian
Skater	Politician
Garbage Man	Truck Driver
Political Activist	Single Father
Drug user	Alcoholic / wino
Homeless Person	Punk
Computer Programmer	More...
Drug Dealer	

Activity: Auction Action

Purpose: To explore and evaluate what characteristics are important to a group.

Grade Level: Middle School and above

Time: 25-45 minutes

Of Participants: Over 8

Setting: Indoor

Energy Level: Medium

Description

First separate into groups of 5-10 participants and choose a note taker for each group.

Brainstorm with the entire group words that describe what the participants think are characteristics of something of value to the group (citizenship - voting, service - meaningful, education - engaging, teaching - innovative, leadership - honesty etc.). The facilitator should be writing this for everyone to see, while the note takers are writing them on note cards for each group. When you are done with the list, separate into your groups.

The note taker will hand out the Auction Value Cards to each participant within the groups. Leader's Note: Auction Value Cards can be any token that has value - even note cards with number values. These will be used to bid on items. Each participant should get the same amount of auction cards.

The note taker will facilitate the auction by calling out each word. To place a bid the participants must use their auction cards by placing them in the middle of the circle or in front of the note taker/facilitator. Once an auction card is placed for a bid, they do not get it back. As the participants place their bids the facilitator plays the role of an auctioneer by calling out the competing bids. For example if the word up for auction is *cooperation* the facilitator might say, "Up for auction if cooperation. Are there any bids for cooperation? Yes, we have Becky with a bid of \$10 dollars (or points); do I hear \$20? \$20 dollars from Jared; do I hear \$30? Going once, going twice, cooperation is sold to Jared." Continue in this manner for each word. When a word is won the participant now owns the note card with their word. The note takers record the total of all of the bids placed on each word. For example, Jared won "cooperation" for \$30. However, the total value of the word was \$30 + \$20 + \$10 for a word value of \$60. Later, during reflection, have a conversation about which words were valued most by the group.

Continue the auction until all of the words are won or the participants run out of auction cards.

Materials

Auctions cards (or play money or candy), paper, pens, and note cards for words.

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Discussion

Explore why the participants chose the words they did. Also, discuss the strategies of the bids that were placed by participants. This can give you a great insight into the process that your participants use in decision-making, group interaction and more. Here are some sample discussion questions.

Why did you choose the words you did?

Did you win the words you wanted the most?

Did you choose these words as characteristics you'd like to possess or because you do possess it?

Did you choose these words as characteristics you have seen in someone? Who?

How did you go about betting for words?

Did you hold onto all of your auction cards to bid on one word?

Did you buy up all of the words that no one wanted?

Activity: Reflection Rings

Purpose: To learn from and assess the growth experienced individually and as a group.

Grade Level: 9 to 12

Time: 25 – 30 minutes total

Of Participants: 5 to 30 (see description for details)

Setting: Indoor/Outdoor

Energy Level: Low

Description**Preflection:**

This should be done at the beginning of the day or project. Ask each participant to write down a goal. This can be for the day's events or a project. After they have written down their goal have them break into small groups of 3-5 to discuss their goals. When everyone has shared, instruct them to hang on to the note card they have written their goal on.

Reflection:

At the end of the day or project have the participants form two circles, one inner circle and one outer circle. Each circle should have the same number of participants. Have the inner circle participants face outwards and the outer circle face inwards, so they are looking at one another. Make sure that the participants are matched up so everyone is facing someone. Have them pull out their note card with their goal.

Starting with the inner circle participants, they will have 1 to 2 minutes to read their goal and comment on it. If they met that goal, what has changed, etc. The participant they are facing can only listen for those 1 to 2 minutes without interjecting.

When both participants have shared for the 1 to 2 minutes have the outer circle rotate. This can be left or right and 1, 2 or 3 spaces, it is up to you. This activity has a greater impact if every participant gets to share with one another. In this case you would only have them rotate 1 space left or right consistently.

Materials

Note cards and pens.

Discussion

The discussion is happening during the reflection. This activity has a sense of privacy between the two participants when they are sharing.

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Activity: **Start – Stop – Continue**

Purpose: To look at the changes you experienced that you would like to act on.

Grade Level: K to 12 (see Variations)

Time: 20-35 minutes

Of Participants: 5 to 30

Setting: Indoor/Outdoor

Energy Level: Low

Description

Have everyone sit in a circle, including the facilitator/teacher and any volunteers. Hand out paper and pens to each participant. Begin by having them think about the day. What they did, why they did it, who they met, what they experienced. Then have them write down something that they would like to Stop, Start, and Continue.

For example, after a day of volunteering at a tree planting I might write, Stop – I would like to stop walking by litter. Start – I would like to start picking up litter I've been walking by and start volunteering more. Continue – I would like to continue working with youth and sharing my love for–the environment.

When everyone is done, ask if there are volunteers that would like to share what they wrote. Often there are participants that ask if what they write is confidential or not. As the facilitator you can make that decision. I usually tell them that it would be great if they would share with the group, but if they would only like me to see what they write that is okay too.

Materials

Note cards and pens

Discussion

Many times the experience that the participants are reflecting on is important. In those cases their Stop, Start, and Continues may not be attainable. Ask the participants what they will do to Stop, Start, and Continue what they wrote. Also, you can ask if anyone has ever done this type of volunteering before. This will help you understand their Start, Stop, and Continue more.

Variations

K-5: Keep the size of the group smaller, 5-15 participants. For students that cannot write their Stop, Start, and Continue down simply have everyone share out loud one at a time.

6-12: After everyone is done writing down their Stop, Start and Continue have the break into smaller groups of 3-4 to discuss what they wrote.

Activity: Sweet and Sour

Purpose: A simple reflection on the project or days experiences.

Grade Level: K to 12

Time: 10 – 25 minutes

Of Participants: 5 to 30 (see Variations)

Setting: Indoor/Outdoor

Energy Level: Low

Description

Have the participants sit in a circle. Give each participant one sweet candy and one sour candy. They cannot eat the candy until they have shared with the group one sweet or one sour thing from the day or project. This can be a good aspect of the day or some aspect of the day that could have been improved. Not everyone has to participate, but everyone usually does (...if you have good candy).

Make sure that you and any other volunteers are sitting with the participants and share your sweet and sour thoughts for the day as well.

Materials

Sweet and Sour candy

Discussion

After everyone has shared, that would like to, build on the insight you just received from the participants.

So it sounds like many of you liked working in the hummingbird garden, would anyone be interested in building bird boxes? Everyone seemed to like all of the activities today, what was your favorite? If Justin and Lindsey respond to that question by saying that they really liked this activity (sweet and sour) tell them that maybe next time they could help lead the activity if they wanted.

Variations

For large groups separate into smaller groups with no less than 5 participants. After all groups have had a chance to share regroup into one large circle and ask for volunteers to share what their groups observed and discussed.

Extension

This can be used after a service, a field trip, a speaker, doing a cooperative activity and so on.

REFLECTION ACTIVITIES

IF THE WORLD WERE 100 PEOPLE

(Discussion, Investigation, Reflection, and Preflection)

This activity is designed to help broaden participant's understanding of the make up of the world's population and what the distribution of health, wealth and resources would be if there were only 100 people in the world.

This exercise allows participants to compare their perception of the world with the reality of the world's demographics. The goal is to help participants address, discuss and explore on a deeper level their perception of the world.

Focus questions include:

“Was there any piece of information that surprised you?”

“Is this how you perceive the world?”

“What might life be like if you didn't live in the United States? What are the chances that you would be hungry? What are the chances that you would not be able to read? Or even attend school?”

“If our perception about the world was not correct, what about our perceptions regarding life in our country. Our state? Our community?”

Directions:

This activity uses teams working together to match numbers with statements about the world. For example, if the world were 100 people, 57 would be Asians, 21 Europeans, 14 North and South Americans, and 8 Africans.

The teams must decide which number corresponds correctly to each statement. After the teams have spent some time discussing and arranging the matches, reveal the first fact on the list. This allows teams to begin to verify their choices.

Then reveal additional answers, providing some time for participants to discuss and absorb the fact.

Once all of the facts have been revealed ask if any team had them all correct. Ask focus questions (some options above) and encourage a deeper level of discussion, not just about the facts but also about the implications of the facts.

One of the goals of the discussion should be to help participants transfer the understanding of the world overall to a better understanding of similar perceptions (and misperceptions) that participants hold regarding more personal communities.

This activity can be adapted to a variety of data sets that can be used to focus discussions into a particular topic area.

IF THE WORLD WERE 100 PEOPLE

There would be:

57 Asians

21 Europeans

14 from North and South America

8 Africans

52 would be female

48 would be male

70 would be nonwhite, 30 white

59% of the entire world's wealth would belong to only six people

and all 6 would be citizens of the United States

80 would live in substandard housing

70 would be unable to read

50 would suffer from malnutrition

One would be near death

One would be near birth

Only one would have a college education

Only one would have a computer.

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