

REFLECTION METHODS AND QUESTIONS FOR SERVICE LEARNING

Reflection – What, So What, Now What ¹

WHAT?

Describe

- What happened at the service site?
- What service was performed?
- Who did you interact with?
- What were their roles?

SO WHAT?

Examine

- What was the significance of the service?
- What did it mean to you personally?
- What are your feelings about the experience?
- What did you learn that enhances your classroom instruction?
- What skills and knowledge learned in the classroom did you use/apply?
- What skills or knowledge did you lack?
- What did you learn about the people at your service site and the community issues they face?

NOW WHAT?

Contemplate

- What impact might your service have on your lifelong learning process?
- What impact did the experience have on your everyday life?
- What insights did you gain that might assist you in your major or career choice?
- What is the connection of this experience to your future?
- What did this experience teach you about community involvement, citizenship, and civic responsibility?
- What is the relationship of your service experience to the big picture (societal changes)?
- How can you best use what you've learned?

¹ Based loosely upon David Kolb's Experiential Learning Cycle.

General Reflection Questions ²

1. Why was this agency a good choice for you?
2. Describe this activity to someone who knows nothing about it (i.e. what was this activity?)
3. What was your most important contribution to this activity?
4. How can you make a difference in a democratic society through your action?
5. How did you apply your academic knowledge and skills to working on the task(s) at the agency?
6. What was the most important thing you learned during, or as a result of, this activity?
7. How did this activity help you explore your decision regarding your college major or career interests?
8. How does what you learned through the project strengthen or reinforce what you've learned in the classroom?
9. How do service learning activities like this one connect you to the university and/or to your community?
10. What influence do you believe you had on the clients you served or on the agency in general?

11. How did this service learning project benefit you personally?
12. Compare your expectations before beginning your service learning activity to what actually occurred.
13. Please write about what surprised you the most about this activity (your feelings, ideas, benefits, questions, etc.).
14. Respond to this statement – “I feel that service learning is an important part of my own life education.”

² No citation found

Learning, Service, Process ³

Learning:

- What information did you learn in preparing to do service?
- What skills did you develop through the activities?
- How did this project help you to better understand ideas or subjects we have been studying?
- Through this service learning project, what did you learn about:
 - Yourself?
 - Working with others, including people in your class?
 - Your community?
- How will you use what you learned in this experience?

Service:

- What was the need for your service effort?
- What contribution did you make?
- What overall contribution was made by your class?
- How did your service affect the community?

Process:

- How did you and other students help with project planning?
- In what ways did you make decisions and solve problems?
- Were there any differences between the initial project and what you actually did?
- What ideas do you have for improving any part of the project?

³ From *The Complete Guide to Service Learning: Proven, Practical Ways to Engage Students in Civic Responsibility, Academic Curriculum, & Social Action* by Cathryn Berger Kaye, M.A., Copyright 2004. Free Spirit Publishing Inc., Minneapolis, MN; 866/703-7322; www.freespirit.com. This page may be photocopied for individual, classroom, or small group work only.

Guided Reflection Questions ⁴

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...

³ Guided Reflection Questions. Austin Community College. <https://sites.google.com/a/austinctc.edu/service-learning/sample-guided-reflection-questions>. PDF file. 06 September 2017.

Reflection Questions for Paper ⁴

Write a paper that summarizes your service learning experience. Organize the paper in a way that you think best expresses your thoughts and feelings about the work. You must address the following areas:

1. Describe the organization or agency at which you served, including its mission and goals, its organizational structure, and where your service effort fit.
2. Give a detailed description of the work that you did. What did you learn about the people with whom you worked or served? Do you feel differently about them now than you did when you started the project? In what ways has your service caused you to reexamine your values, beliefs, or behaviors?
3. Explain why the work is important to you and to the organization. How do you see your participation in service learning benefiting individuals, the neighborhood, your community, your state, or your country? How does the work contribute to a civil society or common good? How has your service learning effort affected your own sense of civic responsibility? Has your service learning experience changed your perceptions about how you can affect the lives of others?
4. In what ways has your service learning placement made the course material relevant (or vice versa)? Be specific and provide concrete examples.

⁴ Gottlieb, Karla and Robinson, Gail. *A Practical Guide for Integrating Civic Responsibility into the Curriculum*. Washington. The American Association Community College Press, 2002.