

Reflection Suggestions

Transforming Service into Learning

Reflection is an intentional endeavor to discover specific connections between something we do and the consequences which result. Reflection translates experiences into knowledge.

In your role as professor, it is essential that you help students reflect on their experiences throughout the academic service-learning semester. In short, help them think critically about what they are doing, why it is important, and what it means. The following provides a few examples of how you can help your Academic Service-Learners reflect:

Reflection is the key to helping students gain the most from their Academic Service-Learning experience

1. Learning Objectives:

Work with students to set objectives related to their learning. Have them put several objectives in writing and help them develop a plan to meet those objectives. *Ask: "What do you want to learn about your agency...about the community... about the profession?"*

2. Regular "Processing" Meetings:

Take a few minutes in the beginning of class to discuss the progress of their AS-L projects with your students; ask them open-ended questions about their experience. *Ask: "What are you learning? What has surprised you? What is the most challenging thing that has happened and how did you handle it? What can be done to better serve the community? Why do you think this problem (homelessness, etc) exists? How can you incorporate what you are learning into your everyday life?"*

3. Critical Thinking Questions:

Give students a list of questions that challenge them to explore and think critically about their chosen agency and the issues you discuss in class. Ask them to find answers to these questions during the course of their service and process what they discover with them periodically.

Have them interview at least two staff members to get their opinions.

Ask: "Why does this problem exist (homelessness, children who can't read, etc.)? What are the advantages and disadvantages of a career in this field? What types of jobs exist at this agency and what skills or education is required?"

4. Readings:

Give your AS-L students a short article from time to time related to your chosen agency and/or community issue and ask them to read it. Later on, discuss and process it with them.

Ask: "What were your reactions to this article? Do you agree or disagree? What did you learn? Do you think this will have an effect on your agency?"

Alternative: Ask students to research and find an article on their own to bring to the group for discussion.

5. Be Creative:

Develop your own reflection exercise!