

**Deepening the Learning in Service-Learning:  
Reflection resources and activities.**

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*...Critical reflection on [service-learning] experiences enables [students] to test and refine their knowledge and skills, to pose and examine new questions, and to learn about themselves as learners” (Harrison, et al., 2014).*

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## Information about Reflection

### ***What is Reflection?***

“Reflection is a process designed to promote the examination and interpretation of experience and the promotion of cognitive learning. It is the process of looking back on the implications of actions taken - good and bad - determining what has been gained, lost, or achieved, and connecting these conclusions to future actions and larger societal contexts” (Vanderbilt University).

“Reflection is simply another word for learning. What distinguishes it from some other forms of learning is that ‘reflection’ grows out of experience” (Author unknown).

### Reflection (noun)

Pronunciation: /rə'flekSH(ə)n

: Serious thought or consideration: *he doesn't get much time for reflection*

: An idea about something, especially one that is written down or expressed: *reflections on human destiny and art*

(Oxford English Dictionary)

In *Community Service and Higher Learning: Exploration of the Caring Self*, Robert Rhoads (1997) discusses the inseparable relationship of action and reflection. He explained: (1) We can have no true action without reflection. And reflection without action has no sustenance; and (2) Service without a reflective component fails to be forward looking, fails to be concerned with the community beyond the present, and in essence fails as community service. Community service, ideally speaking, is about community building for today and tomorrow (emphasis added) (184-185).

Jane Kendall (1990, as cited in Rhoads, 1997, p.185) also speaks to the importance of reflection: “A good service-learning program helps participants see their questions in the larger context of issues of social justice and social policy—rather than in the context of charity.”

Reflection addresses students’ concerns, challenges their preconceptions, and fosters their cognitive/affective/behavioral growth. It can also be used to challenge students to connect their sense of self with that of others, ultimately reducing the likelihood of a superior/inferior service relationship (Rhoads, 1997). In other words, service is less likely to be seen as the “haves” serving the “have nots,” but rather as everyone working together toward the common good.

### ***Why Reflect?***

“Reflection is fundamental to successful service-learning because it is the element that connects service and learning. Reflecting is the bridge, like a hyphen, that connects the two (Jacoby).”

Reflection:

- Helps students derive meaning and new knowledge from a service experience.
- Provides an opportunity for students to analyze concepts, evaluate their experiences, and form opinions.

*...Critical reflection on [service-learning] experiences enables [students] to test and refine their knowledge and skills, to pose and examine new questions, and to learn about themselves as learners”*  
(Harrison, et al., 2014).

- Provides students with the opportunity to examine and question their beliefs, opinions, and values.
- Helps students connect their service experience to course concepts.
- Helps students recognize the opportunities or limitations of a service site, community organization, or social system.
- Helps students think critically about larger social issues affecting their communities and increases students' cultural awareness and competency.
- Helps students see the value of service and involvement in their communities.
- Helps evaluate the role that service plays in your life now and in the future.
- Is key to developing a long-term commitment to service.
- Leads to thoughtful and thus more effective service.
- Validates the feelings of individuals and allows them to realize that they are not alone in their reactions.
- Helps internalize the lessons learned and connects those lessons to personal choices and behaviors.
- Improves retention by engaging volunteers.
- May generate ideas for improvement of service.
- May create a sense of closure to the service experience.

#### ***4 C's of Critical Reflection***

A reliable guide to help an instructor with reflection is to consider the 4C's of Critical Reflection, provided by Eyler, Giles and Schmiedes (1996).

1. **Continuous:** occurs before the service-learning experience, during it, and afterward. It is ongoing within the course.
2. **Connected:** makes all of the theoretical concepts in class come to life. It is an intentional connection to the course content.
3. **Challenging:** reflecting so old questions are seen in new ways, new perspectives are revealed, and new questions are raised. It avoids simplistic, one-dimensional conclusions. It pushes students to think in new ways.
4. **Contextualized:** the process and setting of the reflection should be appropriate to what is occurring in class and in the community.

Jacoby, B. *Service-Learning Course Design: What Faculty Need to Know Service-Learning*.

Eyler, J., Giles, Jr., D. E., & Schmiede, A. (1996). *A practitioner's guide to reflection in service-learning: Student voices and reflections*. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University.

#### ***Steps to Creating a Reflection Activity***

1. Decide the intended purpose of the activity.
2. Develop meaningful, open-ended questions, which cannot be confused or misunderstood.
3. Choose the method for your reflection. Be sure to vary the methods and consider multiple learning styles.
4. Determine and gather materials for the reflection activity.
5. Determine any preparation work students must do prior to the reflection activity.

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***Guidelines for Creating Reflection Activities***

- Critical reflection assignments and outcome should be tied to the goals of service-learning as specified in the course syllabus.
- Effective reflection activities are guided and allow for feedback and assessment.
- Consider the goals of incorporating service-learning into the course and use reflection activities to meet those goals.
- Consider the structure of the class. How does it lend itself to particular reflection activities?
- Create and publicize expectations.
- Consider your skills as an instructor when choosing reflecting activities. What sorts of activities are you competent to evaluate and facilitate?
- Consider learning styles. A variety of reflection activities, rather than a single type, take into account that different students learn differently.
- Keep it simple. Do not take on more than you can do thoughtfully.
- Think about evaluation and assessment of the reflection methods. Consider soliciting student feedback on what is working well and what needs to be improved.
- Think about evaluation and assessment of students' critical reflection efforts. What constitutes an A, B, C?
- Remember the 4Cs: Continuous, Connected, Challenging, Contextualized (Vanderbilt University).

***Tips for Leading Reflection Activities***

- Call students by name.
- Make the value of participation clear to students.
- Promote active listening.
- Create a safe space by setting rules for effective discussion (see page #).
- Allow students who are shy/timid time to process and speak.
- Avoid yes-or-no questions.
- Repeat and rephrase questions to ensure questions are clear to students responding.
- Acknowledge contributions.
- Talk less and facilitate more: Students should be doing the majority of the work. Have a few questions or topics you think are important to discuss, but allow discussion to be guided majorly by student participation and feedback.
- Never humiliate students: Even if a student's contribution is not in the right direction, never make students feel like they are wrong. Find a way to turn what the students says into something positive or develop a question out of the student's statement to prompt further critical thinking about an issue.
- Have a backup reflection plan: If your discussion comes to a logical end earlier than you had planned or there is less participation than expected, reflective writing works well for an end-of-the-period activity and helps students draw together what has taken place in class (and students who are more shy during discussion may be willing to share more through writing)

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***Example Rules for Effective Group Discussion***

1. For every general statement you make you must give an example or supporting evidence.
2. No name-blaming.
3. Critique ideas, not people.
4. Challenge each other, but do so respectfully.
5. Do not interrupt one another.
6. Build on one another's comments; work towards a shared understanding.
7. Everything said in class is confidential.

***Selecting Reflection Activities***

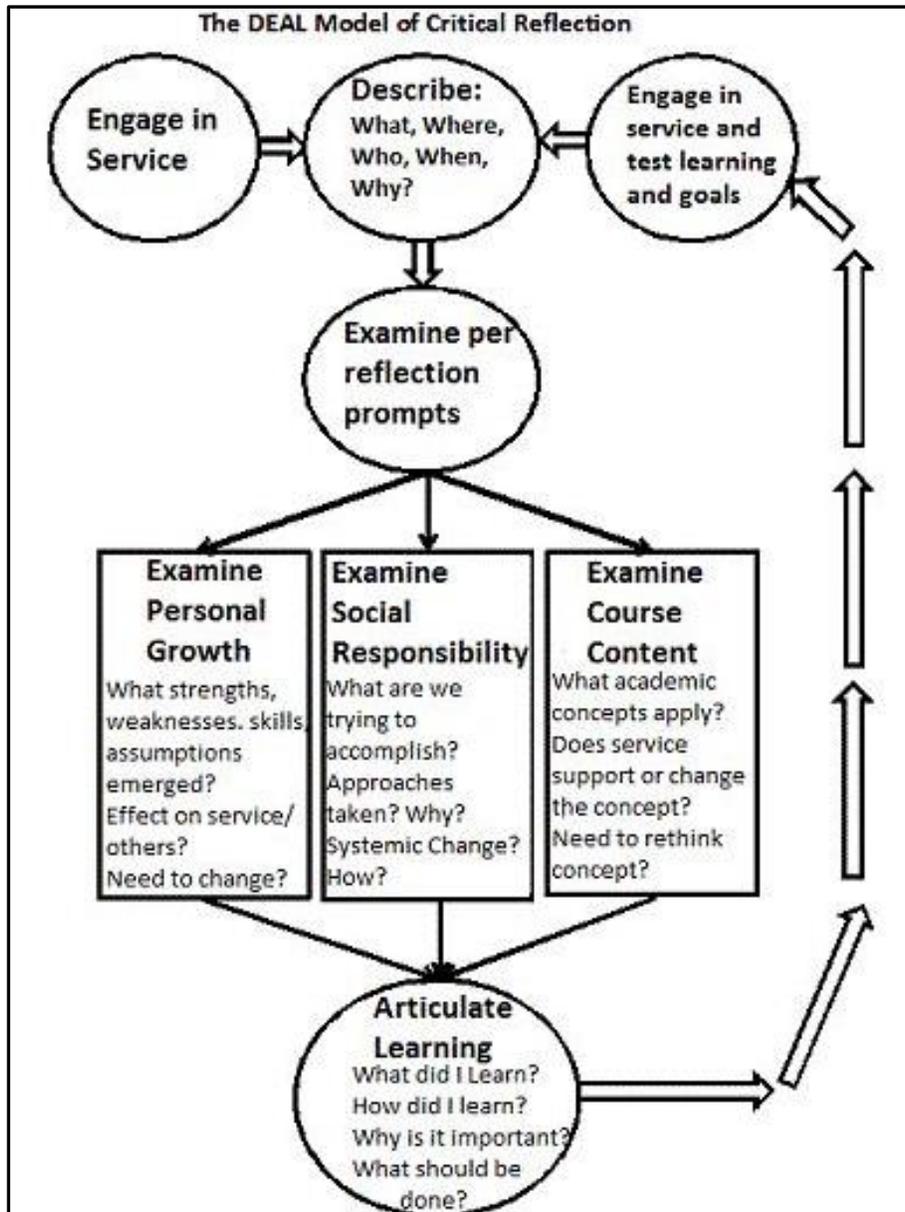
Reflective Teaching Strategies (from Silcox, A How-To Guide to Reflection)

TYPE	PRIMARY EXPECTED RESULT	DESCRIPTION
Readings/Creative Projects	Foster group bonding and leadership; facilitates directed learning	Specific assignments include essays, music, videos, artwork, etc.—both in class and out.
Journal Writings	Foster personal growth	Student maintains a regular journal that the faculty member to which the faculty member responds.
Directed Writings	Foster directed learning	Student produces essays that address specific questions or issues required by the instructor.
“Feelings-Oriented” Oral Reflection	Fosters group bonding and trust	Class members participate in a group discussion regarding their service experiences.
“Student As Expert” Oral Reflection	Fosters citizenship, leadership, and cognitive learning	Student leads a classroom session providing a critique of a reading assignment or presenting a solution to a problem.
“Cognitive Teaching” Oral Reflection	Fosters leadership, directed learning, cognitive learning, personal growth, and critical thinking	The faculty member leads a teaching session that fosters critical thinking skills and problem solving.

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**Reflection Models**

- The DEAL Model of Critical Reflection



(Dr. Patti Clayton of North Carolina State University)

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- The ORID Model

This model provides a progression of question types designed to move students from reflecting on the concrete experience to analytical and subjective reasoning. It mirrors the Kolb learning cycle and may be used to create journal or discussion questions and to guide assignments and activity types. The progression may be completed within one assignment and/or over the course of the semester.

*Objective:*

Begin with questions related to the concrete experience. What did students do, observe, read, and hear? Who was involved, what was said? What happened as a result of their work?

*Reflective:*

Next, introduce questions that address the affective experience. How did the experience feel? Of what did it remind them? How did their apprehension change or their confidence grow? Did they feel successful, effective, and knowledgeable?

*Interpretive:*

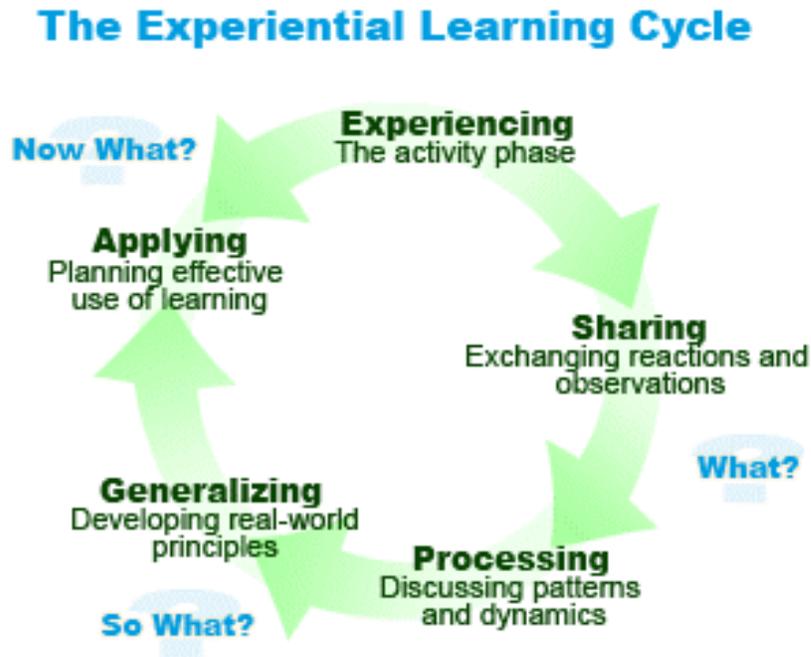
Then ask questions that explore their cognitive experience. What did the experience make them think? How did it change their thinking about...? What did they learn? What worked?

*Decisional:*

Finally, students are prepared to incorporate their experience into a new paradigm. They may have a shift in knowledge, awareness, or understanding that affects how they see things and, ultimately, how they will act. What will they do differently next time? What decisions or opinions have they formed? How will the experience affect their career path, their personal life choices or their use of new information, skills or technology? (Vanderbilt University).

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- Kolb's Experiential Learning Model (1984)



### Reflection Activities

#### *Discussion-Based Reflection Activities*

1. **Preflection & Postflection:** Before students begin their Service-Learning experience, pass out one notecard to each student. On it, the student should write their fears, anticipations, and any questions they have. They should NOT put their names. Throughout the Service-Learning experience, you (the instructor) may use notecards to help guide discussion. At the semester's conclusion (or after the Service-Learning experience is complete), bring out the notecards and pass around, at random, to students. Discuss the growth students experienced over the semester.
2. **Identity Wheel:** (<http://www.aauw.org/files/2015/11/Social-Identity-Wheel-activity-nsa.pdf>). In this activity, participants will reflect on and discuss the identities that are most important to them. This activity will help participants get to know each other better and allow participants to express important parts of their identities that may otherwise not be known. Participants will also be asked to reflect on the value of their identities by considering which of those is most and least important to them and why that may be. Participants can expect to understand better how the world around them allows or does not allow them to make choices about what identities are most important.
  - a. Of what identities were you more aware?
  - b. Were the identities you are more aware of targeted or advantaged?
  - c. Why do you think that is?
  - d. Which identities do you take for granted and not think about often?

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- e. Were the identities you are less aware of targeted or advantaged? Why do you think that is?
  - f. From this exercise, can you identify one identity of which you need to be more aware?
  - g. What does this have to do with being an Ally?  
(American Association of University Women)
3. **What do I Assume?:** Begin by asking students to turn to the person next to them and share one thing people often assume about them (without getting to know them first). Allow time for students to share with the large group. Then, ask students to break up into groups of three and provide them with a picture from the *Human of New York* website (without the caption or explanation paragraph). Ask students to analyze the picture and discuss in small groups what they assume about the person in the picture based on the single photo. Come back into large group and ask students to share what they discussed with their group and why they made certain assumptions. Reveal the caption of the photo to students and then allow time to share their thoughts and responses. After this activity, **lead a group discussion with question prompts about what types of assumptions the participants** may make about the population they will be working with during the service experience, why they should not make assumptions, what stereotypes feed into those assumptions, and how they can overcome their individual biases to work most effectively with a particular population (Ask Big Questions).
4. **What? So What? Now What?:** This is a well-used and successful model to assist you in designing the reflection activities. Although you can derive learning from each question, focusing on all three will provide broader insights and keep participants from being stuck on only the facts or just the feelings.
- a. **What?** (Reporting what happened, objectively). Without judgement or interpretation, participants describe in detail the facts and event(s) of the service experience. Questions include: *What happened? What did you observe? What issue is being addressed or population is being served? What were the results of the project? What events or “critical incidents” occurred? What was of particular notice? How did you feel about that? May we hear from someone who had a different reaction?*
  - b. **So What?** (What did you learn? What difference did the event make?) Participants discuss their feelings, ideas, and analysis of the service experience. Questions can also be focused on the meaning or importance of the activity to:
    - i. **The Participant:** *Did you learn a new skill or clarify an interest? Did you hear, smell, or feel anything that surprised you? What feelings or thoughts seem most strong today? How is your experience different from what you expected? What struck you about that? How was that significant? What has an impact on the way you view what you expected? What struck you about that? How was that significant? What affects the way you view the situation/experience? (What lens are you viewing*

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from?) *What do the critical incidents mean to you? How did you respond to them? What did you like/dislike about the experience?*

- ii. **The Recipient:** *Did the “service” empower the recipient to become more self-sufficient? What did you learn about the people/community that we served? What might influence the recipient’s views or experience of the project?*
- iii. **The Community:** *What are some of the pressing needs/issues in the community? How does this project address those needs? How, specifically, has the community benefited? What is the least impact you can imagine for the project? With unlimited creativity, what is the most impact on the community that you can imagine?*
- iv. **The Group** (group projects): *In what ways did the group work well together? What does that suggest to you about the group? How might the group have accomplished its task more effectively? In what ways did others help you today? (and vice versa) How were decisions made? Were everybody’s ideas heard?*

- c. **Now What?** (How will they think or act in the future as a result of this experience?) Participants consider broader implications of the service experience and apply learning. Be aware to strike a balance between realistic, reachable goals and openness to spontaneity and change. Some questions include: *What seem to be the root causes of the issue/problem addressed? What kinds of activities are currently taking place in the community related to this project? What contributes to the success of projects like this? What hinders success? What learning occurred for you in this experience? How can you apply this learning? What would you like to learn more about, related to this project or issue? What follow-up is needed to address any challenges or difficulties? What information can you share with your peers or community volunteers? If you were in charge of the project, what would you do to improve it? If you could do the project again, what would you do differently? What would “complete” the service?*
5. **How Do You Define Service?** (from Koln & Hamilton) People define service in many different ways. Discussion about these different definitions can be very interesting and eye-opening. This exercise is also important to reveal the diversity of ideas within the group, and to underscore the importance of recognizing differing perspectives. The sample definitions that follow can be presented one at a time through the course of the discussion or can be offered all at once and then ranked by each participant, according to their personal philosophy of service (for example, assigning a “1” to “voting” because the participant believes it best represents service).
- a. Joining the armed services
  - b. Providing dinner once a week at a homeless shelter
  - c. Talking with a friend
  - d. Chaining yourself to an old growth tree as loggers enter the forest

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- e. Leaving your car at home and biking to work every day
- f. Giving \$50 to the United Way
- g. Walking a frail person across a busy street
- h. Writing a letter to a congressperson about the dangers of nuclear proliferation
- i. Giving blood
- j. Tutoring a migrant worker
- k. Adopting an eight year old boy
- l. Quitting your job to move to a monastery and meditate for a year
- m. Working as a state legislator
- n. Voting

Discuss why students ranked certain forms of service above others. Ask students to give their definition of service or a philosophy they have about service. If they need more time to think about how they view service, have students construct a philosophy in writing to bring to the next class hour.

6. **Fact or Fiction:** Have all students write down a statement about the service project (the community to be helped, the actual work, the cause, the location, the time, the objectives/goals, etc.) Facilitate discussion about stereotypes, myths, potential issues, obstacles, successes, etc. (Texas Christian University).
  
7. **Concentric Circles (from David Sawyer):** The group is divided in two, with half of them forming a tight circle in the center of the room. The remaining people then pair up with someone in the circle. The facilitator then poses a question for each pair to answer in a few minutes. Then, either the inner or the outer circle is asked to rotate “x” spaces to the right or left. Another question is asked for the new pair to discuss. This activity can go on for as long as desired, giving people the chance to have one on one discussions with many different people in the group. The following are examples of questions that the facilitator may ask:
  - a. What social or environmental problem touches you most right now and why?
  - b. What is wrong with formal classroom education?
  - c. What do today’s undergraduates want from their teachers?
  - d. What do you like most about service-learning?
  - e. What did you learn about \_\_\_\_\_?
  - f. Talk about a time when someone really supported you.
  - g. Whom did you meet during your service work that touched you deeply?
  - h. Describe a high point/low point in your service work and explain why.
  - i. Discuss an underlying social issue(s) your service work addressed.
  
8. **What Do You Want?:** Make up a list of questions with “What do you want ...” (i.e. from your service experience, from your fellow leaders, to happen in the world, etc.). Let the group take turns answering each question. Then ask how they are going to actively and intentionally achieve what they want (North Dakota State University).

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9. **Case Studies:** Prepare case studies that outline dilemmas similar to those students might experience while working on their projects. Type the case studies in a few sentences and hand them out to groups of four or five students. Have students discuss the case studies and postulate what they would do. Then allow each group to read their case study to the class and explain the solutions they have come up with. You might modify this activity to have groups create their own case studies, perhaps based on their experience, and then swap them with other groups. This activity is useful for preparing students for their projects and discussing expectations. It is also a useful way to solve problems that students are experiencing by employing the creativity of everyone in the class (Simpson College, 2016).
  
10. **Ethical Case Studies:** Ethical case studies give students the opportunity to analyze a situation and gain practice in ethical decision making as they choose a course of action. This reflection strategy can foster the exploration and clarification of values. Students write a case study of an ethical dilemma they have confronted at the service site, including a description of the context, the individuals involved, and the controversy or event that created an ethical dilemma. Case studies are read in class and students discuss the situation and identify how they would respond (David Lisman, Colorado College).
  
11. **Truth is Stranger than Fiction:** (This is an exercise that is best used toward the middle or end of the student's experience). Have the students break into groups of three (no more). Ask them to share the most unusual story that happened to them during their service-learning experience. Some students will be hesitant at first. If they really cannot think of one, do not let them off the hook. Tell them to take the assignment home, write it and submit it at the next session. This usually motivates them to think of one rather quickly. In fact, most classes come up with some interesting stories. Then have the class come together as a whole and share them. It is surprising how animated all of the students get. Even if it is not their own story, they feel some ownership if the person was in their group. Usually everyone ends up sharing a story. As you move through the exercise, even the reticent ones usually find themselves sharing something. Be prepared to prod these students a little. If you happen to have a class that is filled with interesting stories, you might want to save these stories and submit them to the Service-Learning Program for future use (Diane Sloan, Miami Dade Community College).
  - a. **OR** Place participants in groups of no more than three and have them share the most unusual story that happened during the project. Everyone should have a story. Gather the group and share the stories (Texas Christian University).
  
12. **Goals/Fears:** Have the group put three goals and three fears on the card and share some of them. Discuss how to accomplish or overcome them. Then, after the service activity, re-visit them and discuss how you achieved, overcame, dealt with, or are still challenged by your goals and fears (North Dakota State University).

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**13. Short-Takes (Or Longer):**

- a. **Sports Analogies:**
- b. Baseball, Volleyball, and Soccer each have their own set of rules of the game. What is one rule of your service-learning experience? What would happen if someone broke this rule? (Write a rulebook of your Service-Learning experience. Include penalties/consequences.)
- c. Each of those sports also has a playbook. What is the best play you have seen while participating in this Service-Learning experience? Why? (Write a playbook of at least five “plays” that are (1) sure to help you/your group perform well in your Service-Learning experience OR (2) important to know for the profession.)
- d. **Bumper Sticker:** Create a bumper sticker that captures what you learned and/or speaks to the community need you saw in your experience. (Create an ad campaign that addresses this community need.)
- e. **Dinner Guest:** If you could have one person from your service-learning experience over for dinner, whom would you invite and what would you serve? Why? (Depending on assignment, this could be a short or long response) (Katie Halcrow, Inver Hills Community College).

**14. Write First:** Put six sheets of paper on the walls and divide the participants into six groups. Have each group answer a question. Ask multiple reflection questions and allow groups three minutes to formulate and write down their answers to each question.

Example questions:

- a. What happened as a result of the activity?
- b. What academic skills were used?
- c. What challenged did you face and how did you resolve them?
- d. What would you do differently?
- e. What do you want to learn next as a result of the service activity?

Allow time for the groups to discuss their questions and for other groups/individuals to respond to the questions they did not respond to in writing.

**15. All on the Wall:** Put a large piece of paper up on one wall or all the way around the room. Participants write or draw feelings, thoughts/learning on the paper. Facilitator leads discussion based on writings (North Dakota State University).**16. Pass the Ball:** In this activity, the group sits in a circle and you facilitate a discussion about what the participants learned by participating in the service activity. A soft object is tossed around the circle. Whoever has the object is the one that can talk. Material needed: Any soft object that can be tossed from one participant to another.

First, explain how the activity works. Ask them to sit (or stand) in a circle. “I’m going to ask a question. If you would like to answer raise your hand and I will pass you the ball

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(or whatever object you have). Then once you are done you can pass the ball to someone else that would like to answer the same question.” When you are ready to ask a different question, ask that the object be tossed back to you (University of Wisconsin Extension).

17. **Inventory:** Develop an inventory for the community being served or your own community regarding the problem you are addressing or work you are doing. What are the resources, who are the local leaders, what roles do certain organizations play, what relationships exist, what other work has been done, what are the various attitudes about the project, what are the challenges, where are they, etc. (North Dakota State University).
18. **Think about it:** Present the group with a social injustice (perhaps one faced during the service project) and have them answer the four questions below.

Social injustice: \_\_\_\_\_ (e.g. people who work full time are still homeless)

- a. Does this social issue move or bother you? Why or why not?
- b. How can this problem be solved? Can it be solved?
- c. What stereotypes will have to change for this injustice to be righted?
- d. How can I change my behavior patterns to create a positive change?
  - i. List five things you can actively do to help create this change.
  - ii. List three to five things you can do to modify your attitudes/beliefs/ideas to support this change.

List three to five ways that you currently support the solution to this problem (North Dakota State University).

19. **Two Things:** Have each person share two things they have learned from their experience, and how they can apply it to tomorrow, this week, the rest of their life, etc. This activity can be in discussion or modified for a writing assignment. It is also a good activity for a quick check-in during the middle of a service-learning experience/project (North Dakota State University).

20. **Post-It:** Have students (individually) choose three words to describe their community engagement work. Students should write each word on an individual post-it and post on the board/wall. Then facilitate large group discussion: *Why did you choose those three words to describe your community engagement work?*

After large group discussion, break students into small groups of 4-5 people for further discussion about challenges and achievements they experienced throughout the service-learning project. Groups should choose the top three challenges and top three achievements they experienced and write each challenge and achievement on an individual post-it (6 post-its) and post on the board/wall. Facilitator should organize all of the groups' challenges into themes. Discuss, as a large group, common themes. *Why did students experience the indicated challenges? How did students feel about their achievements? What made their achievements possible? What could students do*

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*differently next time to overcome challenges? What did students learn from their challenges?*

21. **Building Solutions (from Chesbrough & Hill):** In a small group, form a circle. Ask one member of the group to identify a problem that s/he feels needs action and resolution. The next member in the group is then to pose a solution through action. Each subsequent member is then asked to build on this solution until the group feels it has reached a consensus on how the problem can be solved. This can be altered in a number of ways using the same process of group reflection and sharing. Consensus may or may not be a part of the process. The facilitator can also pose questions such as “If these solutions exists, why have they not been implemented? Would the people affected by this problem agree with these solutions? Who might not agree?” etc.
22. **The Strong Circle (from City Year, cited by David Sawyer):** This exercise is a relatively quick way to check in with a group at the beginning or end of a meeting and gives a sense of connectedness. It resembles the huddle in team sports and creates a feeling of solidarity and team effort. A Strong Circle is announced. The group stands in a tight circle, shoulder to shoulder, everyone in the circle and no one outside the circle. A pertinent question may be to put the group asking for a one word answer: “Tell us in one word how your service project went...what you thought of the retreat...how your semester is going...”etc. People speak their answers in turn, around the strong circle. Any appropriate closing comments are added.
23. **Taking Sides:** Individuals stand in clusters according to the statement with which they concur. The clusters are asked to explain why they chose the answer they did, but no individual is coerced to talk. Remember that there are no right answers. Some fun warm-up questions might include questions about whether campus athletics should be funded with student fees or they might involve some current event. Once people are comfortable with this format, you can steer toward questions regarding your project.

You can modify this activity for limited space and mobility by having students use thumbs-ups or thumbs-down to express their opinions or by having students stand in a line to represent a spectrum of opinion. This activity is useful when students are tired or apathetic during discussion by creating a way for everyone to express some kind of opinion and, therefore, to be involved (Simpson College, 2016).

24. **Stand and Declare (from David Sawyer):** The facilitator makes a statement to the group, to which members can strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. Groups form around each of the four responses to the statement, showing the group’s “differences.” Members from each opinion group are asked to explain their stance, fleshing out the many facets of the issue. People must listen carefully, and can change positions if they change perspectives. This activity helps everyone learn to disagree without being disagreeable, but must be facilitated carefully. Questions are intentionally stated to allow for personal interpretation and to limit responses to one of the four categories. Several group members will want to take some sort of an intermediate stance,

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but should be encouraged to choose the stance about which they feel the strongest, or which is their instinctive response. Part of processing this activity can then be discussion how it felt to be so limited, to be categorized. Questions should proceed from lower risk statements to higher risk, more controversial statements. Sample statements include:

- a. Service learning is transforming higher education
  - b. Service is not service if participants are paid.
  - c. Direct service is mostly charity work and does little to promote social justice.
  - d. Public education does a good job of preparing young people for the future.
  - e. The goal of service-learning programs is the development of the student (or the transformation of the community).
  - f. Service makes a lasting impact, on the participants/community.
25. **Think, Pair, Share:** Ask students one of the questions from the sets below OR ask a question created from the Depth of Knowledge (DOK) Levels wheel. Give students time to think about the question on their own; then ask them to pair with a partner to discuss the idea. Finally, have each partner group share their findings/thoughts with the class. Discuss. (Depending on the level of the question, this can take anywhere from 10 minutes to the entire class period.)
- a. **Beginning of Semester Questions:**
    - i. What is the identified problem/community need?
    - ii. How is your community partner site addressing that need?
    - iii. Why are you needed?
    - iv. What are some of your perceptions or beliefs about the population you will be serving?
    - v. What fear, if any, do you have about working in the community?
    - vi. What do you hope to gain from this experience?
  - b. **During the Semester Questions:**
    - i. How does your service learning experience relate to the learning objectives of the course?
    - ii. What did you do at your site since the last reflection discussion?
    - iii. What did you observe?
    - iv. What did you learn?
    - v. What has worked? What has not?
    - vi. What do you think is (will be) the most valuable service you can offer at your site?
    - vii. Is there something more you could do to contribute to the solution?
  - c. **End of Semester Questions:**
    - i. What have you learned about yourself?
    - ii. What have you learned about your community?
    - iii. What have you contributed to the community site?
    - iv. What values, opinions, beliefs have changed?
    - v. What was the most important lesson learned
    - vi. How have you been challenged?
    - vii. What should others do about this issue?
    - viii. What impact did you have on the community?

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(Questions from Channel Islands, California State University).

26. **Professional Goals:** Give students one of these prompts:
- Think about the work you are doing for your Service-Learning experience. What are your future professional goals? What are you doing in the experience right now that you think will be important for your profession?
  - Pretend that you are in an interview and your potential employer asks you what you learned during your Service-Learning experience. How would you respond?  
\*\*Note: For this prompt, instructors may want to remind students that the experience is providing an opportunity to practice soft-skills as well as reinforcing the course content\*\* (Katie Halcrow, Inver Hills Community College).
27. **Word Whips:** Students give one word to describe the day/experience. Discuss why students choose the word they do. This is a great “check-in” activity during the course of a service-learning experience/project (GenerationOn, 2011).
28. **Structured Class Discussions:** Structured reflection sessions can be facilitated during regular class time if all students are involved in service. It is helpful for students to hear stories of success from one another. They can also offer advice and collaborate to identify solutions to problems encountered at the service site. The following exercise is an example of structured reflection discussion:
- List phrases that describe your actions at the service site.
  - List phrases that describe your thoughts at the service site.
  - What contradictions did you sense at the service site?
  - What connections can you make between your service and the course content? (Nadinne Cruz, Stanford University).
29. **Creative Questions:** These kinds of questions can get students to think abstractly, critically, and/or creatively about their service experience – especially about the emotions they may be experiencing.
- What is the weather of your experience? Sunny skies? Cloudy? Thunderstorms? Explain.
  - What is the color of your Service-Learning experience? Explain.
  - Look at this chart of faces below. What is the face of YOUR Service-Learning experience? Why?  
[http://2.bp.blogspot.com/\\_TT9hGUvIsCA/TNsmPtdQFAI/AAAAAAAAAAB8/Asi5sByIouk/s1600/howfeel.GIF](http://2.bp.blogspot.com/_TT9hGUvIsCA/TNsmPtdQFAI/AAAAAAAAAAB8/Asi5sByIouk/s1600/howfeel.GIF)
  - What kind of animal are you most like during your Service-Learning experience? Why?
  - Put yourself anywhere in nature that you like to go. What in that visual connects with \_\_\_\_\_? (Insert part of the Service-Learning experience.)
  - Based on your Service-Learning experience, choose the one community concern you think is most important. Which superhero and/or cartoon character is most up to the job of fixing this issue? (Afterward: Who are real-world people that can help?) (Katie Halcrow, Inver Hills Community College).

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30. **Quotes:** Using quotes can be a useful way to initiate reflection because there is an ample supply of them, and they are often brief and inspiring. Here are some quotes as examples you might want to use:

- a. “If we do not act, we shall surely be dragged down the long, dark and shameful corridors of time reserved for those who possess power without compassion, might without morality, and strength without insight” (Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.).
- b. “A different world cannot be built by indifferent people” (Horace Mann).
- c. “I believe that serving and being served are reciprocal and that one cannot really be one without the other” (Robert Greenleaf, Educator and Writer).
- d. “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world: indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has” (Margaret Mead).
- e. “Unless you choose to do great things with it, it makes no difference how much you are rewarded, or how much power you have” (Oprah Winfrey).
- f. “The best way to find yourself is to love yourself in the service of others” (Gandhi).
- g. “Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth” (Muhammad Ali).
- h. “Life’s most persistent and urgent question is: What are you doing for others?” (Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.).
- i. “Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much” (Helen Keller).
- j. “We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give” (Winston Churchill).
- k. “No one can do everything, but everyone can do something” (unknown).
- l. “No act of kindness, no matter how small, is every wasted” (Aesop).
- m. “Each of us, whatever our talents, has service to give. And to do it well always involved learning, not once or for a limited time, but continually” (Henry B. Eyring).

Quotes may be used in a variety of ways. You might give each student a page of quotes and ask them to pick one that fits his/her feeling about the service-learning project. Then you could ask them to explain why this quote represents his/her feelings. The best results seem to be when the students are given the sheet one session before the reflection class. This gives them time to put their thoughts together. The students could also do it as a one-minute paper that might then be read and explained to the rest of the class (Diane Sloan, Miami Dade College).

### *Interactive Reflection Activities*

1. **Circle Up:** Have students stand in a large circle, facing the inside of the circle. Instruct students that you (the facilitator) will read a question or statement and if they agree or respond “yes” to having that experience, they should take one step into the circle. If they do not agree with the statement or respond “no” to the question, students should stay

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standing where they are. After each individual question/statement, ask follow-up questions or ask students to share about their experiences.

This activity helps students to identify experiences or personal identities that are similar to or different from those of their peers. This reflection activity works well throughout service or as a preservice activity to recognize personal identities that participants have that may affect the way they work with others/their overall experience.

1. **Beach Ball Reflection:** In this activity, a beach ball is passed around between the participants who are standing in a circle. This ball has a number of different reflection questions written on it. After three “bumps” of the beach ball, the participant who has the ball reads the question that their right thumb is on. The participant then answers the question. The ball is continually passed around the circle until all the participants have the opportunity to answer at least one question. Materials needed: An inflatable beach ball. Before the activity, use a permanent marker to subdivide the beach ball into 10-20 sections. In each section, write a reflection question.

First, ask the participants to stand in a circle and explain how the activity works. “This beach ball has lots of different questions on it relating to the service project we just completed. We will bump (or pass) this ball back and forth around the circle. After the ball has been hit three times, the person who catches it next will read the question that their right thumb is on. That person then has the opportunity to answer the question, or they can “phone a friend” and ask someone else to answer it. We will continue passing the ball back and forth until everyone (who wants to) has had an opportunity to answer a question.”

2. Another option is to give all participants a chance to answer the question once it is read. As the facilitator, you may choose to expand or summarize answers to help the participants in their reflection (University of Wisconsin – Extension). **Snowball Fight:** Similar to the exercise above, this provides students an anonymous way to answer a question, ask a question, or bring up some concern they have about the experience. Ask each student to pull out a piece of paper and then write down a question, an answer to a question, a feeling – whatever their response is to a prompt you give them. Then, have the students crumple up their paper and begin having an in-classroom “snowball fight” with their peers. At the end of the snowball fight, have students each gather one of the papers and read what is written. Use this to start discussion (Stan Rothrock, Inver Hills Community College).
3. **Line Up!:** In this activity, you read several statements about the project the youth just completed and ask the youth to place themselves on the “line” in a continuum based on if they “agree” or “disagree” with the statement. Ideal Group Size: 5+; for larger groups, just make the “line” longer

First, explain how the activity works: “This line represents how you feel about the statements I’m going to make. This end of the line (point to one end) is the “strongly disagree” end of the line and this end of the line (point to the other end) is the “strongly

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agree” end of the line. The middle of line is “neutral.” I will read a statement and you need to place yourself on the line depending how much you agree or disagree with the statement”

After each statement, you can ask individuals to explain why they chose to stand where they did on the line. Another option is to have everyone turn to the people around them and explain to each other why they chose to stand where they did on the line. Emphasize that there are no “right” or “wrong” responses to each statement.

4. **Personal Ways of Seeing/Knowing:** Have students take a Myers-Briggs type test (possibly the True Colors Personality Test, <http://www.phigam.org/document.doc?id=5286>). To discover how they view the world – check out the Kolb Learning Theory for a different interpretation (E/I is Active/Reflective; T/F relates to Concrete Experience/Abstract Conceptualization). Have students reflect on how this will or already has influenced their experiences (Texas Christian University).
5. **Block Arrangement Exercise** (from Wilmes, Scott, & Rice): Two participants sit back to back. One participant creates a design with a set of blocks. They are then asked to describe their design to the other participants so that s/he can draw a picture of it. The drawer cannot ask any questions. Process what assumptions the designer/describer made about what the drawer would understand. What assumptions did the drawer make about what the describer meant? How did it feel to have communication limited? How does this relate to the assumptions we make each day about people or situations?
6. **Describe, Interpret, Evaluate** (from Wilmes, Scott & Rice created by Lillian Roybal Rose): Select pictures from magazines (helpful to select on that may draw stereotypes with captions that would counteract stereotypes) to hand around the room. Captions should be removed or concealed. Ask participants to individually examine the pictures and “describe what they see.” As a group, ask participants to describe what they saw. The facilitator should tabulate responses in three columns at the front (as a description, interpretation, or evaluation) without explanation to the participants. Process the exercise by describing what the facilitator was recording, distinguishing between description, interpretation and evaluation. Discuss the role of assumptions and stereotyping in the exercise. How did the group description exaggerate or modify individual perceptions? End by sharing the caption from the picture. Variation: ask several participants to be blindfolded and paired with partners who describe the pictures to them. Ask for descriptions from the blindfolded participants first in the processing. Did getting the information second hand contribute to distortion? Why or why not?
7. **Four-Part Table:** Students divide (or are given) a piece of paper with the sections to the right. This helps students to
  - a. Differentiate between thought and feeling
  - b. Construct new knowledge
  - c. Ask questions about their experience
  - d. Think critically for the development of analytical essays.

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What happened?	How do I feel?
Ideas	Questions

This table can also be adapted using different figures/concepts within each box (Cathy Kaye, 2012 National Service Learning Conference).

8. **Service Quotes:** Put a few quotes about service on the wall. Allow students to write responses to the quotes on sticky notes (or on the same piece of paper) and post them. Spend time reading everyone else's responses. Discuss responses (Texas Christian University).
9. **Web Charts:** (from STACS) Facilitators should use this brainstorming tool when groups are "stuck" and see no options. Simply place the "issue" or "problem" in the center of the chart and all of the obstacles in "bubbles" outside of the central issue. This is a different strategy for looking at pros and cons and force fields.
10. **Yarn Web:** Have the participants stand in a circle. Have one student start off holding one end of a ball of yarn and pass the ball to another person, saying something like: what they will bring to the next project, what they learned, something they appreciate about the next person, etc. Continue until the ball is unwound completely (Texas Christian University).
11. **Free Association Brainstorming:** (This reflection session should take place no earlier than the end of the first 1/3 of the project experience.) Give each student 10 – 20 "post-its" and ask them to write down all the feelings they had when they first heard about their service-learning requirement. After they finish the first question, have them write down all of the feelings they had when they experienced their first "field encounter." After finishing question two completely, have them write down all of the feelings they are having "right now" regarding their service-learning experience. Encourage them to write down as many different brainstormed thoughts as possible (one for each card). Have three newsprint papers strategically located and taped to the walls around the classroom. Have one with a happy large face, one with a sad face, and one with a bewildered face. Now, ask the students to place their words on the newsprint paper that closest fits their brainstormed feelings. Then, have students stand next to the newsprint that has most of their feeling. This exercise involves both writing and speaking and is seen as non-threatening in an oral presentation sense (Sloan 1996).

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12. **Quotes in Songs:** Ask the student to find a song where the singer uses lyrics that describe what he/she feels about service-learning project. Emphasize that it does not need to be a whole song but lyric in a song. If they have access to the song, tell them to bring it to play at the end of the reflection session. Even if they do not have the song, ask them to “say” the lyric that describes their feelings. This usually proves to be “fun” in a sense that it creates a casual atmosphere and bonds the group together. Many times others will help by trying to sing it with them. Playing the song usually creates a celebratory atmosphere. You might also bring a bag of Hershey’s kisses, or something similar to keep the festive spirit going (Adapted from Prof. Gwen Stewart’s song speech, Miami Dade College).
13. **Puzzle Reflection Activity:** Ask students a series of questions/provide them with a scenario/read a quote/give facts or data, etc. and have students respond to each anecdote by coloring in one of the jigsaw pieces with the color of their choice. Have four colors available that correspond to a feeling (anger, sadness, happiness, hopefulness...etc.). After all students have filled in their puzzle, create a collage out of all the puzzles that represents the feelings of the large group and discuss.
14. **Pictionary:** Have a Pictionary game about the experience and how participants felt throughout the experience. Discuss as a group (North Dakota State University).
15. **Parables/Stories:** Read a piece of pertinent literature and ask participants to respond and draw correlations to the service experience (North Dakota State University).
16. **Interview each other:** Break the group into pairs or triplets and have them interview each other about their service experience, take notes, and summarize a couple of things to the group.
17. **Teach:** Teach others what you learned through this service experience. Put together instructions or references for learning more about it.
18. **It’s Your Thing/Express Yourself:** Tell students that they will have the opportunity to create their own version of their feelings toward the service-learning project. The content of the creation must be linked to course content, but the *forms* do not; rather, they can simply be a way for students to approach reflection that allows them to express themselves as individuals. However, the creative form *can* be linked to skills in the class (when appropriate) to provide a medium for reflection as well as skills assessment. Anything goes – just be sure to require that it must individual work that he/she have created. Here are some ideas:
  - a. Draw/paint/sculpt the most important person/place/object of your experience. Include an artist’s statement.
  - b. Create a photo album (with captions) of your experience.
  - c. Create a collage that captures the various emotions you felt and work you did during your Service-Learning experience.

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- d. Write a haiku poem (or series of poems) that captures your experience and/or describes the community need and/or describes someone with whom you had meaningful contact during your experience.
  - e. Make a music video or write a song/rap that captures your experience.
  - f. Write a short script and/or create a play that captures your experience.
  - g. Write about your experience in the form of a business memo/email correspondence.
  - h. Create a blog that shows your experience and what you learned.
19. **It's My Bag:** Tell the students to find a bag at home (any bag). Then tell them to fill it with one (or two—depending on time) item(s) that remind them of how they feel about their service-learning project. Tell them to bring this bag with item(s) to the reflection session, and have them explain their items to the rest of the class. The items that they bring usually turn out to be inspiring visual aids that bring out some great comments. \*\*Note: this can be done online with pictures of the objects. \*\*  
(Adapted through a speech exercise provided by Prof. James Wolf 1998).
20. **Graffiti:** For this in-class exercise, you will need poster paper to hang in different places around the room and different colored markers that thick enough to be visible on the poster board from a distance. On the top of each piece of poster board, write a topic that relates to the service-learning experience (this can be a course topic, a feeling, a thought, a quotation – whatever). Then, take 10 minutes to have students walk around and write down their own thoughts/feelings/experiences as a response. This is an Anonymous exercise, which allows students to be more honest/vulnerable than if they attached their names to the comments. Discuss.
21. **Sculptor:** Participants should get into groups of three—two of the participants in each group should decide to be the clay and one participant in each group should volunteer to be the sculptor. The facilitator or one participant must choose a topic or questions to address regarding the service experience. The clay people let the sculptor mold them into the sculptor's vision of their topic. Allow up to five minutes for each group to mold their sculpture. Allow large group discussion time to interpret what each group had sculpted and then allow each sculptor to explain their thought process and what the sculpture was meant to represent.
22. **Service-Learning Contracts and Logs:** Service-learning contracts formalize the learning and service objectives for the course. Students, in collaboration with their instructor and agency supervisor, identify learning and service objectives and identify the range of tasks to be completed during the service experience. Oftentimes, a service-learning contract cannot be completed until the student is at the agency for a couple of weeks and has a clear idea of how their skills and expertise can be of service. A service log is a continuous summary of specific activities completed and progress towards accomplishing the service-learning goals. The contract and log can become the basis for reflection when students are asked to assess their progress towards meeting the identified objectives and identify the obstacles and supports that had an impact on their ability to

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achieve the service-learning objectives. These items can also be submitted in a service-learning portfolio as evidence of the activities completed.

23. **Four Corners:** Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree posted in the four corners of the room (neutral can also be in the middle). Students answer reflection questions by going to that area of the room (GenerationOn, 2011).
24. **Citizenship Reflection:** Ask students to create a map that shows how their service-learning experience connects to issues at the state/national/global level and where community involvement and citizenship fit in. Have students share their maps and discuss. Prompt students with further reflection questions (Texas Christian University).
25. **Time Capsule:** Students add mementos throughout the service experience/project, describing why it was meaningful. Use the time capsules for a final reflection activity for students to reflect on what aspects of the experience were most meaningful and why, why they saved certain objects, and what feelings those objects stir up for them.
26. **Interviews or Surveys:** Ask students to conduct an interview with someone about a topic related to their service experience or create a survey that addresses a question/topic/feeling they would like to explore further that is related to the service experience. Surveys can be distributed to other participants in the service experience, community partners, or other individuals involved with a specific cause (GenerationOn, 2011).

### *Written Reflection Activities*

#### 1. **Empathy Work:**

- a. **Journal:** Write a journal entry from the point of view of the person (or one of the people) you are serving. The journal entry can be about a specific topic that concerns them, about working with you (in your service-learning capacity), or just about a day in the life of that person.
- b. **Story the Experience:** This is a guided writing assignment for students that helps them to silence their inner censors. Instructor needs to lead this experience.
 

Instructions to students:

  - i. Choose someone you remember observing at some point today. Begin writing a story about this morning's activities from his/her perspective.
  - ii. As students write, instruct them to – about a minute apart – add a color, a sound, weather, an emotion, dialogue, the word “strange”, a question, a short sentence. (These items of addition are just suggestions; you could easily sub in material from your class in place of the other “add-ins.”) Afterward, ask students what they learned about their own perceptions by writing this. What thoughts/feelings about the Service-Learning experience came out in their writing?  
(Katie Halcrow, Inver Hills Community College).

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2. **Letter to Self:** Prior to a project, have participants write a letter to themselves about their personal and career goals regarding the project, or feelings about the project or community. Place it in a sealed envelope, mail it to yourself, or hand out again to the team after six months and reflect (North Dakota State University).
3. **Letter to a Community Member:** Write a letter about the day or project (GenerationOn, 2011).
4. **Recommendations:** Compose a letter to your site supervisor offering suggestions for working with future volunteers (North Dakota State University).
5. **Free Writing:** Give students a writing prompt: a question, phrase, quote, scenario, word, or topic. Have students write about that prompt for five minutes. Writing should be continuous and students should let their writing lead them (students should write about whatever comes to their minds). Stress that students should not lift their pens/pencils from the paper, but write continuously. At the end of five minutes, ask students to share their writing (have them read verbatim). Students may be nervous to share their writing, so gauge the class and ask them to share concepts they wrote about and ask questions to prompt further discussion—invite all students to respond to one another’s writings and questions. The instructor may collect the writings at the end of the activity to grade/review student responses.
6. **Written Reflection:** Pose three or four questions using “what, so what, now what” model, and allow time for writing (i.e., what you did, why/how you did it, how you could do it better) (North Dakota State University).
7. **E-Mail/Blog/Discussion Board Discussion Groups:** Through e-mail, students can create a dialogue with the instructor and peers involved in service projects. Students write weekly summaries and identify critical incidents that occurred at the service site. Students can rotate as a moderator of the discussion every two weeks. Instructors can post questions for consideration and topics for directed writings. A log can be printed to provide data about group learnings that occurred from the service experience (Diane Sloan, Miami Dade College).
  - a. **Assignment Option:** Have participants post to the discussion board, but end each entry with a question. Require students to respond to at least two peer’s questions in the discussion thread after submitting their initial post (Texas Christian University).
8. **Critical Incident Journal:** This type of journal entry focuses the student on analysis of a particular event that occurred during the week. By answering one of the following sets of prompts, students are asked to consider their thoughts and reactions and articulate the action they plan to take in the future. Sharing these in class after students complete the assignment can be a powerful learning experience for all students.

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- a. Prompt 1: Describe a significant event that occurred as a part of the service-learning experience. Why was it significant to you? What underlying issues (societal, interpersonal) surfaced as a result of the experience? How will this incident influence your future behavior?
  - b. Prompt 2: Describe an incident or situation that created a dilemma for you in terms of what to say or do. What is the first thing you thought of to say or do? List three other actions you might have taken. Which of the above seems best to you now and why do you think this is the best response? (Hatcher, 1996).
9. **Personal Journal:** Students will write freely about their experience. This is usually done weekly. These personal journals may be submitted periodically to the instructor, or kept as a reference to use at the end of the experience when putting together an academic essay reflecting their experience. *Note:* Oftentimes journal writing can become a log of events rather than a reflection activity in which students consider the service experience in the context of learning objectives. Guidance is needed to help student's link personal learning with course content (Hatcher 1996).
10. **Dialogue Journal:** Students submit loose-leaf pages from a dialogue journal bi-weekly (or otherwise at appropriate intervals) for the instructor to read and comment on. (A dialogue journal is a continuous dialogue between two or more individuals, so this journal is like a conversation between the student and instructor and a sharing of ideas). While labor intensive for the instructor, this can provide continual feedback to students and prompt new questions for students to consider during the semester (Goldsmith 1995).
11. **Highlighted Journal:** Before students submit the reflection journal, they reread personal entries and, using a highlighter, mark sections of the journal that directly relate to concepts discussed in the text or in class. This makes it easier for the instructors to identify students' learning and, more importantly, necessitates that students reflect on their experience in light of course content. The highlighting could be done as a final journaling activity on already graded journal entries or prior to the submission of each individual journal entry (Gary Hesser, Augsburg College).
12. **Key Phrase Journal:** In this type of journal, students are asked to integrate terms and key phrases within their journal entries. The Instructor can provide a list of terms at the beginning of the semester or for a certain portion of the text. Students could also create their own list of key phrases to include. Journal entries are written within the framework of the course content and become an observation of how the course content is evident in the service experience (Hatcher 1996).
13. **Double-Entry Journal:** When using a double-entry journal, students are asked to write one-page entries each week: Students describe their personal thoughts and reactions to the service experience on the left page of the journal, and write about the key issues from class discussions or readings on the right page of the journal. Students then draw arrows indicating relationships between their personal experiences and the course content. This

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type of journal is a compilation of personal data and a summary of course content in preparation of a more formal reflection paper at the end of the semester (Angelo and Cross 1993).

14. **Three-Part Journal:** Students are asked to divide each page of their journal into thirds, and write weekly entries during the semester. In the top section, students describe some aspect of the service experience. In the middle of the page, they are asked to analyze how course content relates to the service experience. Finally, an application section prompts students to comment on how the experience and course content can be applied to their personal or professional life (Bringle, 1996).
15. **Reflection Essays:** Reflective essays are a more formal example of journal entries. Essay questions are provided at the beginning of the semester and students are expected to submit two or three essays during the term. Reflective essays can focus on personal development, academic connections to the course content, or ideas and recommendations for future action. As with any essay, criteria can be clearly stated to guide the work of the students (Chris Koliba, Georgetown University).
16. **Directed Writings:** Directed writings ask students to consider the service experience within the framework of course content. The Instructor identifies a section from the textbook or class readings (i.e., quotes, statistics, and concepts) and structures a question for students to answer. For example, “William Gray has identified five stages of a mentor – protégé relationship. At what stage is your mentoring relationship with your protégé at this point in the semester? What evidence do you have to support this statement? In the following weeks, what specific action can you take to facilitate the development of your mentoring relationship to the next stage on Gray’s continuum?” A list of directed writings can be provided at the beginning of the semester, or given to students as the semester progresses. Students may also create their own directed writing questions from the text. Directed writings provide opportunity for application and critical analysis of the course content (Diane Sloan, Miami Dade College).
17. **Experiential Research Paper:** An experiential research paper, based on Kolb’s experiential learning cycle, is a formal paper that asks students to identify a particular experience at the service site and analyzes that experience within the broader context in order to make recommendations for change. Mid-semester, students are asked to identify an underlying social issue they have encountered at the service site. Students then research the social issue and read three to five articles on the topic. Based on their experience and library research, students make recommendations for future action. This reflection activity is useful in interdisciplinary courses and provides students with flexibility within their disciplinary interests and expertise to pursue issues experienced at the service site. Class presentations of the experiential research paper can culminate semester work (Julie Hatcher, IUPUI).
18. **Directed Readings:** Directed readings are a way to prompt students to consider their service experience within a broader context of social responsibility and civic literacy.

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Since textbooks rarely challenge students to consider how knowledge within a discipline can be applied to current social needs, additional readings must be added if this is a learning objective of the course. Directed readings can become the basis for class discussion or a directed writing (Diane Sloan, Miami Dade College).

19. **Agency Analysis Papers:** Students identify organizational structure, culture and mission.
20. **Theory Application Papers:** Students select a major theory covered in the course and analyze its application to the experience in the community.
21. **Writing for a Cause:** Write letters-to-the-editor or to government officials that address issues important to the community organizations or causes with which they are working and that can help to inform the public.

### *Cumulative, Final Reflection*

1. **Student Portfolios:** This type of documentation has become a vital way for students to keep records and learn organizational skills. Encourage them to take photographs of themselves doing their project, short explanations (like business reports), time logs, evaluations by supervisors or any other appropriate “proof” which could be used in an interview. Require them to make this professional. Keep reminding them that submitting it at the end of the term is only one reason for doing this. “The real reason is to have documentation to present at future interviews. This could be a major factor in distinguishing them from other candidates.” Student portfolios could contain any of the following: service-learning contract, weekly log, personal journal, impact statement, directed writings, photo essay. In addition, any products completed during the service experience (i.e., agency brochures, lesson plans, advocacy letters) should be submitted for review. Finally, a written evaluation essay providing a self-assessment of how effectively they meet the learning objectives of the course is suggested for the portfolio (Diane Sloan, Miami Dade College).
2. **Class Presentations:** A way for students to share their service-learning experience with peers is to make a class presentation through a video, slide show, bulletin board, panel discussion, or a persuasive speech. This is an opportunity for students to display their work in a public format. A similar presentation can be offered to the community agency as a final recognition of the students’ involvement (Diane Sloan, Miami Dade College).
3. **Develop a Project Website:** Students should create a website highlighting specific aspects of the service experience that they felt were particularly important. For example: The home page may be an introduction to the agency, cause, community population, the problem and the solution the service addressed. Another page may discuss a specific

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societal issue affecting the community population, or a page may discuss the connection between the local societal issue that the agency addresses through its services and larger global issues or other issues that factor into it (i.e. hunger and poverty). Students should be as creative and make as many connections as they can. The instructor should set some parameters, such as the website must have a homepage (introduction page) plus three to five additional pages, addressing x/y/z topics (GenerationOn, 2011).

4. **Community Mural:** Creating a mural is a more nontraditional approach to student reflection. This technique enables students to express feelings and learning from the service experience and allows for a creative collective statement about aspects of an issue facing a community. Murals are excellent final projects for the end of a course, and can be developed in concept and final product over the entire length of the course. Students can use various sources (magazines, newspapers, other art materials) to build their mural. Faculty can use class time or out-of-class time for this work. Faculty need to define well the criteria for evaluation of content, yet allow freedom for means of expression. Display final projects at a community site or on campus. In addition, students may want to create a community mural that can be permanently displayed at an agency or community site (Simpson College, 2016).
5. **Develop a Project Blog:** (Four Individual Posts). This choice offers students the opportunity to blog about their experiences with volunteering or service-learning. Students should compose four different blog posts of at least 500 words each. The spacing of the entries is up to the instructor, but I would suggest for students to wait at least one to two weeks in between posts to have enough reading/classroom material and service experience to inspire a new post. Very important: the blog cannot simply be of a reflective, journal-entry. Students must engage a topic related to their service work, the population they serve, or the cause they are supporting, and critically cite at least two scholarly sources per blog (class material and readings are appropriate). Students should also suggest how their readers can learn from their experience and apply to their own service experiences or critical social issues affecting their communities. Students should offer specific strategies to take away (essentially, discuss how course content, certain societal issues, and your own experience affect practice). Make sure to alert/email the instructor each time a new blog is posted. Students will be graded on four completed posts by the end of the term.
6. **Experiential Research Paper:** An experiential research paper, based on Kolb's experiential learning cycle, is a formal paper that asks students to identify a particular experience at the service site and analyzes that experience within the broader context in order to make recommendations for change. Mid- semester, faculty ask students to identify an underlying social issue they have encountered at the service site. Students then research the social issue and read three to five articles on the topic. Based on their experience and library research, students make recommendations for future action. This reflection activity is useful in interdisciplinary courses and provides students flexibility within their disciplinary interests and expertise to pursue issues experienced at the service

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site. Class presentations of the experiential research paper can culminate semester work (Julie Hatcher, Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis).

7. **Project Guide:** Have students create a guide for upcoming students who participate. Include personal insights and suggestions for improvement. Instructor should set parameters for content, length, multimodal displays, etc. (Texas Christian University).
8. **Alphabet Book:** Create an alphabet book (or use the project/organization's name) and illustrate it with a sentence, thought, or picture for each letter. Possibly an individual final project option or could do as class for final reflection (Texas Christian University).

### Sample Reflection Questions and Prompts

#### *Examples of Journaling Assignment Questions*

1. Describe your service-learning project. Include a description of the agency or organization you will be working for (i.e. What is their purpose? How big are they? What is their history? What is their mission? What are their goals?).
2. How is your service-learning experience related to the readings, discussions, and lectures in class?
3. How does the service-learning experience connect to your long-term goals?
4. What new skills have you learned since beginning your service? How did you learn or use those skills through service (i.e. what activities helped you to hone those skills)?
5. What have you done this week to make a difference?
6. What characteristics make a community successful?
7. 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?
8. Describe what you have learned about yourself as a result of your service. (California State University – Channel Islands, n.d.)
9. Complete this sentence: Because of my service-learning, I am....
10. Discuss the social identities of those you work with and discuss the personal social identities you hold. How do your identities affect those clients and community members you work with? What differences do you feel you must work through most? How do you work effectively with diverse others?

#### *Agency/Issue-Focused Discussion Questions*

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1. Why does the organization you are working for exist?  
Why is the identified problem/community need?
2. How is your community partner site addressing that need?
3. What is your role at the community site?
4. What were your initial expectations? Have these expectations changed? How? Why?
5. What do you perceive as the underlying issue, and why does it exist?
6. Describe what you did during the experience. To what issues were you exposed?
7. What social, economic, political, and educational systems are maintaining and perpetuating the situation?
8. What can you do with the knowledge you gained from this experience to promote change?
9. When asked, what do you tell friends and family about your experiences in the community and in this class?
10. What was the most positive [or negative] thing that happened this week during your community engagement activity? What can you learn from this?
11. Do you know if your work is valuable to the community or organization? If so, how do you know? If not, how do you plan to find out?
12. What institutional structures are in place at your site or in the community? How do they affect the people you work with?
13. How can you educate others or raise awareness about this group or social issue?
14. How can you continue your involvement with this group or social issue?
15. What do you think is (will be) the most valuable service you can offer at your site?
16. Is there something more you could do to contribute to the solution?
17. What have you learned about your community?
18. What have you contributed to the community site?

### ***Community/Culture/Society-Focused Questions***

1. What fear, if any, do you have about working in the community?
2. Have you become more culturally aware through your community engagement work?  
Give examples/ explain
3. Have you observed examples of inequity or privilege through your community engagement work? Give examples/ explain.
4. If you could start your community engagement work all over again, what would you do differently now knowing what you know?
5. Choose three words that best describe your community engagement work and explain why you chose them.
6. Did anything about your community involvement surprise you? If so, what?
7. What did you do that seemed to be effective or ineffective in the community?
8. How does your understanding of the community change as a result of your participation in this project?
9. What impact did you have on the community?
10. What is the difference between service, generosity, charity, justice and social change?

### ***Client-Focused Reflection Questions***

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1. What are some of your perceptions or beliefs about the population you will be serving?
2. What similarities do you perceive between you and the people you are serving?
3. How do the people you serve perceive you?
4. What do you think a typical day is like for the people you serve?
5. What issues affect the specific population of community members you serve?
6. Describe a person you have encountered in the community who made a strong impression on you, positive or negative.
7. Has your view of the population with whom you have been working changed? How?
8. How has the environment and social conditions affected the people at your site?

### ***Self-Focused Reflection Questions***

1. Do you see benefits of doing community work? Why or why not?
2. How do you motivate yourself to go to your site when you do not feel like it?
3. What personal social identities do you hold? Which identities are most salient?
4. How does your personal social identity affect your work in the community and with others who may hold different identities than you?
5. What personal qualities (e.g. leadership, communication skills, empathy etc.) have you developed through service-learning?
6. What contribution can you make to public understanding of this issue based on your service-learning experience?
7. In what ways are you finding your involvement with service-learning difficult?
8. What have you found that is helping you follow through with your service commitment despite the difficulties you encounter?
9. Have you become more aware of your own privilege or biases through your community engagement work? Give examples/ explain.
10. Did you take risks or did you play it safe during this experience? Were you challenged? Did the work make you feel uncomfortable ever? If so, explain why.
11. What discussions or experiences did you have throughout your community involvement that had an impact on your thinking? Provide examples.
12. What about your community involvement experience was eye-opening?
13. Has the experience affected your worldview? How?
14. What are the most difficult or satisfying parts of your work? Why?
15. How are your values expressed through your community work?
16. What values, opinions, beliefs have changed?
17. What was the most important lesson learned?
18. What sorts of things make you feel uncomfortable when you are working in the community? Why?
19. What have you learned about yourself throughout this experience?
20. What is something you are proud of during this experience?
21. Tell about one thing that surprised you during your service experience.
22. Something I worked hard for is...
23. Something I wonder about is...
24. I took a risk when...

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25. Complete this sentence: Because of my service-learning, I am....

***Group/Teamwork-Focused Reflection Questions***

1. What I liked most about the group was...
2. What I liked least about the group was...
3. The most effective things about the way the groups worked were...
4. The least effective things about the way the groups worked were...
5. The things I did that helped the group most were...
6. The things I did that helped the group least were...The types of people I would like to work with are...
7. The roles I would like to play in the group are...
8. The exercises I would like the group to go through are...
9. The working methods I would like to use are...
10. The way I would like us to run our meeting is...
11. As a group, we need...
12. Something I like about how our group worked together is....

***Course/Academic-Focused Reflection Questions***

1. How does your service learning experience relate to the learning objectives of the course?
2. How does the service experience relate to the course material?
3. Did the experience contradict or reinforce course material?
4. How is your coursework helping you be more effective in your community engagement work?
5. How is your community engagement work helping you to understand your coursework?
6. How did the course material help you overcome obstacles or dilemmas in the service-experience?
7. What aspects of your learning have occurred because of your service-experience?
8. What do you NOW know? What do you still want to know? What have you learned?
9. Talk about any disappointments or successes of your project. What did you learn from it?
10. One thing I would like us to accomplish during the service-learning experience is...

***Career/Professional-Focused Reflection Questions***

1. How does your community engagement work relate to your career plans? If you do not see a direct relationship, try to find an indirect relationship.
2. What professional skills did you gain or develop throughout your community engagement experience?
3. How did you practice those skills specifically during your service experience (i.e. what activities did you engage in to hone those skills)? Provide examples.
4. Have your career options been expanded by your service experience?
5. Tell about a new skill you learned.

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