

Reflection: Before, During, and After Your Project

Structured reflection helps youth acknowledge the connections between their semester of service experiences, the academic content and their personal goals. Research indicates that good reflection activities are continuous, connected guided, allow feedback and assessment, and help to clarify students' values⁽¹⁾. Students are given the time to think about how they relate to the community need they identify, the actions they undertake, the impact they are able to effect in the community, and how they can be change agents, and the effectiveness of their service and learning activities.

Meaningful Reflection

Reflection is most effective when:

- Students draw connections between coursework and knowledge from the classroom and their service experiences
- It is intentional and continuous – occurring before, during, and after service.
- Students are involved in designing, selecting, and leading the reflection activities.
- A variety of learning styles are addressed.
- During discussion, facilitators wait after asking a question to allow for silence.
- Topics and questions are linked to project evaluation, goals, and progress monitoring
- It is used to discuss frustrations, as well as to celebrate success.
- Students consider their past experiences, their current situation, and their plans for the future.
- It takes a variety of forms to tap multiple student interests and talents, including writing, speaking, presenting, calculating, art, music, etc.

Suggested Activities

Ideally, students will select and design reflection activities that are based on their strengths and interests. Below is a list of possible activities that encourage meaningful reflection, creativity, and the development of youth voice.

- Design a poster illustrating what they have learned and present it to their peers.
- Facilitate a discussion.
- Film a video.
- Use digital software such as PowerPoint, Prezi, or Glogster to share their experiences.
- Write a storybook or develop a storyboard.
- Create a scrapbook or a photo collage.
- Write and perform a poem.
- Write, produce, and direct a play, song, rap, or dance
- Create a bulletin board display.
- Keep a project journal which they write in periodically.
- Analyze quotes from famous people about service.

1. RMC Research Corporation. K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit. Scotts Valley, CA: National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2006/2009.