

# Importance of Reflection

## What is reflection?

Reflection provides a structured opportunity for individuals and groups to consider the ramifications of the service they provided and better understand their role in the larger community. Reflection also makes a connection between the service you have provided and the broader social issues that are impacting that population or community. It is also a time for personal growth when individuals can look within, by processing the knowledge and skills one acquires through service.

## Why should we reflect on service activities?

In addition to the reasons offered above, reflection adds meaning and depth to any service project. Those students who engage in reflection are more likely to continue with service because they are better able to recognize the positive personal and societal aspects of the activity.

## How do you reflect?

Reflection can be conducted in a variety of ways. It can be done on an individual basis or as a group. It is most beneficial if done shortly after the service experience.

A list of sample reflection ideas are included below.

## Some things to keep in mind:

- Make sure you save plenty of time for reflection at the end of each event!
- Service learning and leadership are closely connected-be sure to incorporate questions that reveal this connection. (eg. What have we learned that we can take back to our leadership positions on campus and in the community?)
- Before reflection, remind participants of the importance of trust, respect, and confidentiality.
- When working with the same group, use a different reflection activity for each event so that it doesn't get boring.

# Sample Reflection Ideas

## What, So what, Now what

- Facilitate discussion based on these questions.
- What did we just accomplish?
- So what does it mean? Why did we do it?
- Now what do we do?

## Fishbowl

- Create a large circle of chairs with a smaller circle of chairs within.
- A topic is presented for discussion/reflection.
- Those who are interested in discussing move from the outer to the inner circle.
- Those who remain on the outside are observers.

## Using Metaphors

- Encourage discussion by posting an inquisitive metaphor on newsprint.
- For example: In what way is serving the community like baking a cake?
- Facilitate discussion.

## Yes/No/Sometimes/Not sure

- Post the above words/phrases on the wall in different sections of a room.
- Ask questions, such as: Serving the community is important for all people.
- Have students passively answer the questions by walking to the appropriate section.

## Circle in a Circle

- Create two circles of chairs, equal size, one inside the other, the chairs facing each other.
- Have students sit, each facing another student.
- Ask a question, such as: What did you learn from this experience?
- Have the students share their answer with the person across from them.
- After they have finished sharing thoughts on that question have the students in the inner circle shift to the right by one seat.
- Continue with the next question.

## Tree Reflection

- Have each participants draw a tree on a sheet of paper.
- Have them label the roots as the values, people, beliefs that influence them,

- The bark as issues/causes they are passionate about,
- And the branches as steps they will take to act on these passions or address the needs they identified.
- Discuss.

\*\* Activities adapted from *Community service learning: A guide to including service in the public school curriculum*. Edited by Rahima C. Wade. 1997