# REFLECTION IN SERVICE-LEARNING: STRATEGIES AND RESOURCES

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Service Learning

- Service-learning is a teaching and learning method that connects meaningful community service experiences with academic learning, personal growth, and civic responsibility .

Reflection   **Learning**

Service Learning

Knowledge
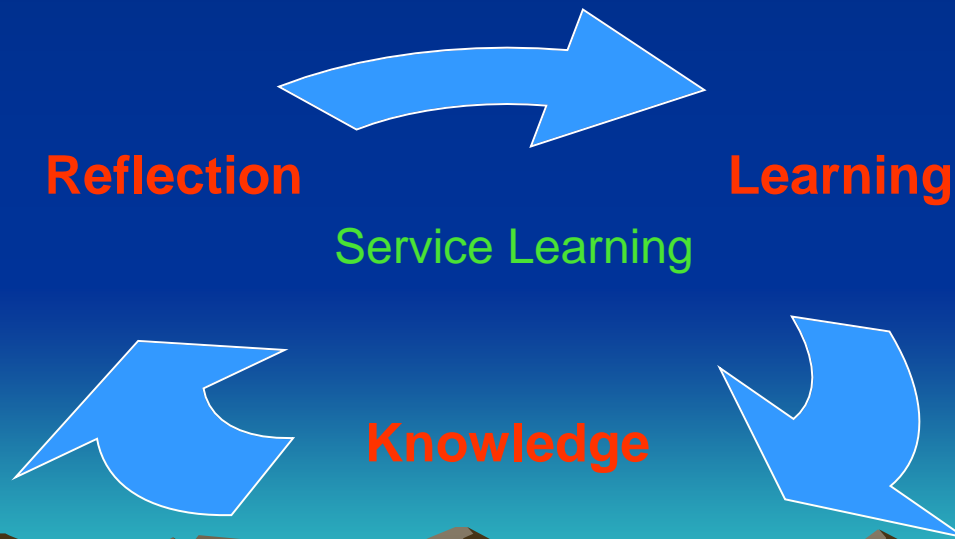
Elements of Success

- Learn from each other.

- Learn by doing.

- Reflection - applications in a real-world context.

- Leaders of projects.

- Engaged in community-based learning projects .

Reflection

- The term "reflection" is derived from the Latin term *reflectere* -- meaning "to bend back".

- In service learning it develop processes that allow the people doing service to bend the metaphorical light of their experiences back onto their minds .
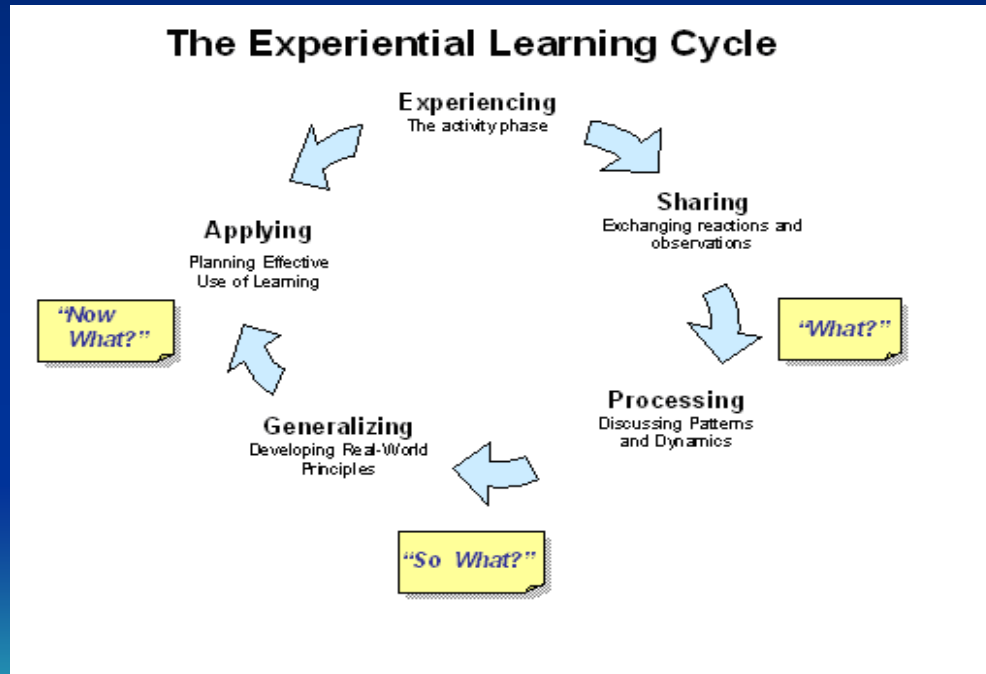
To make careful considerations about

- ✓ what their experience were all about.
- ✓ what did they see,
- ✓ who did they meet,
- ✓ why is there a need for such services in the first place

- It accomplish civic and academic goals

Need for Reflection

- Action + Reflective thinking = Better Understanding.

Four Core elements of Reflection

Core Element	Definition
Continuous	The reflective process is implemented and maintained continuously before, during and after the service-learning experience.
Connected	The service experience is directly linked, or connected, to the learning objectives of the course or activity and allows for "synthesizing action and thought."
Challenging	Learners are challenged to move from surface learning to deeper, critical thinking through the use of thought provoking strategies by the instructor or community facilitator. Since learners may encounter uncomfortable feelings, it is important that the students feel they are in a safe and mutually respectful atmosphere where they can freely express their opinions, ideas and thoughts.
Contextualized	Reflection is contextualized when it "corresponds" to the course content, topics and experience in a meaningful way.

Reflection Facilitated in Class Room

➢ Effective reflection depends on appropriate contexts and real problems and issues.

➢ The culture of the class community must be one in which students feel included, respected, and safe.

➢ The dialog among instructor and students must be meaningful to the students.

➢ If used in faddish or mandated ways without understanding and appreciation of the larger perspectives, it does not serve its intended purpose.

By involving them in real community problems, service-learning provides students with a need to know, a desire to enhance their skills and a commitment to solving problems of importance to them.

Good Practices – Effective Reflection

➢ Links service objectives to the course objectives by integrating the service experience with course learning.

➢ Is guided and purposeful.

➢ Occurs regularly within the course.

➢ Includes components that can be evaluated according to well-defined criteria.

➢ Provides opportunities for both private and public reflection.

➢ Fosters civic responsibility.

Designing Service Activity

- Accomplish Outcome .
- Select appropriate service activity.
- Structured Activities
- Develop reflection activity.
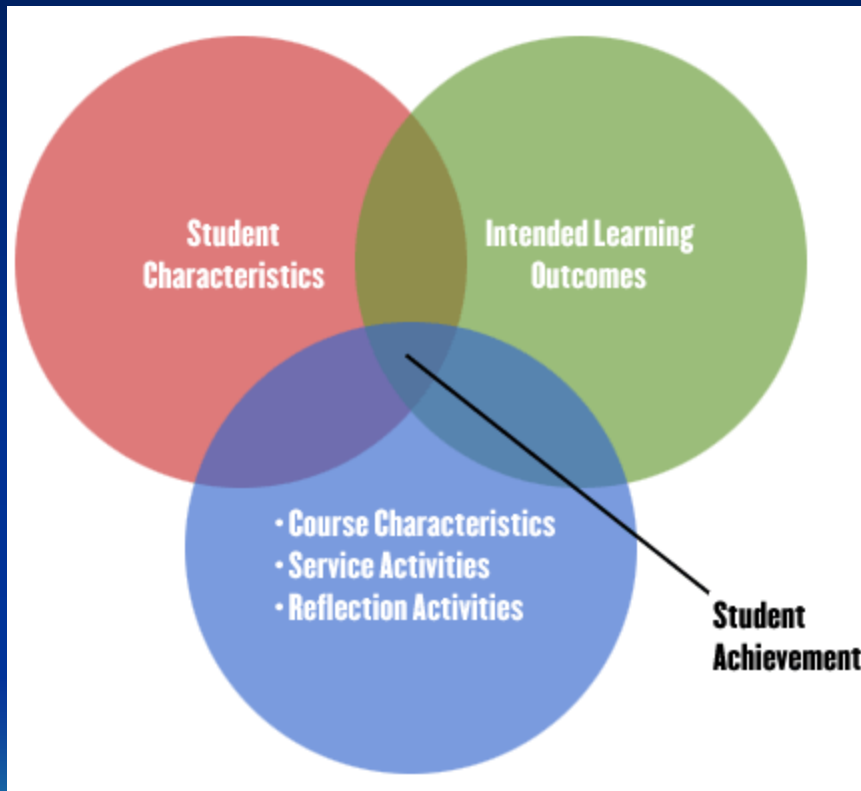- Assessing the Outcome.

Cont..

- Students must participate in
  - ➢ Developing community/learning outcomes.
  - ➢ planning resource use.
  - ➢ executing and managing projects in the community
  - ➢ planning for the continuity of projects

Web Based Structured Reflection Template

- Tools of Reflection

Tools

➢ Journaling:

Record actions and Observations as well as emotional and intellectual reactions to community experience.

- ✓ Personal Journal
- ✓ Dialogue Journal
- ✓ Highlighted Journal
- ✓ Key Phrase Journal
- ✓ Double entry Journal
- ✓ Critical Incident Journal
- ✓ Three part Journal
- ✓ Free Association Brainstorming

➢ Discussion.

- ❖ More personal reflection tool.
- ❖ Invites more structured reflection.
- ❖ Experiences are "collectivized"
- ❖ Allow more voices to be heard and similarities and
- ❖ Patterns among experiences to be identified

Cont..

- Quotes
- Reflective Essays
- Directed Writing
- Experiential Research Paper
- Service Learning Contracts & Logs
- Directed Readings
- Ethical case studies
- Truth in stranger than fiction
- Student portfolios
- Small Group work
- E-Mail Discussion Groups
- Class Presentations

Reflection

Case studies	Assign case studies to help students practice problem-solving skills.
Presentation	Arrange for an orientation session by community agency staff.
Small group activity	Ask students to develop an information-gathering plan (sources of information, interview questions, etc.)
Large group discussion	Organize a large group discussion on developing an information-gathering plan

During Experience

Structured Journal	Ask students to record thoughts, observations, feelings, activities and questions in a journal throughout the project.
Critical Incidents Journal	Ask students to record a critical incident for each week describing events in which a decision was made, a conflict occurred, or a problem was resolved. Ask students to describe the event, how it was handled, alternative ways in which they could have resolved the situation, and how they might act differently in a similar situation in the future.
Small group activity	Ask students to keep a log describing plans and activities (sources of information, interview questions etc.)
Large group discussion	Encourage formal/informal discussions with team members, the class, volunteers and staff to introduce students to different perspectives and to challenge students to think critically about the project.

After   Experience

Papers	Ask students to write an integrative paper on the service project. Journals and other products can serve as the building blocks for developing the final paper.
Presentation	Ask student(s) to present their service experience and discuss it in terms of concepts/theories discussed in class
Interviews	Interview students on service experiences and the learning that occurred in these experiences.

Real Time Example – Practiced in LDC

The example below shows how the design of reflection is facilitated by

(1) Establishing clear outcomes.
(2) Structuring service activities appropriately, and
(3) By considering the linkage between reflection and assessment.

Projects Undertaken:

- Designed Web site for Marketing the SHG Products of Thirupallai Village in Madurai [2005].

- Designed Web site for Uthangudi Panchayath Office [2006].

- Designed web site for the Betsan Special school for mentally challenged students [2007].

- Tutored Photoshop to the Students in LoveCare home in Madurai [2008].

- Web Based community project

Activities:

- Requirement Analysis
- Designing the task
- Implementation
- Customer Service

Reflection through:

- Review Meeting

- Group Discussion

- Journal Entry Assessment for completeness, thoughtfulness and thoroughness

- Structured Questionnaire

- Hosting the Site and Maintenance.

- Presentation on the task completed based on effort taken, problems faced , rectification measures and final outcome

Outcome:

- Working with people of different ages and/or ethnicities
- Ability to apply knowledge to real life problems/new situations
- Define their own sense of identity.
- Enhance critical thinking.
- Increase interpersonal skills
- Develop a concern for social responsibility
- Gain good communication skills
- Learning to be flexible.

Sample

Project Management Outcome Category	Specific Outcomes	S-L Project Proposal Assessment: content analysis of S-L proposal	Final Report Assessment: content analysis of final report
Project goals	Determines community outcomes and learning goals	- Intended community outcomes - Intended learning outcomes	- Community impact - Lessons learned
Resource use	- Realistically estimates time and resource requirements. - Allocates project resources to maximize results. - Effectively manages human resources that are committed to the project	- External resources available (other organizations, professionals) - Student interests, time and skills	- Utilization of external resources and human resources -Ways to improve resource utilization in future S-L
Project execution and assessment	- Effectively facilitates and controls the project process. - Measures project progress. - Takes corrective action as needed.	- Planned process for communication with stakeholders (community, partners, faculty, students, professionals) - Assessment measures and approach	- Actual communication and possible improvements - Assessment results
Project continuity	Sees projects through to completion or orderly transition	- Plan for continuation -Communicating prior successes and corrective measures based on lessons learned	

Sample Sites

OnLine Service Learning Project

- ORID MODEL

Course and Service Characteristics

Planning Questions	Implications for Reflection
What type of course is the service-learning project being incorporated in? (freshman, sophomore, junior or senior level course; required, elective or capstone course)	The nature of reflection activities must be appropriate for the course. For example, (1) If students are involved in their first service experience through a freshman/sophomore level course, reflection activities to orient students for working in community based settings may be important. (2) It may be more feasible to incorporate extensive reflection if the service project is a major component of a course (e.g. a capstone course)
What course knowledge is required for completing project tasks?	One of the key objectives of reflection is to connect service activities with coursework. If a significant amount of course material is required for the service project, several preparatory exercises may be required to help students practice application of course concepts to unstructured problems.
What skills are required for completing project tasks (information-gathering, oral presentation, teamwork)?	Reflective exercises may be required to help students acquire necessary skills for carrying out project activities. For example, assignments may be required to help guide students in tasks such as interview planning and question design.
Are projects completed in teams?	If projects are completed in teams, small group discussions can be effective in discussing issues specific to a team's activities. Discussion can help students see the service experience, problems etc. from multiple perspectives. Students may feel more comfortable in small group settings.

Do different teams work on similar tasks for different organizations? Do different teams work on varying tasks for the same organization?	If teams work on similar activities (tutoring, designing web pages) then faculty can organize large group discussions focusing on solving these specific types of problems. Large group discussions of project activities may be more difficult if different teams are engaged in diverse service activities. If service activities are different but all the teams are working for the same community organization, large group discussions can be organized to deal with larger issues related to community needs and the organization. For example, faculty can arrange a presentation by community agency staff to orient students to the organization.
What is the weight assigned to the service-learning project in grading?	Reflection activities have to be appropriate given the weight of the service project in the overall course grade. If the proportion of the course grade attached to the service project is small, it may not be feasible to assign extensive reflection activities. Similarly, different reflection approaches may have to be used if the project is optional or for extra credit. For example, large group discussion of the service-learning project may be difficult if service-learning is an extra credit option.
To what extent are community agency staff commited to the project?	If the community organization is committed to the project, several reflection activities may occur in community settings. Students may be involved in orientation sessions, ongoing discussions, presentations etc.
To what extent are community agency personnel able to participate in activities designed to support educational goals of students?	Some community agency staff may be willing to assume active roles as partners in education. For example, they may be willing to give presentations on application of course related material in nonprofit settings.

Connecting Service and Other Coursework

- One of the goals of reflection is to connect the reflection to coursework.

- The intended learning outcomes for service activities and the associated reflection activities must reflect and reinforce established course goals .

- Frequent reflection may be necessary to create strong linkages between the service activities and coursework

Guidelines For Reflection

- 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 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. Don't 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

Conclusion

- Reflection should be age appropriate and multi-modal in order to respond to all learning styles prevalent in the classroom.

- The reflection once made online by analyzing various disciplines and the mode of reflection it is possible to create an effective online template which can be used world wide by the service learning community to assess their programme.

- By challenging students to practice using a tool with which they already feel competent, to develop that competence, and to trace the thread from situated experience to theory, we can encourage them to engage in increasingly higher levels of critical thinking .

- Online Service Learning Web sites like an E-Education can help not only the needy community immediately, but can help the students to enhance their knowledge and get feedback about their work from the respective community within fraction of second.

- On Line certificate course in service learning to be encouraged by institutions offering service learning in curriculum.

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