

5 CRITICAL ELEMENTS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNITY-BASED LEARNING

COMMUNITY VOICE

The voice and needs of the community need to be included in the development of the community-based learning program. No program can succeed without it.

ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

Orientation and training give the necessary tools to students so they can accomplish their goals. Information should be provided for student volunteers about the community issue, and the agency or community group.

MEANINGFUL ACTION

Meaningful action means that the activity is necessary and valuable to the community itself. Meaningful action also allows volunteers to feel like what they did made a difference in a measurable way and that their time was utilized well. Without this, volunteers may not want to continue their service.

REFLECTION

Through reflection, lessons can be drawn from the experience that will aid future work. It places the experience into a broader context, and identifies issues to improve or resolve. Reflection should happen immediately after the experience.

EVALUATION

Evaluation measures the impact of the activity in the community, and measures the learning experience of students. Agencies should measure the community impact with the affected communities; students should evaluate their learning experience. Evaluation gives direction for improvement, growth and change.