

**From the Colorado State Faculty Manual
Service Integration Project: Service-Learning Faculty Manual**

Steps to Integrating Service into Curriculum

Incorporating service-learning into a course requires thoughtful pre-planning and thorough follow-up. Remember that the service activity is not an additional component, but another way to teach course concepts. Successful learning and effective community contributions depend upon a well-integrated package of syllabus, orientation, reflection, and assessment.

Negotiating Projects

- Articulate, in writing, the objective(s) of the service assignment.
 - What do you want students to gain through the experience?
 - Communicate your objective(s) to SIP (via faculty planning sheet).
- Identify community needs that may be appropriate for your objectives.
 - Ask SIP to draft a list of possibilities or identify community needs via your own professional contacts.
- Contact potential community partner(s).
 - Describe what you and your students have to offer via your course objectives, timeline, and limitations.
 - Gather information concerning the following: **agency need, contact person, location, number of students they can accommodate, orientation and training requirements, hours of operation or need.** If using the 100% placement model, create a table with information on the sites that are a fit. This will serve as a site selection menu for students.

Developing a Syllabus

- Identify the service activity and objective(s) of the service in the syllabus.
- Link the service to course content.
 - Writing assignments, discussion topics, readings, presentations, and other activities listed in the syllabus.
- Clearly explain the incentive(s) for successful completion of the experience.
 - Provide a clear link between course content, the service activity and student success in the course.
- Describe how students will be assessed on the experience.
 - Clarify that the grade is for the processing of their experience—through papers, discussions, presentations, etc.—not for the service hours alone.

Orientation/Training

- Talk about the service experience on the first day of the course.
 - Touch on each of the topics listed under “developing the syllabus.”
 - SIP staff are available for class presentations.
- Invite agency or community representatives to visit the class.
 - Host a panel presentation if you have multiple partners.
- Address student concerns, fears, and expectations regarding the service experience.
- Prepare students with the appropriate skills and brief them on their responsibilities regarding communication, follow-through and professionalism.
- Have students complete the cooperative service-learning agreement form with their community supervisor and submit a copy to you.

Contracting/Supervision

- Provide a timeline.
 - Students need benchmarks for contacting the agency, meeting with supervisors, signing contracts, beginning and completing the service—avoid the inevitable temptation to procrastinate.
- Have a backup plan for students with special needs.
 - Consider providing an alternative for those students who are legitimately unable to participate in the service.
- Contact the community partner(s) at least once mid-semester to seek feedback and, if possible, visit the service site(s) to gain first-hand exposure to the experience.

Reflection

- Implement reflective assignments and activities throughout the semester.
 - See section on “Guiding Reflection” and “Reflection Activities.”
- Discuss the service in class even if you are using an optional placement model.
 - Students who choose not to participate in the experience will still gain insights and knowledge from the comments of students who do participate.

Assessment/Evaluation

- Use reflection assignments to assess student learning and evaluate performance.
 - Evaluate analytical skills, communication skills, critical thinking and judgment from student’s reflection papers and presentations.
 - Create individual or group assignments that require students to integrate the course content and the service experience.
- Have students submit an evaluation form to be completed by the service supervisor.
- Though incentive points may be provided for successfully completing the service contract and obtaining a supervisor evaluation, the grade should be based upon rigorous assessment of student learning and skill application.

- ❑ Administer the SIP evaluation form to students on the last day of class. (It will be mailed to you two weeks before finals.)
 - Return the evaluations to SIP and a summary report of responses will be sent back to you.
 - Use the evaluations to plan and refine your next service-learning course.

Further Reading

Jacoby, B. and Associates (1996). *Service-learning in higher education: Concepts and practices*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc.

Negotiating Projects (also see “Establishing Positive Community Connections”)

Ramsey, W. (1976). Cultivating agency allies. *Synergist*. 5(1) 18-53.

Kretzmann, J.P. and McKnight, J.L. (1993). *Building communities from the inside out: A path toward finding and mobilizing a community's assets*. Evanston, Ill.: Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Northwestern University.

Assessment/Evaluation

Hesser, G. (1995). Faculty assessment of student learning: Outcomes attributed to service-learning and evidence of changes in faculty attitudes about experiential education. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning*, 2(1) 33-42.

Driscoll, A., Holland, B., Gelmon, S., Kerrigan, S. (1996). An assessment model for service-learning: Comprehensive case studies of impact on faculty, students, community, and institutions. *Michigan Journal of Service Learning*, 3(1) 66-71.

Neal, M. and Shumer, R. (1994). *Evaluation: The key to improving service-learning programs*. National Service Learning Cooperative Clearinghouse.

Tips for Establishing Positive Community Connections

- ❑ Research the agency history, mission, and related social issues before making contact.
- ❑ Meet agency representatives at their office whenever possible.
- ❑ When inviting community partners to campus, call parking management at 491-7041 two days in advance to order guest parking passes.
- ❑ When visiting the agency or service site, note details on location, transportation and parking that will be pertinent to your students.
- ❑ Ask the agency how what you have to offer might be useful to them. It is a significant role reversal to put yourself in the position of learner, with the community partner as the expert and teacher.
- ❑ Learn about the assets of the agency and the clientele. Explore their capacities and abilities, and relate this to your students. As faculty and students shift their perception of community members as deficient and needy, to acknowledging that others have valuable and desirable strengths and insights, they will be able to realize the real reciprocity integral to the discipline of service-learning.
- ❑ Be open to indirect service projects. Consider how you can help students see the value of service that provides support to community vs. direct contact with people.
- ❑ Take care to “do no harm.” The community and the clientele are not a teaching or research laboratory. The notion of community as laboratory assumes a false hierarchy of power and perpetuates an attitude of institutional superiority. Basic goals of service-learning include community development and empowerment. For these goals to be realized, faculty and community must be equal, collaborative partners.
- ❑ Invite community partners to be a part of reflections, presentations and related activities.

Further Reading

Gugerty, C. R. and Swezey, E.D. (1996). Developing campus-community relationships. *Service-learning in higher education*. Jacoby, B. and Associates, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 92-108.

Ramsay, W. (1976). Establishing agency relationships. *Synergist*. 4(3) 14-18.

Facilitating Critical Reflection

According to Thomas Dewey, “truly educative” experiences generate interest, are intrinsically worthwhile, present problems that awaken new curiosity and create a demand for new information, and take sufficient time to foster development.

What is critical reflection?

Reflection is a process designed to promote the examination and interpretation of experience and the promotion of cognitive learning. It is “a process by which service-learners think critically about their experiences.” 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. Through reflection students analyze concepts, evaluate experiences, and form opinions. Critical reflection provides students with the opportunity to examine and question their beliefs, opinions, and values. It involves observation, asking questions, and putting facts, ideas, and experiences together to derive new meaning.

Why reflect?

Reflection is an essential process for transforming experiences—gained from the service activities and the course materials—into genuine learning. It is crucial for integrating the service experience with the classroom topics. It fosters learning about larger social issues such as the political, economic, and sociological characteristics of our communities. It enhances students’ critical understanding of the course topics and their ability to assess their own values, goals, and progress.

What are the benefits of reflection?

Reflection improves basic academic skills and promotes a deeper understanding of course subject matter and its relations to the non-academic world; it improves higher level thinking and problem solving, and students’ ability to learn from experience. Reflection promotes personal development by enhancing students’ self-awareness, their sense of community, and their sense of their own capacities.

How can reflection be facilitated in the classroom?

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 dialogue among instructor and students must be meaningful to the students. Students are helped to feel respected and included in the class community through small groups in which they can

exchange concerns, experiences, and expectations about the service and the class. Meaningful dialogue is facilitated by ensuring that topics and experiences are relevant to students and over which they have some control. Underlying meaningful dialogue is students' "need to know." 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.

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;
- and, is continuous, connected, challenging and contextual.

Tips for facilitating reflection:

- Prepare a framework for guiding the discussion (see ORID model).
- Lead the group by actively engaging each student.
- Set the tone by establishing norms of behavior such as:
 - Anyone in the group may speak at any time—no hand raising is required, but the rules of polite conversation are followed.
 - No profanity or sexual innuendoes are necessary to make a point.
 - Speakers should be respectful, open-minded, and not aim to put anyone down.
 - Insist that responses are clear, coherent sentences, not just a few words.
- Clarify students' responsibilities and expectations (write them down and copy for all).
- Arouse interest and commitment to the service-learning.
- Assess the values, knowledge, and skills that each student brings to the project.
- Develop background information about the people and problems the students will encounter in the service situations to sensitize them and help to revise any misconceptions.
- Develop and practice any skills that will be required, including being active observers and questioners of experience.
- Get closure on emotional/affective issues by the end of each reflective session.
- Leave some cognitive/topical issues open until the next session to give group members an opportunity to think more about them.

Reflection Activities and Questions

When facilitating reflection, vary the activities to accommodate multiple learning styles; create a reflective classroom—don't just add a reflective component.

Group Discussions

The groups may involve either the entire class or just small numbers of students. If they are small groups, the instructor may allow students to choose their own group members, or s/he can set criteria for group composition (e.g., no groups composed of a single ethnicity or gender), or s/he can assign students to groups. The group members exchange ideas about the course topics and/or the service experiences. The instructor may either pose general or narrowly focused questions for discussion. A scribe may be assigned to submit a summary of the discussion to the instructor.

Journals

Students may be asked to keep a journal as they engage in the service experience. The journals should not merely be simple inventories of events. They should address situations objectively, subjectively, and analytically. Instructors may provide questions to guide students in addressing issues and should review the journals periodically. It is helpful to offer written comments, questions and feedback that will encourage, challenge and essentially provide a dialogue that deepens the students' thought process.

Analytic papers

These provide students with an opportunity to describe their service experience; to evaluate the experience and what they learned from it; and to integrate their experiences with course topics. If the papers are assigned at the end of the course, students can make use of ideas derived from class discussion, journals, and other reflective activities provided during the course.

Portfolios

Students may be asked to compile materials relevant to the service-learning experience and the course of which it is a part. These materials may include: journals, analytic papers, scripts/notes for class presentations, items created as part of the service, pictures, agency brochures, handbooks, time-sheets, service agreement and training materials. Portfolios provide a focus for reflection on the service experience and its documentation.

Presentations

Students may be asked to make presentations to their classmates (and/or to broader audiences) describing their service-learning experiences, evaluating them and integrating them with the course topics.

Reading responses

Students may be asked to write responses to course readings. Students can be allowed greater or less freedom in how they respond, by posing either general or more focused questions.

Electronic forum

Students may be asked to contribute to electronic discussion on the service-learning and course topics using email or a listserv. They may respond to either questions posed by the instructor or to points raised by other students.

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 addressed under “What is Service-Learning?” 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 whole 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? What did it remind them of? 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?

Examples of Reflective Questions:

- What (will/have) you been doing? Who have you been serving?
- So what (will/have) you been learning? Why is your service work needed?
- Now what should others do about it? What are you going to do about it?
- Can you talk more about that? Why do you think that happens?

- What evidence do you have about that? What does this remind you of?
- Do you see a connection between this and _____?
- How else could you approach that? What do you want to happen?
- How could you do that?

As a finale:

- Create a class/group product.
- Hold a culminating event.
- Have a formal closing of the project.

Further Reading

Eyler, J. Giles, D. E. and Schmiede, A. (1996). *A practitioner's guide to reflection in service-learning: Student voices and reflections*. Nashville, TN: Project funded by the Corporation for National Service.

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Silcox, H.C. (1993). *A how to guide to reflection: Adding cognitive learning to community service programs*. Philadelphia, PA: Brighton Press.

Wylie, J. (1993). Using initiative activities to build community within a service-learning classroom. *Praxis II, Service-learning resources for university students, staff, and faculty*. Ann Arbor, MI: OCSL Press, 67-75.

Diversity and Service-Learning

Service-learning provides rich opportunities for students to experience and understand diversity in meaningful ways. It is a vehicle for students to learn from other cultures and explore differences beyond ethnicity. Planning, processing and identifying common hurdles will optimize your students' opportunities to learn about diversity.

Planning Considerations

- ❑ Expand the definition of culture and diversity. Culture and diversity are often defined in terms of ethnicity, race, or gender. Consider the following factors and the ways they influence your students' perceptions and reflections:
 - Socio-economic status
 - Geographic place
 - Atmosphere or environment
 - Values
 - Beliefs
 - Traditions

- ❑ Do an inventory:
 - Understand the culture of your class:
 - What are the different ethnicities represented?
 - What are the geographic places your students call home?
 - What is the age range?
 - Where are they at in terms of student development?
 - What are their learning styles—visual, auditory, or kinesthetic?
 - Understand the culture of the agency:
 - What is the size of the organization?
 - What is their history?
 - What is the environment or atmosphere of the organization? Formal? Informal?
 - Understand the culture of the recipients:
 - How would you describe the clients being served?
 - What are their stories?
 - What are the stereotypes and what are the realities?
 - What opportunities do you have to demystify stereotypes?

- ❑ Prepare the agency, recipients, and students for diversity issues:
 - Help the students understand what has shaped their own cultural identity.
 - Define and create an atmosphere that respects and nurtures differences.
 - Model the type of behavior that supports respect for diversity.
 - Facilitate exercises and activities that create awareness of the diversity issues present in the service-learning activity.

- Provide orientations that demystify stereotypes of students to agencies, and vice versa.
- Explain the differences between the culture of the non-profit and the culture of student life.

Processing Issues

In addition to planning considerations, it might also help to thoughtfully consider processing issues. There are different types of learning styles, processing styles, and cultural communication patterns—all of which may affect the quality and depth of your reflection sessions.

- Design ongoing reflections that compliment an array of learning and processing styles.
- Understand that different dialogue processes are shaped, in part, by cultural background.
- Plan reflection components to be thoughtful of the different cultural communication aspects.

Common Challenges with Diversity Issues in Service-Learning

Sometimes diversity issues are not fully addressed because they can be intimidating. Here are some common faculty fears, and some possible strategies or solutions.

- Fear: activities might perpetuate stereotypes.
Possible strategies or solutions:
 - *Prior to the service project, ask students what types of activities perpetuate stereotypes and why. Explore those issues further.*
 - *If the service work might relate to those activities, be proactive and ask students how they think this might affect their beliefs.*
- Fear: having prejudiced/stereotyped comments come out during reflection sessions.
Possible strategies or solutions:
 - *Set parameters and boundaries prior to the service-work, that defines and clarifies what types of comments are acceptable and what are not.*
 - *If an inappropriate or uninformed comment is made, give it back to the class and facilitate a discussion around that belief.*
 - *Follow up on the discussion during the next class. Utilize the expertise of the agency or organization to assist in demystifying stereotypes.*
- Fear: not knowing what is okay to say or not, or not being knowledgeable enough about a certain culture or ethnicity.
Possible strategies or solutions:
 - *Clarify that you are not necessarily responsible for being an expert on different cultures, but are there to facilitate dialogue and exploration on thoughts regarding different cultures.*

- *Utilize the norms and ground rules on acceptable behavior as a guide.*
- *Remind the students that “an error in judgment is not an error in character,” and that if something is not articulated properly but is respectful, it is still okay and it is not a reflection upon the person’s character.*

Further Reading

Jacoby, B. and Associates. (1996). *Service-learning in higher education: Concept and practices*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 37-39, 44-45.

McKennar, M.J. and Ward, K. (1996). “Service-learning: A culturally relevant pedagogy,” *Thresholds in Education*, May, 18-20.

Wlodkowski, R. J. and Ginsberg, M.B. (1995). *Diversity and motivation: Culturally responsive teaching*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.