



LEARN AND SERVE  
COLORADO  
@ DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION  
SPECIAL POINTS  
OF INTEREST:

- **Theoretical basis for reflection, pg.4**
- **CALL for stories, pg. 4**
- **Outcomes of Reflection pg. 2**

## Service-Learning Success Story

The 9th grade English team at Palmer, Colorado Springs' urban high school, were inspired to create a service-learning unit after taking part in the Urban Experience for Educators.

They designed Visions and Voice of Hope:Homeless as Humans. During this unit, classes immersed themselves in reading newspaper articles, poetry and other non-fiction sources about the issue of homelessness, both locally and nationally. Guest speakers from local agencies visited the class to provide authoritative information.

Many classes also participated in tours of Urban Peak, Marion House and Ecumenical Social Ministries. Student-driven service projects included creating information brochures/videos and a fundraising movie night to collect socks. Students hone their comprehension, persuasive writing and reflection skills while being challenged to look at the world around them.

### Examples of Reflection Activities

*Many types of reflection activities lend themselves to the development of higher-order thinking skills.*



#### *Pre-Service*

Students interview a guest from a community agency where the students will be working on a service project. Before the visit, students are asked to develop a set of questions to facilitate the discussion. They form small groups to brainstorm questions and then return to the large group to discuss their questions. The questions are then edited and an interview form is prepared so that students may take notes during the interview and take turns asking questions.

After the guest leaves, students are instructed to reflect on the interview by answering some questions individually, such as:

- What did you learn from the community member that you did not already know?
- Does this change any ideas or pre-conceptions you had about the people you will be working with?

- What changes, if any, will you make to your plans or ideas for the service project?
- What is our next step?

Students become active members of the information gathering process, not passive onlookers. Students are able to evaluate the speakers' comments and apply what they learn to the service project design. They can infer what the next steps in the process will be.

Students also gain an understanding of multiple perspectives about service by talking with each other, the teacher, and the community agency representative.

#### *During Service*

Students can be engaged in reflection during service through activities including discussion, interaction with peers, and journaling. Reflection activities, especially in the elementary school grades, can be simple and still develop higher-order thinking skills.

Perry and Albright (1999) developed an activity for integrating reflection into elementary school literacy instruction that can also be used in service-learning. Students write about their service experience in a journal and then share their journal with a "buddy" in their class. The reflection process is enhanced as students write back and forth to each other to share their perspectives and ideas. Teachers can provide feedback on service activities and on basic skills

*(Continued on page 4)*



# SL Standard: Reflection



*Service-learning incorporates multiple challenging reflection activities that are ongoing and that prompt deep thinking and analysis about one's self and one's relationship to society.*

John Dewey noted that learning does not come from experience, but rather from reflection on experience. In effective service-learning projects, teachers give students a range of reflective assignments to study and report on their activities, impacts, how efforts can be more effective, next steps, etc. When knowledge gained from reflection is taught to others, it is easy to assess and also multiplies the service-learning in the project.

## Indicators:

1. Service-learning includes a variety of verbal, written, artistic, and nonverbal activities to demonstrate understanding and changes in participants' knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes.
2. Service-learning reflection occurs before, during, and after the service experience.
3. Service-learning reflection prompts participants to think deeply about complex community problems and alternative solutions.
4. Service-learning reflection encourages participants to examine their preconceptions and assumptions in order to explore and understand their roles and responsibilities as citizens.
5. Service-learning reflection encourages participants to examine a variety of social and civic issues related to their service-learning experiences so that participants understand connections to public policy and civic life.

## Outcomes of Reflection in Service-Learning

Service-learning combined with opportunities for reflection offers many benefits to students. Reflection outcomes for students generally fall into three categories: **academic learning**, **personal development**, and **civic engagement**.

### Academic Learning Outcomes

Reflection helps students gain a deeper understanding of what they learn, applying what they learn to real life situations, and developing increased problem solving skills.<sup>1</sup>

Students also improve basic skills, such as reading, writing, and speaking, and develop higher level thinking through reflection.<sup>2</sup>

Reflecting on service encourages students to deal with the root causes of complex issues. Students learn to look for the big picture and to synthesize what they have learned.

### Personal Development Outcomes

Personal development outcomes that result from reflection include:

- (1) awareness of changes in oneself,
- (2) a sense of community, and
- (3) ability to take charge of one's own life.<sup>3</sup>

Opportunities to reflect on service help young people feel more confident in themselves and their accomplishments, connect to others, and link the personal and the academic. Students develop an increased sense of personal power and are better able to clarify and accomplish their goals.

### Civic Engagement Outcomes

Studies<sup>4</sup> demonstrated that reflection is a predictor of openness to new ideas, ability to see issues in a new way, "increased commitment to use of public policy to achieve social justice, and a more systemic locus of problem causes and solutions."

Researchers<sup>5</sup> discovered that students engaged in critical reflection are more likely to apply what they learn to understanding and solving social problems.

Reflection also allows youth to form identities in community service settings, especially with regard to agency, social relatedness, and moral-political awareness.

# Stages of the Reflective Process



The components, or stages, of the reflective process in service-learning mirror the higher-order thinking skills process. In the reflective process, students think about what they have experienced, analyze information, examine their values before and after their experience, and apply what they have learned to future experiences (Stephens, 1995, p. 31).

Reflection occurs in at least three stages in the service-learning process: pre-service, during service, and post-service.

In **pre-service** reflection activities, students examine their beliefs, assumptions, and attitudes about issues. They do this when they choose service projects and prepare to engage in service. **During service**, students have the opportunity to learn from their peers, share observations, ask for and receive feedback, ask questions, and solve problems. Teachers can evaluate student work and provide feedback as the reflection process continues. **After service**, students look back at their initial beliefs, assumptions, and attitudes to assess their own development. They also evaluate their projects, apply what they learn, and develop ways to solve problems that may arise in the future. Perry and Albright (1999) summarize the five steps involved in the act of reflection:

1. Remembering and thinking about what was experienced.
2. Relating to current and prior experiences.
3. Representing the experience by actively participating in service-learning.
4. Reaching further into the experience by extending thinking and thinking at higher cognitive levels.
5. Revisiting the experience by looking at the value of the experience and exploring what else can be learned from it.



## Theoretical Basis for Reflection in Service –Learning

The theoretical basis for reflection as a practice in education is grounded in the work of John Dewey. Dewey's educational philosophy have three principals:

- *Education must lead to personal growth;*
- *Education must contribute to humane conditions; and*
- *Education must engage citizens in associate with one another.*

Dewey saw reflective thinking as a way to discover specific connections between actions and consequences. He believed that reflective thinking would help students learn from experience and improve their problem solving skills.

Dewey's work formed the basis for David Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning. *In this model, learning, change, and growth occur through a continuous cycle of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation.* Learners base their initial actions and involvements on concrete experiences. They then reflect on and observe experiences from many perspectives. Abstract conceptualization occurs when learners create concepts and integrate observations in logically sound theories. These theories are used by learners to make sound decisions and solve problems. The experiential learning cycle allows learners to understand and modify behavior and/or choose new experiences. Reflection leads to change and is therefore a basic element in learning.

These models illustrate how reflection in service-learning promotes higher-order thinking skills in students. Promoting higher-order thinking skills is important because these skills (i.e., analysis, synthesis, evaluation) enable students to learn, inquire, reason, and make sense of new information.

When teachers incorporate higher-order thinking skills into reflection activities, the service-learning experience becomes deeper and more meaningful for students.



# Reflection Activities

(Continued from page 1)

such as writing. Higher-order thinking skills are attained as students summarize and evaluate their experiences, develop an understanding of their peers' perspectives, and apply knowledge gained to the service project.

## Post-Service

Reflection after service-learning activities provides a way for students to look back on their accomplishments and interactions with others. Campbell, Campbell, and Dickinson (1996) suggest an activity particularly suited to high school students where they reflect on receiving feedback from adults during their service activity.

Teachers can pose a set of questions that prompt students to consider multiple aspects of adult feedback, such as:

- What feedback did you receive and what was your reaction to it?
- What do you think the adult understood about your work?
- What did they misunderstand?
- What did you learn about yourself by having this conversation with the adult?
- What would have made the conversation better?
- What will you do differently the next time when you are asked to get adult feedback?
- How does this relate to the world of work where employees get feedback from supervisors?

Students use higher-order thinking skills, such as evaluation, inference, summarization, and understanding multiple perspectives in this type of reflection activity.

The activity can be extended in several ways, e.g. students can role play adults giving feedback to others. They can critique the feedback and generate a set of appropriate rules for people to follow when giving feedback. Teachers and students can also discuss the differences between constructive and destructive feedback, including what makes feedback constructive.

Learn more at: [http://www.servicelearning.org/instant\\_info/fact\\_sheets/k-12\\_facts/reflection/](http://www.servicelearning.org/instant_info/fact_sheets/k-12_facts/reflection/)

## Learn and Serve Calendar

<b>Feb.</b>	<i>Sun</i>	<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thu</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>
<p>Our next issue will talk about Youth Voice.</p> <p>If you have a good story, or example, of how a, or a group of, youth contributed greatly to a service-learning project, we would like to share your story.</p> <p>Please email Rachael Bibby and let her know you have a story to tell!</p>		1	2	3	4	5	6
	7	8	9	10	11	12 CDE Furlough *Office closed*	13
	14	15 President's Day *Office Closed	16	17	18	19	20
	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
	28						
							<b>2010</b>

1. Eyler, J., & Giles, D. E., Jr. (1999). *Where's the learning in service-learning?* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
2. Conrad, D., & Hedin, D. (1987). *Youth service: A guidebook for developing and operating effective programs.* Washington, DC: Independent Sector.
3. Conrad, D., & Hedin, D. (1987). *Youth service: A guidebook for developing and operating effective programs.* Washington, DC: Independent Sector.
4. Eyler, J., & Giles, D. E., Jr. (1999). *Where's the learning in service-learning?* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
5. Eyler, J., Giles, D. E., Jr., & Schmiede, A. (1996). *A practitioner's guide to reflection in service-learning.* Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University .