

SERVICE-LEARNING REFLECTION JOURNAL

Citizenship & Service-Learning

Missouri State University



SERVICE-LEARNING REFLECTIONS

Citizenship & Service-Learning

Missouri State University

Student Name:

Course:

Instructor(s):

Semester/Year:

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Front: Missouri State Service-Learning Dietetics Student TeNeal Minks from Higginsville, Missouri worked with senior citizens at Culpepper Place Assisted Living.

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“The most important thing an institution does is not to prepare a student for a career, but for life as a citizen.”

Frank Newman, co-founder of Campus Compact

Service-Learning at Missouri State University

Service-learning is a method of teaching and learning that combines and pursues both **Academic Achievement** and community service in a seamless weave, requiring the use of effective **Reflection** exercises. The goal of service-learning is to develop the skills, sensitivities, and commitments necessary for effective **Citizenship** in a democracy.

Student Benefits:

- Gain a sense of personal satisfaction by knowing that what you do makes a difference.
- Earn course credit while completing a “mini internship.”
- Enhance your résumé with “real-world” experience related to an area of interest (professional or personal).
- Develop relationships, build references and gain valuable job leads.
- Test career choices and explore areas of interest *prior* to graduating from college.
- Apply theoretical concepts (from classroom and textbook readings) to real-life situations.
- Receive a special designation on your student transcript.
- Develop insight into how government agencies and non-profit agencies work to improve communities.
- Acquire skills to be successful citizens and professionals.
- Contribute to the quality of your community.

Your service-learning experience will take place with a “community partner,” a nonprofit or government agency, such as a school, hospital, various offices or departments. You are not graded on your volunteering or service (although you do have a minimum number of required hours and there are high expectations for your quality of work at the agency) but on the learning that takes place over the semester. Structured **Reflection** connects and reinforces in-class work and textbook reading with civic engagement and service experiences. This journal was developed to help you with the **Reflection** part of service-learning.

How Am I Graded?

- Completion of 40 hours or more of service during the semester with an approved community partner.
- Evaluation by your community partner site supervisor.
- Reflection exercise completion, as assigned by your service-learning professor.

Reflection

Most of us regularly **reflect** on an informal basis. When you think about your conversations, arguments, actions, plans or disappointments, what you might have done differently, what may happen in the future, and why these events happened the way they did, you are **reflecting**. The **Reflection** you will do for service-learning is more directed and focused on the specific events and issues of your service. One of the goals is for you to see the relevance of your service, to your classroom and textbook experiences, as you come to conclusions about your place in the community. It is hoped that you will grow in your ability to see issues that need work and ways that you can contribute positive solutions to problems.

It is often said that **Reflection** is the “glue” that connects service and learning together—the bridge between the service and the learning. **Reflection** is the component that distinguishes service-learning from volunteering. As you serve in the community, you may encounter issues or problems that cause you to question or feel some discomfort with the way you have been thinking. By questioning your beliefs and knowledge, you will be learning on a deeper level. **Reflection** is meant to assist in this growth and learning process, to encourage thinking that ties school, self and community together.

Reflection is a process that allows you to:

- Think critically about yourself, identity, experiences and perceptions of others.
- Understand the complexity of experience and put it into “big picture” context.
- Ask “What have I learned about myself, the world, and my place in it?”
- Explore, understand and question policies, laws, trends and theories.
- Examine attitudes, beliefs, opinions, assumptions, privileges, prejudices, stereotypes and fears.
- Transform this service into further community involvement and broader awareness of issues.
- Improve the quality of community involvement and increase the level of commitment to community.
- Appreciate what you and others are doing to make a difference.

Students often comment that they didn’t necessarily like keeping a journal or doing the required **Reflection**, but later found that it was one of the most important parts of their service-learning. The process helps clarify what students are experiencing and makes it personal. It assists with the internalization process and helps them understand the importance of what’s being learned in the classroom. It puts it into a “real world framework,” something that is sometimes difficult to do in the classroom. So, you may have a “love-hate relationship” with **Reflection**—it seems to be a common reaction to the process!

How To Reflect

Your instructor may give you additional guidelines or assignments in addition or as a result of your **Reflections** here. Remember that those assignments and instructions will be important to your grade in service-learning. The information presented here is to help you, not to replace any other assignment or guidelines.

Two different ways of approaching your entries is presented here. These “Models” (**What, So What, Now What and The Mirror, The Microscope and The Binoculars**) are to help you frame your thinking and writing as you make your **Reflection** entries each time.

What, So What, Now What Model (Adapted from Janet Eyler)

What did you do, see, hear, feel, think, smell? What were your most vivid first impressions? Describe the physical detail and the people as much as possible. What does the agency do? How do they do it? What happened at the site while you were there? What interactions took place? Describe your participation.

So what did you learn? What questions do you have? What did you understand? What was unclear? So what did you like? So what didn't you like? Explain why. So what ideas from the readings and class discussions come to mind as you reflect on your visit?

Now what will you do with the learning, experience and information you now have? How will you approach your next visit? Now what are you apprehensive about? What are you excited about? Now what do you want to explore further? How did you feel when you arrived at your site and how do you feel about your site?

The Mirror, The Microscope, The Binoculars “Model” (Adapted from Mark Cooper)

The Mirror—A clear reflection of yourself. Who am I? What are my values? What have I learned about myself through this experience? Do I have more/less understanding or empathy than I did before service-learning? In what ways, if any, have I, my values, sense of “community,” willingness to serve others, and self-confidence/self esteem been impacted or altered through this experience? How have my motivations for service-learning changed? How has this experience challenged stereotypes or prejudices? Any realizations, insights, or especially strong lessons learned or half-glimpsed? Will these experiences change the way I act or think in the future? How have I challenged myself, my ideals, philosophies, concept of life or the way I live?

The Microscope—Makes the small experience large. What happened? Describe your experience. What would you change about this situation if you had been in charge? What have you learned about this agency, these people, or the community? Was there a moment of failure, success, indecision, doubt, humor, frustration, happiness, and sadness? Describe it. Do you feel your actions had any impact? What more needs to be done? Does this experience compliment or contrast with what you are learning in class? How? Has learning through experience taught you more, less, or the same as learning in the classroom? In what ways?

The Binoculars—Makes what appears distant, appear closer. From your service experience, are you able to identify any underlying or overarching issues which influence the problem? What could be done to change the situation? How will this alter your future behaviors, attitudes, and career? How is the issue or agency you are serving impacted by what is going on in the larger political/social sphere? What might the future hold? What can be done?

Specific Directions for Reflections in this Journal

The Reflections are set up to progress through the semester with the **Beginning** (two are offered but you may only need one); **During** (twelve are offered but you may need fewer); and **Ending** (two are offered but you may only need one). Questions are offered specifically for the **Beginning** and **Ending** of the experience and you are given questions from which to choose for the **During** part of the semester. **During** the semester, your experiences will be different from other students' because your placement or service duties may be quite different. We encourage you to choose what seems most appropriate for your experience (or what your instructor has assigned).

The number of entries may depend on the number of hours you spend at your site, your specific assignment requirements, and/or the number of times you serve each week. Making an entry each time you visit the site is probably what will work for most of you, but if you are completing your hours at a site that requires you to concentrate the hours in a shortened number of visits, you may want to make entries after each two hours spent (or whatever seems to make the most sense for your situation). You are not necessarily required to complete every page— we're just trying to cover all of the possibilities and present ample opportunities for **Reflections**. If you have specific questions about what is most appropriate for you, check with your instructor.

Reflection Entries

You should have one to two entries for the beginning of the semester, using the provided questions. During the semester, *you will choose* from questions listed on **PAGE 9**. Answer a different question each time. The number of entries depends on your situation. As your service draws to a close, you will have one to two entries at the end of the semester, using the provided questions.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Always check with your instructor regarding specific assignments and preferences regarding Reflection!

“We learn the inner secret of happiness when we learn to direct our inner drives, our interest and attention to something outside ourselves.”

Ethel Percy Andrus

Beginning of the Semester

Date:

Agency:

Describe your expected duties as explained to you by your community partner:

Reflection Questions:

What is the community issue/problem of your agency? What are some of your perceptions or beliefs about the population you will be serving? What fear, if any, do you have about working at this site? What do you look forward to?

Reflection Entry:

“You may never know what results come from your action. But if you do nothing, there will be no results.”

Gandhi

Beginning of the Semester

Date:

Agency:

Describe your expected duties as explained to you by your community partner:

Reflection Questions:

Describe the agency or organization you will be working for (i.e. what is their purpose, what is their size, what is their history, what is their mission, what are their goals?). How will your skills match their needs and/or their clients' needs? What do you hope to gain from the experience?

Reflection Entry:

Questions for “During the Semester” Reflections

(Please choose a different one for each of your “During” entries. Your choices should be based on what seems most appropriate for your situation and/or guidance from your instructor):

1. What have you done this week to make a difference? Describe the difference made.
2. What new skills have you learned since beginning your service? How will the skills benefit you?
3. What did you learn this week?
4. What did you observe this week that challenged your beliefs or thinking about the clients, agency, or issues?
5. What are you doing at the site that seems to be working? What are you doing that doesn't seem to be working? Describe why you think so.
6. What do you think will be the most valuable service you can offer at your site? Why?
7. How can you contribute more to the solutions of the problems at your site? You may choose a specific problem or issue or you may want to address the broader scope of the issues at your site.
8. What was the most positive thing that happened this week at your site? What can you learn from this? What was the most difficult or negative and how can you learn from it?
9. How does your service work relate to your long-term goals (may be career or other goals)? What is the relationship between the two areas? There may be a direct or indirect relationship—describe what you are experiencing.
10. How is your work at your site helping you understand your course work? How is your course work helping you be more effective at your site?
11. Would you describe your relationship at your site as mutually beneficial? Why or why not?
12. Have you observed examples of privilege or inequity at your site with regard to race, gender, age, economic status, appearance, etc? How has this challenged your own perceptions and beliefs?
13. How have your experiences at the site contradicted or reinforced class material? Describe examples that are appropriate.
14. Have you taken any risks at your service site (not necessarily physical risks, but stepping out of your comfort zone)? If so, what did you do and what were the results?
15. Identify a person, group or community that you have gotten to know at the site, who is significantly “other” for you. What are the challenges facing them that particularly got to you? What is one way in which you allowed yourself to be changed as a result of knowing these folks?

“In a democratic society we must live cooperatively, and serve the community in which we live, to the best of our ability. For our own success to be real, it must contribute to the success of others.”

Eleanor Roosevelt

During the Semester

Date:

Reflection Question You Are Answering:

Choose a different question for each reflection entry. (Questions are on **PAGE 9** of this document).

Reflection Entry:

“Life is not a spectator sport...If you’re going to spend your whole life in the grandstand just watching what goes on, in my opinion you’re escaping your life.”

Jackie Robinson

During the Semester

Date:

Reflection Question You Are Answering:

Choose a different question for each reflection entry. (Questions are on **PAGE 9** of this document).

Reflection Entry:

“Others are merely mirrors of you. You cannot love or hate something about another person unless it reflects something you love or hate about yourself.”

Cherie Carter-Scott

During the Semester

Date:

Reflection Question You Are Answering:

Choose a different question for each reflection entry. (Questions are on **PAGE 9** of this document).

Reflection Entry:

“I don’t know what your destiny will be, but the one thing I know; the only ones among you who will really be happy are those who will have sought and found how to serve.”

Albert Schweitzer

During the Semester

Date:

Reflection Question You Are Answering:

Choose a different question for each reflection entry. (Questions are on **PAGE 9** of this document).

Reflection Entry:

“Success has nothing to do with what you gain in life or accomplish for yourself. It’s what you do for others.”

Danny Thomas

During the Semester

Date:

Reflection Question You’re Answering:

Choose a different question for each reflection entry. (Questions are on **PAGE 9** of this document).

Reflection Entry:

"I hear and I forget. I see and I remember. I do and I understand."

Chinese Proverb

During the Semester

Date:

Reflection Question You Are Answering:

Choose a different question for each reflection entry. (Questions are on **PAGE 9** of this document).

Reflection Entry:

“I am only one; but still am one. I cannot do everything, but I still can do something. I will not refuse to do the something I can do.”

Helen Keller

During the Semester

Date:

Reflection Question You’re Answering:

Choose a different question for each reflection entry. (Questions are on **PAGE 9** of this document).

Reflection Entry:

“We don’t see things as they are, we see them as we are.”

Anais Nin

During the Semester

Date:

Reflection Question You Are Answering:

Choose a different question for each reflection entry. (Questions are on **PAGE 9** of this document).

Reflection Entry:

“Not everything that counts can be measured. Not everything that can be measured counts.”

Albert Einstein

During the Semester

Date:

Reflection Question You Are Answering:

Choose a different question for each reflection entry. (Questions are on **PAGE 9** of this document).

Reflection Entry:

“You cannot sincerely help another without helping yourself.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

During the Semester

Date:

Reflection Question You Are Answering:

Choose a different question for each reflection entry. (Questions are on **PAGE 9** of this document).

Reflection Entry:

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead

During the Semester

Date:

Reflection Question You’re Answering:

Choose a different question for each reflection entry. (Questions are on **PAGE 9** of this document).

Reflection Entry:

“Try to forget yourself in the service of others. For when we think too much of ourselves and our own interests, we easily become despondent. But when we work for others, our efforts return to bless us.”

Sidney Powell

During the Semester

Date:

Reflection Question You Are Answering:

Choose a different question for each reflection entry. (Questions are on **PAGE 9** of this document).

Reflection Entry:

“You can never expect too much of yourself in the matter of giving yourself to others.”

Theodore C. Speers

End of the Semester

Date:

Reflection Questions:

What have you contributed to the community? What have you learned about yourself? What values, opinions, beliefs, have changed? What were the lessons learned? What were your biggest challenges?

Reflection Entry:

“No act of kindness, no matter how small is ever wasted...”

Aesop

End of the Semester

Date:

Reflection Questions:

What things did you discover about the community? Do you have a different picture of your community than you had before you began your service? What new questions do you have? What would you like to change about your community? How might you assist with the change?

Reflection Entry:

Important Contacts:

Name: Title:
Company:
Address: Email:
Phone:

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