

## Reflection

Service Learning is a method of teaching classroom curriculum where students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service that meets an authentic community need.

### Reflection

#### What Is It

Reflection is a vital and ongoing process in service learning that integrates learning and experience with personal growth and awareness. Using reflection, students consider how the experience, knowledge, and skills they are acquiring relate to their own lives and their communities. (Cathy Berger Kaye, Complete Guide to SL, p.11)

The use of creative and critical thinking skills to help prepare for, succeed in, and to learn from the service experience, and to examine the larger picture and context in which the service occurs. Toole, J. & Toole, P. (1995) The Complete Guide to Learning Experiences. (RMC, p.159)

#### Explain It

Reflection in service learning is an opportunity for students to explore their service experience; it builds the bridge between service and learning, bringing to life the experiential learning process. Reflection should take place before, during, and after the experience and focus on its impact upon oneself and the community (local and global). Along with choosing reflection activities that address varying learning styles, reflection should also lead students to observe, question, and apply what they have learned to future experiences. Reflection will occur spontaneously as a result of student comments or class discussion. However, to ensure learning takes place, it needs to be purposefully planned into the service-learning project. Reflection solidifies the experience and provides the transformational link between service and learning.

#### Support It

Reflection is defined by Toole and Toole (1995) as "the use of creative thinking skills to help prepare for, succeed in, and learn from the service experience, and to examine the larger picture and context in which the service occurs" (p.100). Reflection helps students both to understand the links to the curriculum and explore what they have learned through thinking and writing and talking (Anderson, 1998). Bringle and Hatcher (1999) described how the raw material of the experience is transformed into more cohesive learning "when critical reflective thought creates new meaning which leads to growth and the ability to take informed action" (p.180).

RMC Research Corporation. (2003). Connecting Thinking and Action: Ideas for Service-Learning Reflection, p.159-164.

Eyler, J., Giles, D., & Schmiede, A. (1996). Practitioner's Guide to Reflection in Service-Learning. Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press. (Ch. 3 p. 47-60)

Jensen, E. (1995) Super Teaching (3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.), p.217

Bringle, R.G., Hatcher, J.A. (1999). Reflection in Service-Learning: Making Meaning of Experience. Educational Horizons v.77 no4 p.179-85.