Reflecting on Service

Reflection is a crucial component of the community service learning experience. Reflection should happen immediately after the experience to discuss it—reactions, stories, feelings, and facts about the issues which may dispel any stereotypes or an individual’s alienation from service—and reflection should place the experience into a broader context.

Why We Reflect

**Reflection helps increase sensitivity to community issues**, expanding our capacity to serve more effectively. Reflection also lets you monitor service experiences through discussion and interaction, helping you feel both challenged and supported as you:

- Think critically about your volunteer or service experience
- Understand the complexity of the experience and put it in a larger context
- Challenge, but not necessarily change, attitudes, beliefs, assumptions, privileges, prejudices, and stereotypes
- Transform a single project into further involvement or broader issue awareness
- Ask "Why?"

Ways to Reflect

People can reflect through **speaking, writing, and performing activities** - anything to help think about the experience, especially in ways that help draw connections to the class.

Volunteers can reflect **orally** through: one-on-one meetings with peers or peer leaders; large- and small-group discussions; discussions with representatives of the public benefit organization or community; leading a discussion; or presentations.

Volunteers can reflect in **writing** through: essays; research papers; journals, writing a guide for future volunteers; an evaluation of the program; or a publishable article based on the volunteer experience.

Volunteers can also reflect through **activities**: dance movement; art; simulation or role playing games; teaching others; analysis and problem solving; scrapbooks; photo essays; imaging; or any other activity that will help distill their ideas and provide an opportunity to share them with others.

*See Department of Community Service for other creative ideas to facilitate meaningful reflection*

**Keep an eye out for monthly Reflections on Service Lunches and other Department of Community Service Sponsored Opportunities to engage with campus community in reflection on service**