

Updated with the K-12 Service-Learning  
Standards for Quality Practice

# K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit

2009 Updated Edition



Created by  
**RMC Research Corporation for  
Learn and Serve America's  
National Service-Learning Clearinghouse**





*K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit*



This material is based upon work supported by the Corporation for National and Community Service under Learn and Serve America Grant Numbers 01CACA0012 and 05TAHCA005. Opinions or points of view expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Corporation or the Learn and Serve America program.

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Printed in the United States of America

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**Suggested citation for this document:**

RMC Research Corporation. *K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit*. Scotts Valley, CA: National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2006/2009.

[www.servicelearning.org/library/resource/8542](http://www.servicelearning.org/library/resource/8542)



## **Planning Your Service-Learning Project: An Introduction**

Service-learning can help your students become better learners, classmates, and citizens, and can help them make a valuable contribution to their communities. However, to be successful, your project must be organized so that both student learning and service experiences achieve the best results. The materials in this planning guide are intended to help you and your students take the first steps toward creating an effective project. While the materials here are based on the research about what works, this planning guide is not intended to be a comprehensive review of the rationale for using service-learning or the research behind it. Rather, this guide provides practice tools and advice to help you to implement and improve service-learning in your classroom.

These materials contain information about the five core components of a service-learning project:

- investigation
- planning and preparation
- action
- reflection
- demonstration of results and celebration

The information is organized into an overview and five chapters, each addressing the components. Assessment is discussed throughout each chapter. Each chapter includes two types of documents: guides and worksheets. Guides include a brief explanation of the particular component of service-learning being discussed, an example of how a real-world project has worked with this component, questions to guide your thinking, and suggested resources for further exploration. Each guide is also accompanied by a worksheet designed to walk you and your students through the process of planning each component of a service-learning project.

Woven throughout the phases or components of service-learning, you will see ways to ensure that your program meets the Standards and Indicators for K-12 Quality Service-Learning. Research shows that when these standards and indicators are in place, outcomes from service-learning are higher.

## **Standards and Indicators of K-12 Quality Service-Learning**

### **Duration and Intensity**

**Standard:** *Service-learning has sufficient duration and intensity to address community needs and meet specified outcomes.*

Indicators:

1. Service-learning experiences include the processes of investigating community needs, preparing for service, action, reflection, demonstration of learning and impacts, and celebration.
2. Service-learning is conducted during concentrated blocks of time across a period of several weeks or months.
3. Service-learning experiences provide enough time to address identified community needs and achieve learning outcomes.

### **Link to Curriculum**

**Standard:** *Service-learning is intentionally used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards.*

Indicators:

1. Service-learning has clearly articulated learning goals.
2. Service-learning is aligned with the academic and/or programmatic curriculum.
3. Service-learning helps participants learn how to transfer knowledge and skills from one setting to another.
4. Service-learning that takes place in schools is formally recognized in school board policies and student records.

### **Meaningful Service**

**Standard:** *Service-learning actively engages participants in meaningful and personally relevant service activities.*

Indicators:

1. Service-learning experiences are appropriate to participant ages and developmental abilities.
2. Service-learning addresses issues that are personally relevant to the participants.
3. Service-learning provides participants with interesting and engaging service activities.
4. Service-learning encourages participants to understand their service experiences in the context of the underlying societal issues being addressed.
5. Service-learning leads to attainable and visible outcomes that are valued by those being served.

## **Youth Voice**

**Standard:** *Service-learning provides youth with a strong voice in planning, implementing, and evaluating service-learning experiences with guidance from adults.*

Indicators:

1. Service-learning engages youth in generating ideas during the planning, implementation, and evaluation processes.
2. Service-learning involves youth in the decision-making process throughout the service-learning experiences.
3. Service-learning involves youth and adults in creating an environment that supports trust and open expression of ideas.
4. Service-learning promotes acquisition of knowledge and skills to enhance youth leadership and decision-making.
5. Service-learning involves youth in evaluating the quality and effectiveness of the service-learning experience.

## **Diversity**

**Standard:** *Service-learning promotes understanding of diversity and mutual respect among all participants.*

Indicators

1. Service-learning helps participants identify and analyze different points of view to gain understanding of multiple perspectives.
2. Service-learning helps participants develop interpersonal skills in conflict resolution and group decision-making.
3. Service-learning helps participants actively seek to understand and value the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of those offering and receiving service.
4. Service-learning encourages participants to recognize and overcome stereotypes.

## **Partnerships**

**Standard:** *Service-learning partnerships are collaborative, mutually beneficial, and address community needs.*

Indicators:

1. Service-learning involves a variety of partners, including youth, educators, families, community members, community-based organizations, and/or businesses.
2. Service-learning partnerships are characterized by frequent and regular communication to keep all partners well-informed about activities and progress.
3. Service-learning partners collaborate to establish a shared vision and set common goals to address community needs.

4. Service-learning partners collaboratively develop and implement action plans to meet specified goals.
5. Service-learning partners share knowledge and understanding of school and community assets and needs, and view each other as valued resources.

## **Reflection**

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

### **Indicators:**

1. Service-learning reflection 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 experience so that participants understand connections to public policy and civic life.

## **Progress Monitoring**

***Standard:*** *Service-learning engages participants in an ongoing process to assess the quality of implementation and progress toward meeting specified goals, and uses results for improvement and sustainability.*

### **Indicators:**

1. Service-learning participants collect evidence of progress toward meeting specific service goals and learning outcomes from multiple sources throughout the service-learning experience.
2. Service-learning participants collect evidence of the quality of service-learning implementation from multiple sources throughout the service-learning experience.
3. Service-learning participants use evidence to improve service-learning experiences.
4. Service-learning participants communicate evidence of progress toward goals and outcomes with the broader community, including policy-makers and education leaders, to deepen service-learning understanding and ensure that high quality practices are sustained.



## *K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit*

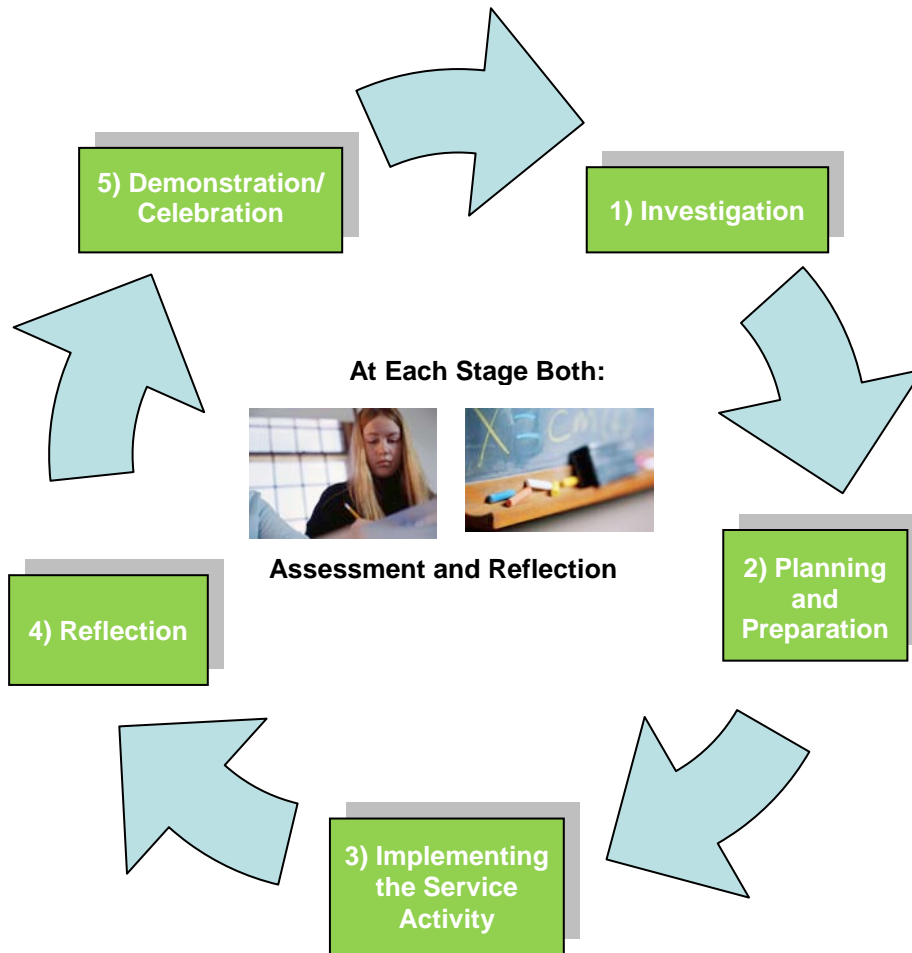
At every point of planning and implementation, service-learning participants should assess the quality of their approaches to ensure they are meeting the standards and indicators.

These guides and worksheets will help you and your students to implement a well-organized project, including:

- choosing a meaningful problem for your service-learning project;
- linking the project to your state's curriculum framework and citizenship and social-emotional learning goals;
- developing an assessment plan;
- implementing a high quality service-learning activity;
- designing reflection activities; and
- organizing a demonstration/celebration culminating event.

Before you begin your planning, please turn to the Overview to read a description of the core components and ongoing activities of service-learning projects.

## Service-learning: An Overview



A typical service-learning project includes five components:

1. *Investigation*: Teachers and students investigate the community problems that they might potentially address. Investigation typically involves some sort of research and mapping activity.
2. *Planning and Preparation*: Teachers, students, and community members plan the learning and service activities, and address the administrative issues needed for a successful project.
3. *Action (Implementing the Service Activity)*: The “heart” of the project: engaging in the meaningful service experience that will help your students develop important knowledge, skills, and attitudes, and will benefit the community.
4. *Reflection*: Activities that help students understand the service-learning experience and to think about its meaning and connection to them, their society, and what they have learned in school; and
5. *Demonstration/Celebration*: The final experience when students, community participants and others publicly share what they have learned, celebrate the results of the service project, and look ahead to the future.

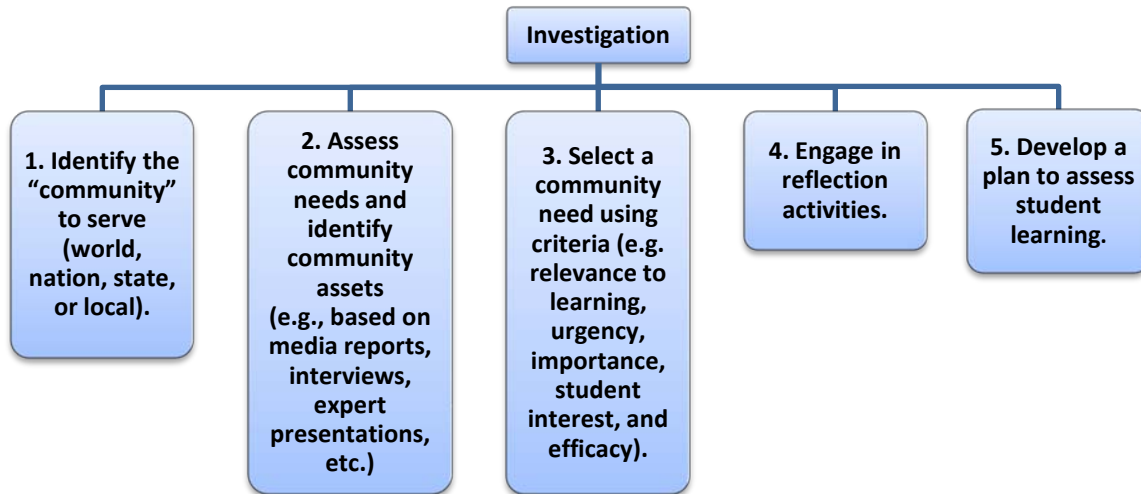
## *K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit*

Assessment is part of all activities to ensure that you can measure the learning and development that occur through service-learning, and to help you diagnose student needs, provide feedback, and improve instruction.

These components are the building blocks of any service-learning project. Now that you have reviewed them, please turn to Chapter 1 to begin planning your service-learning project.

## Chapter 1: Investigation

In the first phase of service-learning, Investigation, you and your students work to identify the community problem that will be addressed. The following graphic shows the steps in the Investigation phase.



There are many approaches teachers use to work with students to investigate community problems. Often students engage in a *community mapping activity*. In this type of activity, the students walk through the community using a set of questions to guide their observations. They note what is going on in the environment (Are the sidewalks or pathways littered? Does the stream look and smell dirty? Are there community agencies around the school that serve people in need? Are there places for the elderly to sit? Are there homeless people sleeping on benches?). Community mapping activities often lead to selection of issues such as working with the environment, the homeless, senior citizens, hospitals, and other agencies that are in the neighborhood. Some people use a school mapping activity with younger children, where they investigate the issues around the school, such as how the outside of the school looks (walls, cafeteria, etc.) and discover that they may wish to engage in recycling or school beautification. Resources you can use for community mapping are in the Resource section.

Another common approach to investigating community problems is to *review the newspaper*. Collect newspapers for about a week or two in advance of the activity, and then distribute them to the students. Have the students identify the various strengths and challenges at the global, national, state, and local level by cutting out the articles in the newspaper and listing them. Newspaper investigations tend to lead to working on service activities that are more global in nature, such as environmental issues, policy-related issues such as transportation, job training, technology-based projects, and working with children of prisoners, helping infants, and so forth.

A third approach that some teachers use is some sort of *brainstorming activity*. Students may be asked to whom they would give money if they were a philanthropist, or which global, national, or state problem they think is the worst and that they would like to do

something about. There are several tools you can use for this purpose, as listed in the forms section.

No matter which of these approaches you use, it is good to do two other things. First, you should add a research component. Students should be helped to document the nature of the problem that they identified. Younger students can count the amount of litter they see, weigh the waste in the cafeteria, or otherwise document a problem. Older students can research the issue on the Internet or by conducting surveys of neighborhood people, their parents, or others. The idea here is to teach the students how to gather evidence. *This evidence should be used to determine a baseline against which they can measure their impact.* Being able to do this helps young people realize how much of a difference they can make and raises their sense of efficacy and desire to volunteer again.

The second thing you need to do is help students come to a consensus on what community problems they will address. It's good to have the students work in groups because they learning teamwork and collaboration skills and they are more likely to be successful. However, the students need to feel that they "own" the problem, so teachers need to use some way to have the students identify the one or two problems they will address. Some ideas for helping students come to consensus are in the Resource section.

In helping students to decide, you may wish to keep four criteria in mind:

- relevance to academic learning – tie in to the curriculum or standards/objectives you want to cover during the school year;
- urgency and importance;
- student interest/engagement in the project; and efficacy (anticipating that students will actually be able to make a difference).

Also be sure that students have voice in making the decisions and that they plan something that will be meaningful to them and to the community.

**Example: High School - Philadelphia, Pennsylvania**

*At a high school in Philadelphia, the community partner assisted the teacher in helping students to develop a short community survey asking middle school students and community members to identify the top five problems facing their neighborhood and community. The students identified multiple problems and narrowed their interests down to two: helping children who were in the foster child system due to abuse or neglect or helping young people avoid underage drinking. The community partner then arranged for guest speakers on the two topics. The guest speakers on the foster care system included an agency representative that worked to place foster children and a person who had been a foster child and now was a successful lawyer and child advocate. The guest speakers on underage drinking included a community agency representative who discussed the extent of the problem and a physician who discussed how drinking affects the brain and impairs driving ability. After the speakers presented to the class, the students engaged in a dialogue about what to do and what they could best affect in the time they had available within the school year. They decided to see what they could do for foster children. The community partner helped the students brainstorm by reviewing a survey of foster*

*children’s needs and the students also conducted Internet research and interviews of children living in a homeless shelter. The students found out that the children often were rescued in the evening or night time and removed from the setting with only the clothes they were wearing, so in the new setting, they had only used clothing and little of their own. The students decided that the foster children needed to have their own things, so they developed a service project to collect used suitcases to give to the workers who rescued the children. In addition, they collected stuffed animals and storybooks, and raised money to buy t-shirts and other clothing of various sizes.*

## **Guiding Questions**

As you and your students engage in Investigation, answering several questions may help guide you through the process:

1. What is the overall purpose of the service-learning project? What impacts do you hope the project will have on students and the community they serve?
2. How will you facilitate student choice of the “community” they want to serve?
3. What activities and resources will you provide to assist students in assessing community needs?
4. How will you use the criteria of relevance to academic learning; urgency and importance; student interest/engagement; and efficacy to help students select the problem for the project?
5. What content standards and benchmarks will working on this problem allow students to meet?
6. What civic and other learning goals do you hope to meet within the project?

Ways to tie the project into academic, civic, and other goals and other aspects of planning are presented next, in Chapter 2: Planning and Preparation.

## **Resources**

1. **The National Service-Learning Clearinghouse ([www.servicelearning.org](http://www.servicelearning.org)).**  
The Clearinghouse is a repository for books, research, tools, program descriptions, and many other ideas for planning and implementing your service-learning project.
2. **Kaye, C. B. (2004). *The Complete Guide to Service Learning: Proven, Practical Ways to Engage Students in Civic Responsibility, Academic Curriculum, and Social Action*, Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.**  
A comprehensive guide to all aspects of planning and implementing service-learning projects, this book provides background information about service-learning, ideas for projects in a variety of areas (e.g., the environment and social justice) and a “bookshelf” of youth literature appropriate for different grade levels and service-learning projects.

**3. The Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS),**

[www.nationalservice.gov](http://www.nationalservice.gov)

The primary agency responsible for federal initiatives to involve Americans of all ages in service-learning and volunteerism, the Corporation administers Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America for K-12 schools and institutions of higher education. Its website includes information for grant seekers and recipients, as well as a Resource Center with tools for designing service-learning and community service programs.

**4. The National Service-Learning Partnership (NSLP), [www.service-learningpartnership.org](http://www.service-learningpartnership.org)**

A network of teachers, administrators, students, and policymakers committed to expanding service-learning nationwide, NSLP's website offers resources on planning, reflection, assessment, standards, student voice, funding, and other topics of interest for teachers at varying levels of expertise.

**Worksheet One: Investigation**  
**Part A. Getting Started**

*How will you help the students identify a community problem?*

- *Community mapping?*
- *Newspaper investigation?*
- *Brainstorming?*
- *Other?*

*How will you help students develop investigation or research skills?*

- *Teach them how to construct and administer a survey and analyze results?*
- *Teach them how to search the Internet, identify sources, and convey information?*
- *Teach them how to interview others?*
- *Teach them how to be good observers and documenters?*

*How will you come to consensus on the one or two community problems to address?*

- *Consensus building?*
- *Dot voting?*
- *Other?*

*How will you ensure that the project has:*

- *A link to curricular objectives?*
- *Urgency and importance?*
- *Student interest and engagement?*
- *Efficacy?*



**Part B. Establishing a Baseline**

**List the baseline information to document the problem. The baseline information should be quantifiable so you can revisit and see your impact at the end of the project.**

*Examples:*

- Currently, our school has 50 pounds of trash every day and no recycling.
- Currently, the incidence of children at the homeless shelter with a Vitamin D deficiency is 50%.
- Currently, 90% of students at our school think that bullying is a big problem.
- Currently, 2 senior citizens in the local independent living center know how to use e-mail.

**Your baseline statement and sources of evidence:**

Baseline Statement	Sources of Evidence

### Part C. Weaving in Reflection

All phases of service-learning should have a reflection component. You can weave your reflection in as part of the investigation activities or you can reflect on progress at the end of the phase. Examples of reflection activities can be found on the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse website. Some sample activities include:

- *If I Had a Million Dollars*: A fun way to think about community problems that are important to you by having participants use a pie chart and divide up their funds for philanthropic purposes.
- *What Worked and How Did I Do?*: A reflection activity to help participants examine their own behaviors in helping the group come to consensus, and an investigation of the ways to persuade others.

### Part D. Assessing Your Effectiveness and Impact

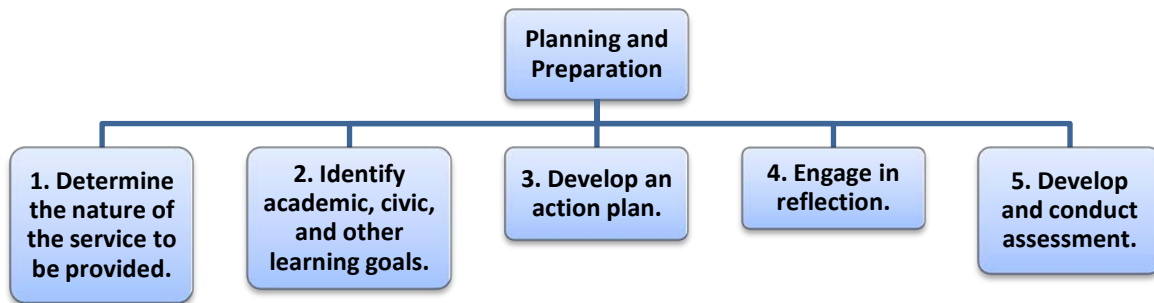
How will you know you were successful in the Investigation phase? What assessment tools will you use? Examples: checklist of research skills acquired; rubric on collaborative processes; essay on steps for decision making; assessment of interview skills.

Your assessment plan:

What you will assess	How you will assess it

## Chapter Two: Planning and Preparation

In the second phase of service-learning, planning and preparation, you, your students, and the community members with whom you work will identify the community concern, determine the specific service that will be provided, develop an action plan, identify the academic and other goals the project will meet, engage in reflection, and develop an assessment plan. The following graphic shows the steps in the Planning and Preparation phase:



Students should have considerable voice in planning and preparation, making most of the decisions with guidance from adults. The action plan should have a detailed plan for how services will be provided, along with persons responsible, team members, timeline, resources needed, and indicators of success. An assessment of readiness for service and training activities should be included in the action plan. Many teachers use this as an opportunity to teach students how to organize projects or work and relate the planning to other relevant aspects of students' lives. It is also good during this phase to weave in perspective-taking activities so that the students think about what it will be like for the service recipients, community partners, and others involved in the project.

### Administrative Tasks

Making arrangements for students to carry out service-learning projects involves many administrative issues, such as scheduling, obtaining parent permission and involvement, gaining administrator agreement to let students miss traditional classes, arranging for transportation, and managing risk. Forms for organizing these tasks appear toward the end of this chapter.

### Elementary School - Wirtz, Virginia

*Fourth and fifth grade students decide to conduct a spring service-learning project that will benefit their local historical park. Some students customize and present a play by a local author about the history of their area, while others serve as tour guides for the park. To prepare students for the project, teachers engaged in several activities, including identifying the Virginia Standards of Learning in literacy, communications, history, and citizenship that the project would meet; forming partnerships with park staff, members of the Historical Society, and the original author of the historical play; planning lessons to teach students about the story, script writing, and public speaking;*

*and familiarizing the children with the park. In collaboration with the service-learning coordinator, teachers also completed several logistical tasks, such as obtaining parent permission for park visits, scheduling transportation and chaperones, arranging a class visit from the author of the historical play, requesting parent assistance in making costumes, organizing children's story boards, and writing a coherent script.*

### **Guiding Questions**

As you and your students engage in Planning and Preparation, you may wish to address the following questions:

1. Once you and the students identify a potential problem area, what questions about the problem and possible solutions should they try to answer through their library and Internet research?
2. What is the specific service to be provided? How does the service relate to the overall purpose of the service-learning activity? How does it address the areas of impact that you hope it will have on the students and the community? Will it successfully address the area that you measured to establish the baseline of the problem?
3. How will you facilitate student decision-making about the specific type of service to be provided and the division of labor that is needed to implement the project?
4. What content standards and benchmarks will be met as students plan and provide the service activities?
5. What civic goals will the project address? What civic knowledge, skills (e.g., informed decision making, listening, expressing their opinions), and dispositions (e.g., tolerance, sense of responsibility for others, believing they can make a difference in the world) will be developed?
6. What other learning do you hope students will gain from the project (e.g., social skills, career exploration, learning to manage conflict, and/or learning about themselves)?
7. How can you ensure that the community partners are part of the vision, planning, and preparation phases?
8. How will you assess the students' readiness for the project? What do your students need to understand about the social problem, the community and organizations with whom they will work, the recipients of service, and themselves? What skills do they need to have (e.g., communicating with others, conducting experiments, planning activities)? What attitudes and values should they have? What strategies will you use to ensure that students have the prerequisite knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values?
9. How will you weave reflection activities into this component?
10. What types of assessment will you use to determine progress toward meeting specific service-learning project goals and learning objectives while they are working on this phase of the project?

## **Resources**

In addition to the resources listed under Investigation, these resources may also be helpful:

1. **Florida Learn and Serve**, [www.fsu.edu/sl/standards.html](http://www.fsu.edu/sl/standards.html)  
Provides several types of resources to help teachers link service-learning to content standards, including profiles of projects designed by Florida teachers in different subject areas and grade levels, lists of the standards each project meets, and a table with all Florida standards and ideas for addressing them at each phase of service-learning.
2. **The Texas Center for Service-Learning**, [www.txcsli.org/stars.php](http://www.txcsli.org/stars.php)  
Offers several resources to help teachers plan service-learning projects, including S.T.A.R.S., a comprehensive rubric for assessing your service-learning project. The five points of the S.T.A.R.S. project provide advice on how to weave in student leadership, thoughtful service, authentic learning, reflective practice, and substantive partnerships.
3. **Service-Learning and Assessment: A Field Guide for Teachers**, [www.servicelearning.org/library/resource/1727](http://www.servicelearning.org/library/resource/1727)  
Developed by a national group of service-learning practitioners, this downloadable guide suggests a variety of naturally occurring classroom and service activities, such as KWL, anchor tasks, and reflection that can be used as standards-based assessments.
4. **Compendium of Assessment and Research Tools (CART)**, [www.cart.rmcdenver.com](http://www.cart.rmcdenver.com)  
A searchable database of tools for measuring service-learning and other youth development programs. The site provides descriptions of numerous instruments that can be used to measure all aspects of service-learning programs, including their design, implementation, outcomes, and community and school contexts.
5. **QNA**, [www.ecs.org/QNA](http://www.ecs.org/QNA)  
This searchable database has ways to construct your own assessments of civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions and school citizenship climate.
6. **KIDS Consortium**, [www.kidsconsortium.org](http://www.kidsconsortium.org)  
Based in Maine, KIDS Consortium is dedicated to facilitating the efforts of teachers, students, and facilitators to create and implement meaningful service-learning. Two comprehensive guides for planning are available:
  - KIDS as Planners – A Guide to Strengthening Students, Schools and Communities Through Service-Learning
  - Reform, Resiliency and Renewal – KIDS in Action

**Worksheet Two: Planning**  
**Part A. Action Planning Form**

<p><i>Project Title:</i> _____</p> <p><i>Time frame for the Service Activity:</i> _____</p>
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**Lesson Plans**

Based on your answers to the questions in Guide 2, create lesson plans for each step in the Service Activity phase of the project.

<b>Step One: Researching the problem.</b>	<b>Step Two: Selecting a solution.</b>
Dates: _____	Dates: _____
Goals:	Goals:
Materials and Resources:	Materials and Resources:
Activities:	Activities:
Assessment Plan:	Assessment Plan:

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<p><b>Step Three: Writing an Action Plan</b></p> <p>Dates: _____</p> <p>Goals:</p>  <p>Materials and Resources:</p>    <p>Activities:</p>    <p>Assessment Plan:</p>	<p><b>Step Four: Orientation and Training #1.</b></p> <p>Dates: _____</p> <p>Goals:</p>  <p>Materials and Resources:</p>    <p>Activities:</p>    <p>Assessment Plan:</p>
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<p><b>Step Five: Orientation and Training #2 and introducing reflection assignment during service.</b></p> <p>Dates: _____</p> <p>Goals:</p> <p>Materials and Resources:</p> <p>Activities:</p> <p>Assessment Plan:</p>	<p><b>Step Six: Students begin their service project.</b></p> <p>Dates: _____</p> <p>Goals:</p> <p>Materials and Resources:</p> <p>Activities:</p> <p>Assessment Plan:</p>
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**Administrative Tasks**

Making arrangements for students to carry out service-learning projects involves many administrative issues, such as scheduling (possibly getting permission for students to miss classes), gaining parent permission and involvement, and managing risk. What challenges do you anticipate related to each issue? What resources (people, financial, etc.) could help you and your students with these challenges? What are your final strategies for addressing each administrative issue?

<b>Administrative Issue</b>	<b>Challenges</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
Scheduling the service experience			
Gaining administrator permission and support			
Gaining parent permission and support			
Transportation			
Materials and equipment needs			
Potential risks			

**Part B. Project Overview**

<i>Project Title:</i>
<i>Subject area/Grade Level :</i>
<i>Service problem:</i>

**Part C. Linking service-learning to academic, civic, and other learning goals**

<i>Purpose of the project.</i>		
<i>Academic Goals:</i>		
Subject Area	Model Content Standards (list the standard number.)	Benchmark or Indicator
	1.	1.
		2.
		3.
	2.	1.
		2.
		3.
	3.	1.
		2.
		3.
	4.	1.

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		2.
		3.
Subject Area	Model Content Standard	Benchmark or Indicator
	1.	1.
		2.
		3.
	2.	1.
		2.
		3.
	3.	1.
		2.
		3.
	4.	1.
		2.
	3.	
Subject Area	Model Content Standard	Benchmark or Indicator
	1.	1.
		2.
		3.
	2.	1.
		2.
		3.
	3.	1.
	2.	

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		3.
	4.	1.
		2.
		3.

<i>Civic Goals</i>	1. Civic Knowledge	1.
		2.
		3.
	2. Civic Skills	1.
		2.
		3.
	3. Civic Attitudes and Values	1.
		2.
		3.

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<i>Other Goals (e.g., social skills, career preparation)</i>
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

### **Part D. Weaving in Reflection**

Remember that all phases of service-learning should have a reflection component. You can weave your reflection in as part of the planning and preparation activities or you can reflect on progress at the end of the phase. Examples of reflection activities can be found on the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse website. Some sample activities include:

- *Paseo Wheel:* Form inner and outer circles to reflect on the preparation and planning phase. First ask the inner circle to respond to the questions, “What went well and what would I improve to make the planning and preparation phase better?” The outer circle listens, and then summarizes what was said. The outer circle then responds to the question, “What would we tell people to do differently next time?” while the inner circle listens. The inner circle then summarizes what was said. The group comes to consensus on the lessons learned that they want to convey to next year’s class.
- *Transferring Learning:* Remind the students of the action planning process that they used to plan their service-learning project. Then ask them to illuminate the steps they would take to plan a dance, plan a vacation, buy a car, or plan a wedding, using the same approach they used to plan the service project. Look for ways to parallel the steps, engage in the same type of consensus building approach, and the same sorts of assessments (how will you know you were successful?)

**Part E. Creating an Assessment Plan**

*1. Plan for assessing students' readiness to learn and serve:*


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*2. Plan for students' progress during Planning and Preparation and the Service Activity (Formative assessment)*

Learning Goal	Description of the assessment task (e.g., during student research, pre-service discussions or writing assignments, during the service itself, or on reflection during service)

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*3. Plan for Assessing Overall Student Achievement (Summative Assessment)*

Goals	Summative Assessment Task
	



### **Chapter Three: Action - Implementing the Service Activity**

Once you have completed the investigation, planning, and preparation, the next step in service-learning is to implement the service activity. Because it is the focal point of your project, it is crucial that you, your students, and the community members implement your service activities well. Typically the implementation phase includes training and service provision, along with the reflection and assessment that should be integrated into every phase. A good idea for reflection and assessment is to ask questions to help link the service to academic and civic learning and ask how students feel about the service and their abilities to make a difference.

Even if your action plan is excellent, you should anticipate the types of problems that may occur and how you will address them. Many teachers include this in the training that occurs before the service.

During the action phase, you want to be sure that the students are:

- Engaged, actively exploring, using inquiry and hands-on approaches
- Given opportunities to work with an adult other than a family member or teacher
- Engaged in perspective taking
- Given the opportunity to see that the service is genuinely meeting community needs

#### **High School – Humble, Texas**

*At a high school in Humble Texas, seniors participate in a comprehensive, year-long project that meets all the criteria for high quality service. After participating in service-learning projects through 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grades, 12<sup>th</sup> grade students enroll in a Senior Seminar, a capstone service-learning course. During the fall semester, students identify and conduct research on a global social issue about which they feel passionate concern. During the second semester, they work in teams to develop and implement action plans that address the global issue. Action plans must build awareness of the issue, include research, address a community need, and be sustainable after the end of the school year. Specific requirements within the Senior Seminar include:*

- *A formal research paper;*
- *Frequent advisory meetings;*
- *Regular group meetings;*
- *Three oral presentations, including a subtopic speech, social action speech, and a self-portrait (see below);*
- *Reflection assignments including a social action directory, project selection sheet specifying service-learning objectives mastered or practiced, project design sheet, and project evaluation sheet;*
- *A journal with at least one entry per week;*

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- *A log of hours spend on designing, planning, implementing, and evaluating the project;*
- *Analysis of group dynamics as they related to workplace tools;*
- *A self-portrait completed in a format of the students' choice, including video, poetry, sculpture, painting, or another medium; and*
- *A portfolio including all of the research project components: academic samples from each discipline, the self-portrait, a wellness plan, career shadowing reflection, and a social action plan.*

*At the end of the year, students must give a formal presentation using multimedia in which they highlight their individual research and the project itself.*

### **Questions**

Answering the following questions can help you in the Service Activity Phase:

1. In direct service activities, students interact with recipients of service or the physical environment they have targeted for improvement. Given the service problem, what types of direct service activities could the youth perform?
2. In advocacy service activities, students try to address the underlying causes of a social problem by attempting to influence policymakers or elected officials. Could an advocacy component be added to the project to enhance the learning and help students feel an even greater sense of efficacy?
3. How can you adopt, adapt, or create a rubric for students to use that ensures the service activity they select demonstrates the standards and indicators of high quality service-learning?
4. How can you ensure that all students benefit from the service activities and that all students find them to be meaningful?
5. How can you ensure that students understand and find mutual benefit with service recipients?
6. How can you make sure that your community partners are playing a significant, positive role in the lives of the students? How can you maximize the potential for the partners to serve as role models?
7. How will you address diversity issues within the service project, both before, during, and after service?
8. How can you keep students engaged in the service over time?
9. How can you implement service-learning so that teachers and other adults also find the service to be fulfilling?

### **Resources**

The resources recommended for other phases are also pertinent in this phase. In addition, you may find the following resources helpful, especially those that have guidelines or examples for implementing service projects.

1. **Chicago Public Schools Service-Learning Website,**  
[www.servicelearning.cps.k12.il.us/Curriculum.html](http://www.servicelearning.cps.k12.il.us/Curriculum.html)

This site provides a toolkit for teachers with background information on service-learning, a planning tool, rubric for assessing the quality of service-learning

projects, and reflection resources and aids. It also offers complete curriculum guides on some topics such as aging, hunger, and poverty.

- 2. Learning to Give, [www.learningtogive.org](http://www.learningtogive.org);  
also The League, [www.leagueworldwide.org](http://www.leagueworldwide.org)**  
With a mission to educate young people about the volunteer sector, Learning to Give offers lessons, units, and resources for teaching about philanthropy and skills for giving back to the community. Lessons are standards-based and searchable by content and grade level. The League organizes the Learning to Give materials into group efforts with events, teams, and points for making a difference.
- 3. National Youth Leadership Council (NYLC), [www.nylc.org](http://www.nylc.org)**  
As one of the most well established organizations in K-12 service-learning, NYLC offers many types of training, books, and technical assistance opportunities to teachers, including an annual conference called the National Service-Learning Conference. The NYLC website includes project ideas searchable by academic subject, grade level, project topic, and key word.
- 4. Paul Coverdell World Wise Schools Service-Learning Rubric, [www.peacecorps.gov/wws/educators/lessonplans/](http://www.peacecorps.gov/wws/educators/lessonplans/)**  
Linked to the Peace Corps, this site provides a series of service-learning lessons organized around the idea of the “common good.” Students explore the meaning of common good, then plan and implement a project based on what they have learned. The site also includes numerous ideas for international lesson plans and projects linked to Peace Corps activities.
- 5. Cesar E. Chavez Foundation, [www.chavezfoundation.org](http://www.chavezfoundation.org)**  
The Cesar E. Chavez Foundation is dedicated to preserving the legacy of Cesar Chavez. The website has multiple sample lesson plans for service-learning, all of which are linked directly to the California State Standards and feature step-by-step guides, forms, and articles to read as part of the service-learning units.

## Worksheet Three: Planning for Reflection

### Part A: Checklist for Training and Orientation

- \_\_\_\_\_ Students have been trained so they know how to conduct the service and what is expected of them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ All students have meaningful roles to play.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Students have been given guidance on how to perform tasks well together.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The community partner understands and is on board with all activities.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Students have engaged in troubleshooting conversations (what to do if....)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Transportation has been arranged as needed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Needed materials and supplies have been secured.
- \_\_\_\_\_ There are enough adult supervisors.
- \_\_\_\_\_ All safety and other risk protections are in place.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Parent permission forms have been obtained.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Permission for pictures and publications have been obtained.
- \_\_\_\_\_ The media have been invited (as appropriate).
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reflection activities to take place during service have been planned.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Explicit links to curriculum have been made.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Administrators are aware of and supportive of the activity.

### Part B: Weaving in Reflection

Remember that all phases of service-learning should have a reflection component. During service, it is important for students to have many opportunities of varying kinds to engage in reflection. While writing in a journal is one favorite approach used by many teachers, be sure to give students other ways to reflect either through artistic means, through deliberate dialogue, or any of a multitude of different means. Examples of reflection activities can be found on the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse website. Some sample activities include:

- *Create a storyboard:* A story board is the devise cartoonists, advertisers, and some novelists use to capture the phases or tell the story that is unfolding. Students can storyboard their service activities, reflecting on the planning, and the specific action steps.
- *Make a mobile or establish another type of metaphor.* Students are often asked to represent their thinking in different ways on various tests. This reflection activity can be simple, such as asking, “What type of traffic sign does this experience bring to mind?” where students may say, “Yield” or “Slow down” or even “Caution, children at play.”
- *Use the plus, minus, delta chart.* This helps students identify what they liked, didn’t like and what they would change. Results can be used to revise the next set of activities.

**Part C: Assessment**

How will you assess the service phase of your service-learning project? One idea to consider is to use the rubrics on service-learning quality to have the students and other participants rate the experience. Another is to have the students engage in self-assessments about how well they collaborated, worked as a team, accomplished their goals, and so forth. What will you do?

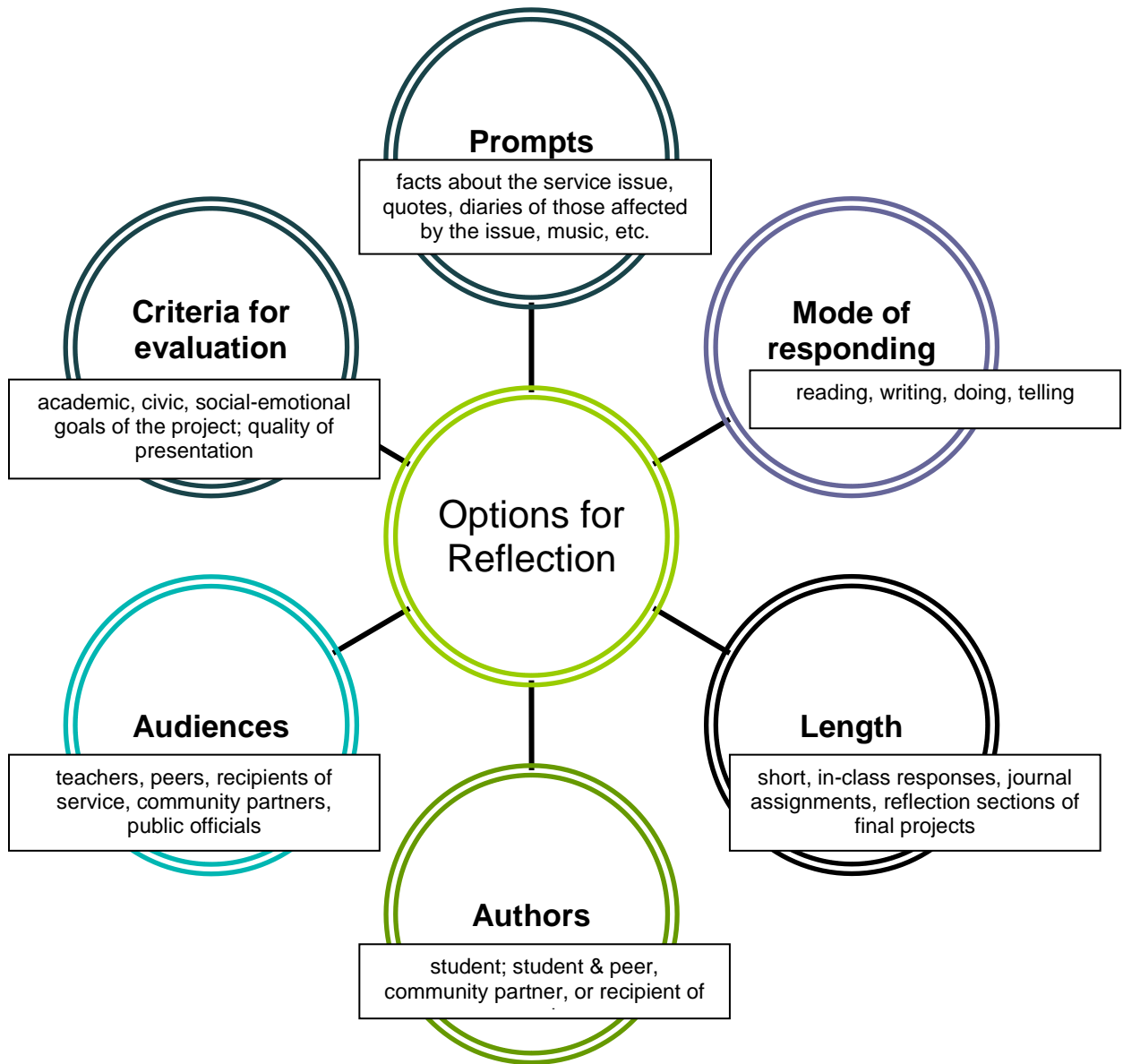
Idea for Assessment	How, when, and where to administer

### **Chapter Four: Reflection**

As previously discussed, reflection should be woven through each of the phases. In the reflection phase that occurs after the service, your goal is to name and solidify the learning. During this phase, reflecting on the service-learning experience can encourage your students to:

- Connect classroom learning with learning from service, giving both greater meaning;
- Question their assumptions both about the causes and solutions of social problems and about those different from themselves;
- Improve their problem solving skills; and
- Develop a deeper understanding of themselves and their responsibilities as citizens of a democratic society.

Good reflection activities are continuous, connected, guided, allow feedback and assessment, and help to clarify student values. As the following diagram indicates, teachers have options for reflection assignments that can meet these criteria.



### **Miami-Dade School District, Florida**

*In the Miami-Dade district, the Bureau of Community Services hosts forums each spring for students and community members on issues of importance to the city. Forum topics from recent years have included proposed changes to Social Security law, the Miami Mayoral Election, health care, bullying, and fire safety. In the early part of the school year, students hear presentations by guest speakers from partner organizations associated with the issue, for example, the Gray Panthers. Throughout the year, they carry out an advocacy activity to address the forum topic, such as circulating petitions to preserve the Social Security system. At the forum, a team of students from each school presents their project. These presentations are followed by small group dialogues between students, community partners, and community members attending the forum. Finally, all participants write reflections in which they describe the highlight of the forum, what they learned, what they heard that made them think or surprised them, and what steps they could take next to inform government leaders and policy makers about their issue.*

### **Questions**

1. What reflection activities could you use to support the academic, civic, and social-emotional learning goals of the service-learning project before, during, and after completion?
2. If you plan to use discussion and journaling, are there forms of reflection you could use to encourage multiple modes of student response? For example, could your students write poetry or fiction about their projects, create paintings, sculpture, or dramatic pieces?
3. What reflection prompts (questions) before, during, and at the end of the project would encourage your students to go beyond simply describing or reporting their experiences? For example, what questions might push them to analyze the causes of social problems, to apply their academic learning to their service experience, or to evaluate the effectiveness of social services?
4. How could you broaden the social context for authoring beyond the individual student to make reflection more collaborative? How could you expand the audience beyond you as teacher to make it more authentic?

### **Resources**

The resources listed in Guide 1 on Planning and Preparation contain valuable ideas for reflection. Other helpful resources include:

1. *A Practitioner's Guide to Reflection in Service-Learning: Student Voices and Reflection*. The authors explain how and why reflection is important in service-learning, using the words of students themselves, to describe its impacts. They explain different learning styles and give suggestions for matching reflection activities to students' styles. The book also includes numerous ideas for reflection, using the modes of reading, writing, doing, and telling.  
Eyler, J., Giles, D., & Schmiede, A. (1996) Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University.



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2. *Connecting Thinking and Action: Ideas for Service-Learning Reflection*. This guide provides a variety of reflection activities for different subjects and grade levels. Activities are included for each phase of reflection, including the service activity, pre-service, during, and post-service. RMC Research Corporation. (2003). Denver, CO: RMC Research Corporation.  
[www.rmcdenver.com](http://www.rmcdenver.com)
3. *Reflection: A Guide to Effective Service-Learning*. Sponsored by the National Dropout Prevention Center, this guide offers tools and ideas for creating learning environments and facilitating reflection during each step of a service-learning project. [www.dropoutprevention.org/publica/servlear\\_pub/servlear\\_pub2.htm](http://www.dropoutprevention.org/publica/servlear_pub/servlear_pub2.htm)
4. The *Disney Channel* website. A complete guide to service-learning including ideas for reflection for each step of a service-learning project.  
[www.disney.go.com/disneychannel/learningtoserve](http://www.disney.go.com/disneychannel/learningtoserve)

### Worksheet Three: Planning for Reflection

*Using the above chart of options, plan the reflection assignments you will use before, during, and at the conclusion of the service activity.*

<b>Phase of Service-Learning</b>	Reflection Assignment	Prompts	Mode of Responding	Length	Authors	Audiences
Planning and Preparation						
During the Service Activity						

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During the Culminating Event						
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*What goals will each reflection activity allow you to meet?*

**Chapter Five: Demonstration/Celebration**

Demonstration and celebration of learning and impact are important parts of your service-learning project that can provide you, your students, and your community partners with a meaningful conclusion to the project and an opportunity to think ahead to the future. In an effective demonstration and celebration, students show influential others how they impacted the community and how they themselves have changed as a result of their service-learning activities. A high-quality demonstration and celebration event recognizes and rewards students’ sense of efficacy and motivation to serve and reinforces community members’ commitment to your program. It provides a public forum for students to display their knowledge, which encourages them to synthesize what they have learned through service, provides an authentic context for assessment, and builds community members’ expertise with respect to the community problem. Finally, a high quality demonstration and celebration event engages participants in analyzing and developing potential solutions to the new set of social issues signaled by the end for the service-learning project, further enhancing their problem solving skills and dedication to service.

Teachers have several options for demonstration and celebration events, including

Demonstrating Impact on the Community	Demonstrating Impact on Self	Celebrating Accomplishments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measurement on a neighborhood quality index</li> <li>• Poster exhibition</li> <li>• Showcase</li> <li>• Portfolio fair</li>   <li>• Development of products such as Power Points, oral presentations, websites, videos, booklets, before/after pictures of the community</li> <li>• Testimonials by service recipients</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self portraits</li> <li>• Autobiographies</li> <li>• Story Boards</li> <li>• Pre/post measures of knowledge, skills, or behaviors</li>   <li>• Evaluation of student work by experts, community partners, recipients of service, or panels of judges</li> <li>• Sharing insights through issues forums</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recognition at a school-wide ceremony</li> <li>• Awards</li> <li>• A tour of the service site to observe progress</li>   <li>• Letters of recognition from community partners, elected officials, etc.</li> <li>• Service credits on the students’ transcripts</li> <li>• Creation of a fund to support future service around the issue</li> <li>• Recognition during a traditional ceremony such as graduation</li> </ul>

**WM. H. Turner Technical Arts High School**

## *K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit*

*At WM. H. Turner Technical Arts High School, teachers Chris Kirchner and Jose Ugarte, who work with seniors in the school's Academy of Information Technology and Entrepreneurship, assign a service-learning project designed to improve students' writing ability, information technology skills, and civic dispositions and competencies. Early in the year, groups of students select a particular social issue (in 2003-04, for example, issues ranged from AIDS in Africa, to Miami's civil rights movement, to Social Security). Students investigate the issue, and their research provides the basis for an interview that is conducted with local volunteers and/or community activists. At the same time, students gather documents (e.g., newspaper articles, historical images) related to their issue. Research findings, videotapes of the interviews, and excerpts of documents are woven into a documentary, and the documentaries are refined and presented at a culminating event that includes students, teachers, interview subjects, senior citizens, district administrators, and the district's service-learning staff. Students begin their presentations by acknowledging what they learned from the interview subjects and their project. For example, a student who had interviewed a civil rights volunteer commented, "I learned that history is all around us. It's not just something in books, but it's all around us. We just need to unlock it." Documentaries are shown. At the end of the presentations, in keeping with tradition, students from each group "pass their project on" to a younger student to "keep the legacy going" and donate their videos to an archive in the library for community use.*

### **Questions**

Answering the following questions can assist you in planning your culminating event.

1. Who should plan the demonstration and celebration and what roles and responsibilities will each participant have?
2. What combination of demonstration and celebration activities would be the most meaningful for your students and community partners, and why?
3. What plans for demonstration will best allow your students to meet the academic goals of the project?
4. In what ways could the demonstrations be used as summative assessments? If they are used this way, who will evaluate student performance and what criteria will they use?
5. Which options for planning would contribute most to your students' civic and social-emotional learning? Which options would contribute most to the community?
6. How will you evaluate the success of the demonstration and celebration events and engage in continuous improvement?

### **Resources**

## *K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit*

The resources suggested in the previous sections offer helpful ideas for demonstration and celebration. In addition, the following resources are especially useful:

1. The *Disney Channel Service-Learning Website*, [www.disney.go.com/disneychannel/learningtoserve/toolkit](http://www.disney.go.com/disneychannel/learningtoserve/toolkit)  
This site includes a brief explanation of celebration in service-learning and examples of possible activities.
2. Ida, A. & Rose, J. (2003). *Service Learning: The Classroom Companion to Character Education: A resource guide for teachers and facilitators*, [www.highered.nysed.gov/kiap/PCPPU/service\\_learn/home.html](http://www.highered.nysed.gov/kiap/PCPPU/service_learn/home.html)  
This useful guide to all steps in developing a service-learning project contains creative ideas for culminating events and demonstrations, such as the Au Revoir Circle. It also offers celebration ideas for specific types of projects, including civic, environmental, and peer mentoring projects.
3. *Youth summits*  
Youth summits are a popular approach in law-related education in which adolescents, public officials, and others come together to discuss crucial social problems. Youth summits give young people an opportunity to present their ideas for solutions to problems to lawmakers, rather than having solutions imposed upon them. A sample book that addresses youth summits is Leiterman, H. (2000) *Youth Summits: Law-related education for violence prevention*. Bloomington, IN: ERIC Clearinghouse for Social Studies/Social Science Education, ED446027.
4. *Senior Projects*, e.g., [www.seniorproject.net](http://www.seniorproject.net)  
Senior projects are culminating projects completed by students in their last year of high school. Typically a senior project includes conducting research and generating a research paper on a topic of interest, participating in field work related to the topic and documenting the service or field work that was accomplished, connecting it back to the topic of research, assembling a portfolio, and providing an oral presentation on the research and fieldwork, using a thesis statement, supporting arguments supported by research, summary of field work and what was learned, and conclusions. The oral presentation is generally judged by a panel of teachers, administrators, and/or community members. Many senior projects assign mentors to work with students, and most often schools ask a teacher to coordinate the projects in return for release time. Often senior projects culminate in a showcase of learning. Senior project approaches can be adapted for all levels.

**Worksheet Five: Demonstration and Celebration**

The purpose of this template is to help you plan a final event that honors students' efforts, allows them to share what they have learned and the impact on the community, and build on their service-learning for the future.

Title of the event	
Date and time	
Location	
Participants and their roles	1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6.
How will you invite participants to the event?	
What are your specific activities for demonstration and celebration?	
Attach an agenda	
How will you evaluate success?	
How will you engage your students and others in reflection about the demonstration/celebration?	