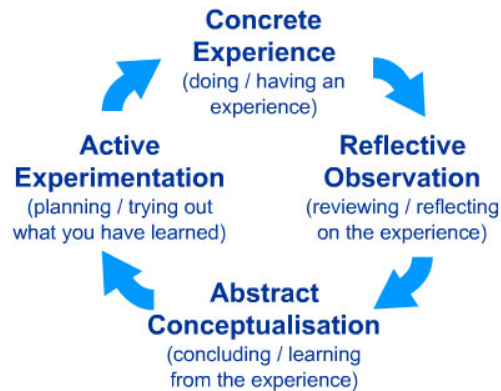


The 4 C's of Reflection: Continuous, Connected, Challenging, Contextualized

Reflection

In order to effectively learn something new, according to David Kolb, you need to not only experience it, you need to also reflect on it. Kolb's theory is summarized in this diagram:



And for service learning, specifically, reflection should be continuous, connected, challenging, and contextualized for students to reap the maximum educational benefit from the experience.

Continuous

You should always be in a reflective frame of mind as you participate in service-learning. What does this mean? Well, you should be thinking critically about the many issues your interaction with a non-profit presents. For example, you may ponder the following questions throughout your service experience:

Before

- What differences exist between you and the clients this agency services?
- How might you overcome these barriers? How can these differences be both a positive and a negative?
- Why is there a need for this agency in our society?
- How can the need for this agency be eliminated? What changes would need to be made?
- How will your service help this agency?

During (in addition to the above questions)

- How is the mission of the agency connected to your service tasks?
- How can your specific skill set help this, or any, non-profit?
- Is the help you are offering creating a temporary or permanent change for the agency?

After

- How can you build on the indirect service you offered to this agency this semester?
- What new understanding have you gained by working with the service agency this semester?
- How can the daily choices you make effect social change?

- How has your “hands-on” experience with a non-profit deepened your knowledge of the course content?

Think about questions like these as you complete your indirect service tasks, and take a moment to write down and/or discuss your responses.

Connected

In your reflections, examine the connection between your service tasks and the course content. For example, as you are preparing materials for your agency this semester, consider how the tasks you are undertaking reflect the concepts learned in a classroom or a textbook about public relations. Also, examine how the critical thinking and service in which you are engaged are connected to the larger Jesuit mission of Loyola.

Challenging

As you reflect on the above, question your original perceptions about your field, about the social issues addressed by your agency, and about the connections between the two. Push yourself to think in new ways. Research the difficult questions for which you do not have the answers.

Contextualized

If possible, take the time to reflect just after you participate in service (even if it is an indirect service task), listen to a speaker from the agency, or visit the agency location. Reflection is often more effective when it is in context and the experience is fresh in your mind.