

Reflection: Volunteering vs. Service

Goals for this reflection

1. Students will begin to explore the difference between volunteering and service learning.
2. Students will begin to understand why service learning has been included in the class
3. Students will consider at least one topic, theme, skill or knowledge-area from the class which relates to the service learning
4. Students will articulate their own goals for their service experience

Length

20 minutes

Best time to use this reflection

Near the beginning of service; 1-2 weeks after students have begun actively working on behalf of their agency

Materials needed

Watch, timer or

clock Bell/buzzer

Blackboard, dry erase board or flip chart paper (any large writing surface) Markers or chalk

Copies of goals handout

Preparation

1. Make enough copies of goals handout for each student in the class
2. Review in-class procedure
3. Pick one major topic, theme, skill or knowledge-area from your class which you feel has an important relationship to the service learning. Express this in one word or short phrase.

Example

s:

Inequality (SOCIA305, Social/Political Inequality) Gender identity (WMSTT121, Gender Play) Accents (THEAM112, Voice & Movement II) Literacy (THEAV243, Black Theater) Crisis (CRJUC285, Crisis Intervention) Interrelatedness of life (BIOLT122, Cultural Biology) Scientific imagination (CHEMA496, Chemistry Seminar) Formation (LAST121, Forming the Self) Outsider culture (SPANNA455, Contemporary Spain) Organizational identity (CMMNA335, Strategic Event Planning) Injustice (RELST121, Social Justice and the Wire)

Critical thinking (ENGLT122, Critical Reading and Writing)

General examples: Access
to.... Proficiency
in..... Ability to....
Knowledge
about.....

Consult the learning goals and objectives stated in your course syllabus when choosing your course-specific one-word prompt.

1. Introduction (2 minutes)

Instructor: “For the next 20 minutes, we are going to talk about the service learning part of this class. I’m going to ask you to stand up and move around. Find one person you don’t know well and stand in front of them.”

2. Free association activity (4 minutes)

Instructor: “One person in each pair, please raise your hand. The person with their hand in the air will LISTEN first. The other person will TALK. I’m going to say a word and when I do, the talker will free associate with the word I say. These can be words, stories, images, whatever comes up. You will have 30 seconds to free associate until I ring the bell. Then you will switch and the listener will become the talker and free associate with the word for 30 seconds.” Ring the bell and say the first word.

a. Volunteering

Wait 30 seconds. Ring the bell. Listeners/talkers switch. Ring the bell to start another 30-second period, and then ring the bell again at the end. Tell students to find a new partner. Say the second word and then ring the bell/buzzer.

b. Service learning

Wait 30 seconds. Ring the bell. Listeners/talkers switch. Ring the bell to start another 30-second period, and then ring the bell again at the end. Tell students to find a new partner. Say the final word and then ring the bell/buzzer.

c. [Your own course-specific word or phrase]

Wait 30 seconds. Ring the bell. Listeners/talkers switch. Ring the bell to start the last 30-second period, and then ring the bell again to signal the end of the exercise.

3. Playback and discussion (8-10 minutes)

Instructor: “What were some of the words/ideas/associations you heard in connection to the term ‘volunteering’?” (Note: students are being asked to share what they heard their partners say, not what they themselves said.) Get 5-10 words/ideas/associations up on one side of the blackboard, dry erase board or chart paper. Draw a vertical line or use a new sheet of chart paper.

Instructor: “Now what were some of the words/ideas/associations you heard from your partner in connection to the term ‘service learning’?” Get 5-10 words/ideas/associations up on the other side of the line.

Instructor: “For the next 2 minutes, let’s talk about what you see as the main similarities and differences between volunteering and service learning.” Note keywords on the board as necessary.

Instructor “What were some of the words/ideas/associations you heard in connection to [your course-specific word or phrase]?” Get 5-10 words/ideas/associations up on a new part of the blackboard, dry erase board, or a new sheet of chart paper.

Instructor: “For the next 2 minutes, let’s discuss how you think service learning connects to [your course-specific word or phrase].” Note keywords on the board as necessary. Conclude discussion by sharing one thought about how you as the instructor see the connection between service learning and [course-specific word or phrase].

4. Short writing prompt (last 5 minutes)

Instructor: “I’m going to hand out a sheet, and I want you to spend the next 5 minutes writing down a few basic goals that you have for your service learning experience in this class. This will not be graded, but I will ask you to hand it in at the end of the 5 minutes. This is for you, to help you get the most out of this experience. Toward the end of this semester, I will hand these back out to you and ask you to revisit your goals.”

Collect the sheets after the 5 minutes. Read, review and keep them, but do not grade them. These can be re-used in another reflection.

Option: Instead of having students spend 5 minutes writing individually about goals, have them work in pairs or small groups (3-5 students). If your class involves students with several different agencies, students may enjoy being grouped with other students who are serving at the same agency.

Post-reflection

Use the discussions and goals sheets as an early assessment to help you know where your students are coming from, how they view the class, how they view your field, and how they approach service in general.