

## SECTION 2: SAMPLE REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Designing effective reflection questions require that faculty and community partners go beyond asking students to describe or list their experiences. Rather, reflection questions should be interpretive and exploratory. Students should reflect on:

- what they observed at the site that reinforced or changed the knowledge acquired in the classroom;
- what impact (positive or negative) their actions had at their service site;
- why they did what they did; and
- how they might respond outside of the service site to societal problems/situations, asking what enables the situation to occur or what needs to happen systemically, organizationally, and personally to change the situation.

Also, students should explore if they feel different because of their service and how their actions and attitudes are transformed as a result of their experience, if at all. Reflection questions should explore students' thoughts, feelings, and reactions, as well as draw out students' insights on the course content, its connection to their experience at their service site, and students' perspectives on skills developed and lessons learned.

Some sample reflection questions follow.

- (1) How is the concept you are currently learning about in class reflected in a recent situation at your service site? What are the similarities and differences between the concept and reality?
- (2) If the situation is different in practice (at your site) than in theory (in class), why do you think this is? Why might agencies and people do things differently than theory? What explains the difference?
- (3) If the situation is the same or similar in practice and theory, what can you predict about the outcomes for the clients the agency serves? Will efforts be successful? Why or why not?
- (4) How is the agency or school meeting the needs of its community, and are these efforts effective? Using information you are learning in class and at the site, critique the agency's efforts using a SWOT analysis (Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (internal and external)).
- (5) List some alternative methods for meeting the needs of the population you are serving. Based on what you are learning in class, why would these methods be good responses to the issues or problems you have observed?
- (6) Before you interact with the agency's clients or school's students, what expectations, assumptions, and "prejudgments" do you have? Where did these come from, and why do you think you have them?
- (7) After doing service learning for a few weeks, how have your previous expectations,

assumptions and prejudgments about the nature of the agency or its clients changed or strengthened? Why?

(8) At your service site, what are you learning about the people or agency you are serving? How does this learning compare to what you have learned in class?

(9) Point out any information you are learning in class that reinforces or challenges what you know from your service experience.

(10) How is this agency or school valuable to its community and our society? What role does it play in the community?

(11) What useful skills did you discover while serving? How might you apply these newly discovered skills in other situations?

(12) How did you refine existing skills and develop new ones?

(13) Did you use a skill at your service site that you didn't think you would need or use? Why?

(14) Describe something you learned as a result of a disappointment or a "failure" during your service experience. How does this new learning translate into your life beyond this class, i.e., how will you apply this learning after this course ends?

(15) What is happening that is positive about your experience? What does this tell you about yourself or about the site?

(16) How did you feel today at your service site? What motivated you to continue serving at this site? What does this tell you about yourself and what you are learning in class?

(17) How does this experience connect to your long-term goals, and what knowledge from your service activity will you utilize to reach these goals?

(18) How have you changed as a result of this service experience? How will these changes influence your future behaviors?

(19) Describe ideal citizens and what qualities they possess, what values they hold, and what actions they take within their communities. How has your service experience informed your image of an ideal citizen?