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## The Critical Elements:

<b>Critical Elements:</b>	Facilitators and students attempting service learning for the first time should aim to develop a curriculum-rich activity that is relatively brief and easy to plan and implement. Even though the activity is a small one, it should encompass all of the six critical elements of service learning.
<a href="#">Community Voice</a>	
<a href="#">Orientation and Training</a>	For the service learning to have value and meaning, these six elements should be the heart of every activity:
	<b>Chapter 1. Community Voice</b>
<a href="#">Thoughtful Service</a>	<b>Chapter 2. Orientation and Training</b>
	<b>Chapter 3. Thoughtful Service</b>
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“It is through cooperation, rather than conflict, that your greatest successes will come from.”

Ralph Charell

## Chapter One      **The Critical Element of Planning and Community Voice**



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Brainstorming](#)  
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Question](#)  
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Students research the needs of the community and school related to the particular academic curriculum in which they are engaged, and they utilize their academic learning to identify problems and solutions. You, the facilitator, must insure that any service experiences chosen will enable students to meet the academic learning standards as well as the needs of the school or community. Choose a project focus about which you and your students feel enthusiasm and commitment. You as the facilitator set the tone. If you are passionate about the experience, your energy will tend to generate interest and excitement among the students.

Begin by brainstorming possible needs, perhaps utilizing a Carousel Brainstorming activity. Students should then research the identified need to make certain what they have perceived is real and that their service solution is doable because if there is no need for the project, disappointment and failure are likely. Once the need/problem is defined and validated, students should begin to frame their service activities. They need to develop an overall plan with an accompanying time line. In this plan development, students should answer the questions of Who, What, When, Where, Why and How. They must identify, divide and assign tasks. They should have choices as to the roles they will play. Choice will enable them to utilize their own perceived skills and interests and increase their sense of engagement and ownership of the activity.

At the same time, students are developing their project, they should anticipate any possible situations that could stand in the way of success and determine how those obstacles can be overcome. They should never be afraid to be creative when thinking of ways to solve problems.

**[continued]**



## Chapter One

In order to find community partners, begin where you are. Start with the contacts of you and your students. Make certain your first community partners are reliable and committed. It is often easier to establish success with a partner with whom you already have a good relationship. Support in any new venture is vital for its success. Partners, whether they are community agencies, community individuals or faculty need to share your enthusiasm and vision that the proposed project will benefit the recipients. There are many doubters who do not see the benefits of service learning and need to be convinced. It is to your advantage to work with those who are willing to share the task of convincing the skeptics.

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### **POSSIBLE COMMUNITY PARTNERS**

Adopt A Stray	Nursing Homes
Aids Shelters	Police Departments
Art Associations	Regional Food Banks
Associations of the Blind	Rehabilitation Hospitals
Association for Retarded Citizens [ARC]	River Watches
Audubon Society	Save the Whales
Boys and Girls Clubs	Senior Centers
Chambers of Commerce	Senior Nutrition Sites
Food Pantries	Senior Residences
Green Peace	Service Organizations (i.e. Rotary)
Historical Societies	Sierra Club
Homeless + Traveler's Aid Society	Special Olympics
Homeless Shelters	Therapeutic Equestrian Programs
Hospitals	Veterans' Hospitals
Humane Societies	Veterans' Associations
Libraries	Volunteer Fire Companies
Make-A-Wish Foundation	World Wild Life Federation
Meals-On-Wheels	YMCA's
Museums	YWCA's

**Chapter One**



**Community Voice**  
**Carousel Brainstorming**

**Objective**

To identify problems, issues, needs, community partners and tasks.

**Materials**

Flip chart paper and markers (five colors).

**Physical Setting**

Room large enough for students to walk about comfortably.

**Description**

This activity offers the opportunity for students to brainstorm numerous problems/questions in small groups in a relatively short period of time. The facilitator begins the activity by reviewing the rules of brainstorming. (No negative criticism. Hitchhike on the ideas of others. Aim for many ideas.) Then he/she divides participants into small groups and assigns each a question.

Questions that might help to focus on curriculum related school/ community needs might include:

- What environmental issues/challenges face our community?
- What social-economic challenges does our community face?
- What skills has the learning in this unit given us?

If a project idea has been suggested, the questions might include:

- What skills/knowledge will we need to accomplish our task?
- What steps do we need to take?
- With what community resources might we partner?
- What problems/challenges might we face in undertaking this service activity?

**[continued]**

Chapter One



**Community Voice**  
**Carousel Brainstorming**

**Description**

Each question is written in a different color on a large flip chart size piece of paper. Each group receives a marker that matches the color of its question. They are given about three minutes to brainstorm solutions to their open-ended question. The facilitator then calls, "Move on!" and groups move to new questions taking their colored markers with them. The activity proceeds until all groups have brainstormed all questions. Then groups return to their original questions and synthesize the ideas on their sheets into four to six main points. All groups then present their conclusions to the large group. At least two group members must take part in each presentation as this is an important visual reminder that this is a cooperative conclusion. After each presentation, the facilitator asks for comments or concerns from the large group. At the conclusion of the activity, the facilitator requests that the groups summarize what they have accomplished.

**Processing**

After Carousel Brainstorming, the facilitator asks the group to discuss where they will go from here.

**Variations**

A **PNI** is very useful for problems or dilemmas that involve a limited choice among relatively few options. Students should all practice this simple activity because it illustrates the importance of visually setting down all of the aspects of a choice or solution before they make a final decision. At the top of their paper, they write the problem and a possible solution. They then draw three columns labeling:

- the first column **P** for positive points about this solution
- the middle with **N** for negative points
- the final column with **I** for points of interest that are not necessarily positive or negative.

When students can visually compare the PNI's of several solutions, they make more aware, rational decisions.

**Chapter One**



**Community Voice**  
**Circle The Question**

**Objective** \_\_\_\_\_

To give all students the opportunity to listen and speak to a variety of issues.

**Materials** \_\_\_\_\_

None.

**Physical Setting** \_\_\_\_\_

Comfortable circle.

**Description** \_\_\_\_\_

This strategy requires that students literally sit in a circle. The facilitator gives a brief introduction to the subject including background information and expresses the question in several different ways to insure that all participants understand. If students have recently completed a Carousel Brainstorming activity, the facilitator should also remind them of their conclusions. Then students take a "think" minute of total silence. After the minute, the facilitator says, "Let us begin," and waits until someone in the circle volunteers to go first. This person expresses his/her opinion on the question for one to two minutes. When he/she finishes, the facilitator says, "Left or right?" The former speaker picks which direction the discussion will take. The designated speaker speaks and the rotation continues around the circle until everyone has given his/her opinion. No one, including the facilitator, interrupts this process. A person may "pass" at any time, but the facilitator will return to that individual after the circle has been completed and that person will then be expected to speak to the question or explain his/her reason for no comment. The right to pass is always important to a community, yet the responsibility to participate fully and honestly is also extremely important. It is the facilitator's role to protect the rights of the participants as well to see that participants live up to their responsibilities.

**[continued]**

Chapter One



**Community Voice**  
**Circle The Question**

**Processing**

As the participants are giving their opinions, it is important for the facilitators to not only listen very carefully and jot any necessary notes down, but also watch the body language and reactions of the group to what is being said. When the circle is completed, the facilitator (who has never said more than thank you to speakers during the circle) invites further comments. The facilitator does not permit anyone to monopolize the ensuing discussion and concludes the discussion by asking someone to summarize the generally agreed upon conclusions and the questions still left unresolved. At this point, it is often effective to jot down these summary points on a flip chart where they can be viewed by all.

**Variations**

**Card  
Discussion**

This strategy encourages the same good discussion habits as **Circle the Question**, but it offers more flexible time constraints and it can accommodate a much larger group. It is most effective when participants are in a graded class. The facilitator has a 3x5 card for each participant. He/she then introduces the question and holds a "think minute." After this, the facilitator shuffles the cards and calls on the person whose card lands on top. After this person answers, the facilitator gives a check or dates the card of every person who makes an honest attempt to answer the question. Participants are not judged on the "correctness" of their answers, but on their willingness to give thoughtful ones.



## Chapter Two    **The Critical Element of Orientation and Training**



[Role Play](#)  
page 3.10

[Docu-Drama](#)  
page 3.12

A key element in establishing any service learning program/ experience is that of adequate orientation of both the participants and the service receivers. All too often, service learning plans ignore the need to orient, perhaps even train, the service receivers. At times, this need is critical. For example, if students and senior citizens are going to be working together on a joint service project, it important that the seniors receive information on the goals and process of the project as well as what to expect in the students' attitudes and capabilities. Sometimes, especially when elders and elementary children are involved, the facilitator/trainer must really emphasize to the elders that the students are partners in the learning and doing and must be treated as such. Whether in the classroom or onsite, teachers or agencies should work together to insure students are informed about:

- the responsibilities of and the “how to” of the service activities
- the population receiving the service.
- difficult situations or problems that may arise
- how the service connects to their learning

The facilitator must teach any needed skills the students may be lacking. These are often communication skills (phone, interviews, meeting people, making presentations)... Activities that may be useful within the classroom to orient and train students include:

- role playing
- docu-dramas
- guest speakers
- assigned readings and discussion

**Chapter Two**



**Orientation and Training**  
**Role Play**

**Objective**

To provide students with the opportunity to practice in a non-threatening environment the skills necessary for their services.

**Materials**

Chairs, tables, small props.

**Physical Setting**

Comfortable space for moving and discussing.

**Description**

The facilitator should have cards with names of characters, descriptions of their personalities and hand them out to participants. Role Plays are usually most effective with 2-4 participants. All others can observe and wait to take their turns. The Role Play should take between three and six minutes. Any longer and the participants and the observers often become unfocused. The facilitator sets the scene with an explicit description of the situation. Participants are given a moment to think and plan with each other, and then they act out their roles followed by a discussion that includes the whole group. Discussion should take place immediately following each role-play and not after several have occurred. The facilitator should be certain important questions are answered:

**By the actors:**

- Why did you respond...?
- How did you feel when...?
- What would be a better way of...?
- What were your choices?

**By the audience:**

- How do you view the situation?
- With what actions/responses do you agree/disagree?
- Where do the dangers come in this situation?
- What do you see as choices for those involved?
- How else might this situation have been handled?

**[continued]**

Chapter Two



**Orientation and Training**  
**Role Play**

**Processing**

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**The facilitator says:**

- Thinking over the role plays we have just completed, what are your expectations of the service activity we will be doing and what skills will you need to complete it successfully?
- Have you encountered similar situations in real life?
- If so, how did you approach them?
- What additional situations have you (or might you) have had to face?
- Is the Role Play helpful to our planned activity? If so, why?
- In what other life situations might Role Play be useful?

**Variations**

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This **mime** activity proceeds similarly to **Role Play** except that **Mime** none of the actors can speak, and therefore they must mime or express their reactions in a nonverbal manner. This strategy places emphasis on the person's body language and actions that are important but often-neglected elements of communication.



## Chapter Two



## **Orientation and Training** **Docu-Drama**

### **Objective**

To provide students with the opportunity to visualize scenarios that they may encounter in their service and to develop strategies for dealing with such situations.

### **Materials**

Chairs, tables, small props.

### **Physical Setting**

Small stage or central point in room that can be viewed by an audience.

### **Description**

This is often an opportunity for older or more experienced students to provide a service by acting out short scenarios that give the students in the audience an idea of what their service experience will be. At critical points in the scenario, the actors pause and ask the observing students to discuss what will/should happen next. Everyone discusses useful strategies for the student volunteers to take. Sometimes the actors may choose to play out several suggestions and then discuss the results.

### **Processing**

This activity processes as it happens, but it is often useful to ask students to write about what they have learned and/or anticipate in their coming service. At the very least, several students should summarize the activity.

### **Variations**

**Simulations** are very valuable for students who will be working with the handicapped or the frail elderly. Divide the students into groups depending on the number of simulations you intend to implement. For example, one group might be learning to maneuver in a wheel chair, another group might be asked to follow the instructions of a facilitator with cotton in their ears, another group wearing safety glasses smeared with Vaseline to try to thread a needle, and finally another group might try to thread a needle wearing heavy garden gloves. After each group has tried each activity, students come together as a large group to discuss the experiences. It is very effective to have several individuals who actually have the disabilities simulated participate in the discussion.



## Chapter Three    **The Critical Element of Thoughtful Service**

It is vital that students participating in Service Learning understand the urgency of punctual, dependable service and they must make a commitment to an established time line. Dates and times of service may not be disrupted by normal events such as jobs, exams, sports or social activities.

Students should be allowed to fail if they are not meeting their responsibilities.

During the service experience, the facilitator is available and regularly monitors student progress. It is vital that the students have the opportunity to accept their responsibility. It is **NOT** the role of the facilitator to perform the service for the students. If the student is not doing his/her job, the facilitator must determine why and if it is due to lack of training, provide that component.

During the service period the facilitator and the agency leadership are in close communication. The facilitator monitors the students' experiences carefully and is alert to possible problems and/or challenges. Students have easy access to both an agency representative and the facilitator to help with questions or concerns that may arise.

The facilitator has a responsibility to ensure that the service is related to the curriculum in order that the experience is meaningful and educational. Students need to have the opportunity to frequently reflect on the activities they have performed. The reflective time should be as close to the actual service as possible. It is best to have students write some response to their service experience immediately after it is performed while reactions are still fresh in their minds.

## Chapter Four    **The Critical Element of Reflection**



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page 3.16

[Voices of Service Learning](#)  
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[Migrations](#)  
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[Film Seminar](#)  
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[Dance Cards](#)  
page 3.27

Reflection is the structure through which students process and synthesize the information and ideas they have gained from both their service and their classroom experiences. In reflection they analyze concepts and evaluate experiences and make meaning, all in the context of the particular academic curriculum. Every reflection activity we suggest contains elements of character education that facilitators should highlight.

It is vital that students have an opportunity to discuss their service and their reactions to their experiences and also the connections to their academic learning. It is equally important for them to hear and think about the responses of their fellow participants. For discussion to be fruitful, students must feel safe and comfortable; therefore community building activities are always useful. Establishing routine strategies for discussion and response fosters productive discussion. Writing before discussion also is important.

Reflection enables service learning students to make sense of the world around them. It is this conscious activity that enhances the learning process. Without this component any service performed is merely service, albeit an altruistic and worthy endeavor, but it does not necessarily provide the student with any connection between classroom learning and the community or real world. Through thoughtful reflection, the student is able to focus on what has been accomplished, what impact the service has had on those receiving the service and how his/her own attitudes, beliefs and future actions may have changed.

**Time** The skilled facilitator will provide opportunity for all students to think individually about their own experiences, weigh and evaluate and draw conclusions, but it is just as important for them to share their thoughts, service learning experiences and conclusions with other students/faculty/parents in a structured, safe, unhurried atmosphere. **Time** is key to learning reflective skills and not all students will learn at the same rate.

**[continued]**

## Chapter Four

Using a variety of reflective techniques will ensure accommodation of all students' learning styles. Students' sharing their experiences both positive and negative with classmates expands their learning opportunities. It is important that students realize that they can learn and improve from their failures. When sharing, students often see alternate methods and form conclusions that help them to improve their service.

Reflective activities should encompass writing, speaking and listening, both small and large group discussions, and/or multimedia presentations (art, music, dance, theater, photography).



Reflection encourages students to gain a better sense of themselves and their developing character. They acquire insights that help them to build on their strengths and to set goals in areas where they know they need further development.

**Chapter Four**



**Reflection**  
**Response Document**

**Objective** \_\_\_\_\_

To give all students the opportunity to clarify and synthesize their responses to experience and to communicate one-on-one with the facilitator.

**Materials** \_\_\_\_\_

Loose-leaf notebook or pocket folders, dated response documents with room for student responses.

**Physical Setting** \_\_\_\_\_

Classroom or can be a homework assignment.

**Description** \_\_\_\_\_

Response documents are a journaling activity designed to help students think and make personal sense of their service experiences. Response documents help to avoid the common pitfalls of journal writing. Despite the fact that writing is thinking, today's students are sometimes journal weary. Written responses are often put off until considerable time has intervened between the experience and the reflection and the response can become a hastily written routine.

Response documents reduce the routine and repetition of journal writing. In our program, students complete the appropriate Response Document after each service experience, thus keeping the facilitator up-to-date, while insuring that written responses are composed close to the experience. Experience has taught us that response leads are essential for effective reflective thought, especially for beginning students. Leads demand that students think not only about their concerns and problems, but also on the positive aspects. This is especially important for students volunteering in difficult situations such as with the poor, the ill or the severely handicapped. They are not going to be able to "save" those with whom they work. The small amount they can do, however, is extremely important and response leads can help them come to understand this.

**[continued]**

**Chapter Four**



**Reflection**  
**Response Document**

**Description**

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**Suggested Response Leads:**

(**Hint:** Every response should be specific...names, dates, details)

**Suggested  
Response  
Leads**

- The best thing that happened was....
- I was pleased/displeased that...because...
- I expected...and ...happened
- One problem is....
- Next time I intend to...because....
- I feel satisfied/worried that...because....
- If I could do this service over, I would ....
- ... is a pleasant/difficult person because....
- I wish ...because....
- If I had more time, I would...because....
- To prepare for my service, I....
- This would be a better experience if....
- Today I accomplished...because....
- My favorite task in this activity has been...because....
- Today I learned....
- One goal I have accomplished is....
- I would like to know more about ...because....
- ... reminded me of...because....

**Processing**

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Facilitators should read and write comments on the response documents and return them to students in a timely fashion. Some students can more easily communicate their fears or concerns in writing. Facilitators should seek out and meet with any student whose written responses suggest a need for personal one-on-one attention. Students should keep all response documents as the **core of a Service Learning Portfolio they are developing.**

**Core**

(See page 3.32)

Chapter Four



**Reflection**  
**Voices of Service Learning**

**Objective**

To give students the opportunity to perceive the world from another's perspective. Such an experience promotes understanding, acceptance of diversity and appreciation for the effects of their own service.

**Materials**

Paper and pencil.

**Physical Setting**

Classroom.

**Description**

**DAY 1**

This activity requires more than one class period and must be carried out after students have been involved in their service for a substantial period of time. They must have had time to experience their roles and to get to know those with whom they work.

Students then choose a person whom they have come to know through their service and brainstorm details that are appropriate to that individual. For the moment, **they should try to think of themselves as this person**. Thus they will be brainstorming in the first person. We often give the following handout to assist in their thinking.

- I am pretending to be...with whom I work at ....
- My general characteristics include....
- My address is....
- My nickname and how I received it....
- My appearance is....
- My personality traits include....
- Generally I am (cheerful, sad, anxious, etc.) because....
- My past includes....
- Childhood memories/events....
- Family (mother, father, siblings, grandparents, aunts, uncles, pets....)
- Special events in my life.... My favorite story is....

**[continued]**

Chapter Four



**Reflection**  
**Voices of Service Learning**

**Description**

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- My memories of significant world events are....
- Present day info about me includes....
- My health is....
- A typical day in my life is....
- TV shows I like are....
- My heroes/heroines....
- Important things in my life (family, religion, TV,) are....
- My feelings about myself and my life....
- My feelings about...(the writer) are...because....
- Typical activities I share with (the writer)....

Students should have time to complete their scripts outside of class and bring them completed to class for the second phase of Voices.

Students will not, of course, be able to complete all of the above brainstorming leads, but it is extremely important that they include descriptions of their relationship with the subject. All too often in service reflection activities, the focus of the reflection remains with the students, those going out into the world to "do." We must continually strive in reflection to remind students of the other very significant voices in their experiences and those are the voices of people with whom they work. These voices and the attitudes they express must be acknowledged and respected. After the students have brainstormed the above materials, they then write a brief description of their subject in the subject's own voice.

**Example**

- Hello.... My name is Marcus and I live with a bunch of my friends at an ARC group home. I have black hair, brown eyes and I am about 5'5". I am 44 years old, but if you ask anyone how old I am they will say I am not older than 25. I am even still trying to become a police officer just like my brother. You better not do anything wrong because he will get you!

**[continued]**

**Chapter Four**



**Reflection**  
**Voices of Service Learning**

**Description**

Sometimes I get a little sick and then I feel terrible but otherwise I am happy. Whatever mood I am in, Mike makes me feel great. He comes over once a week and I always peek out through the curtains watching for him. Then I hide behind the front door and when he comes in, I jump out and shout, 'BOO!' and he always is scared!

I love when Mike and the other kids come because we do so many activities like two weeks ago we made clay figures and last week we painted them. A few weeks ago we made our own mugs. Having Mike around brightens up my day and he makes me feel GOOD.

**DAY 2**

In the second phase the Voices are collected and handed out to other individuals (or students may if they so choose elect to keep their own). All look over their scripts to be certain they can read them clearly. Then students sit in a circle and the reading begins. Voices spontaneously speak up from the circle to introduce and explain about themselves. Suddenly the classroom includes the Voices of Sam who lives in a cardboard box down by the railroad tracks most of the year; Fred, a 65 year old retarded gentleman who has lived all but three years of his life in an institution; and Ruth who was once a ballet dancer and now lives alone in a tiny apartment with only her cat Sally for company.

**Processing**

The activity is indeed powerful. After the readings, students usually have questions about the Voices they have heard. Allow them to ask and answer those. Encourage them to make connections among their experiences and among the Voices. Help them to see that the Voices have commonalties with each other and with the students themselves despite their obvious differences. Ask students which **Voice** they would like to meet and why. All are usually surprised at the depth of knowledge they possess about their subjects. What does this rich understanding say about the value of their experience?

**[continued]**

**Chapter Four**



**Reflection**  
**Voices of Service Learning**

**Variations**

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Our students have performed Voices at local, state and national conferences. When we perform Voices, we stage it so each student sits on a stool with a single prop such as a hat or a cane or a doll. Each student has an old fashioned lamp beside him or her. Randomly the lights switch on and a character comes to life. The light goes out and a new character's light comes on.

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“Walk a mile in my moccasins.”

**Chapter Four**



**Reflection**  
**Migrations**

**Objective**

To give all students the opportunity to utilize the arts to think critically about their service.

**Materials**

Large art print posters.

**Physical Setting**

Classroom with open space appropriate for moving around to view works of art.

**Description**

This is a superb discussion-promoting activity that is flexible and adaptable to any group for a multitude of purposes. For a group of 30-40 participants, set up approximately 8 art posters around the perimeter of the room so that they can be easily seen from all areas of the room. Divide the participants into groups of 4-6. Assign each group to a print. Ask the group to stand before it together and note aloud their basic observations such as: people objects, colors, shapes and lines, **What is happening in this print?** At this time, they should make no subjective judgements. After a brief time, call, "**MIGRATE!**" The groups will then move clockwise to the next print and begin again. They should continue in like manner until they have considered every print. All participants then sit down in a central place from which they can see all of the prints.

The facilitator then asks the participants to choose a print that connects in some way to their service or internship:

- In which print would you be most likely to find those with whom you work?
- In which print would those with whom you work be most happy?
- Which print best represents your emotions when you are at your assignment?
- Which print best suggests a problem in this school or community?

**[continued]**

## Chapter Four



## **Reflection** **Migrations**

### **Description**

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If the prints are all portraits of individuals, then perhaps the question might be:

- Which print most closely reminds you of a person at your assignment?

After participants have chosen their print, they then get up and go stand in front of it. The facilitator congratulates all on their choices. Depending on the size of the group, he/she requests participants share the reasons for their choices (In a very large group, participants can share with those who share their choice rather than with the entire group.)

Facilitators should be careful to recognize the bravery of those whose choice differs from all others and also emphasize that even those who chose the same print often have very different reasons for doing so.

### **Processing**

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Most of the processing is done as the activity happens, but the facilitator should always ask participants at the conclusion to summarize what they noticed or learned about themselves and their understandings of their service. Also point out that art serves as an excellent means of initiating discussion on a variety of topics. One of the advantages of this activity is that everyone must make a choice, act on it and share it with the group albeit not all have to speak. That is a good point to bring up in processing.

- In what other ways do people communicate besides speaking?
- Why is it important for us to recognize these alternative ways?

**Chapter Four**



**Reflection**  
**Film Seminar**

**Objective** \_\_\_\_\_  
To give all students the opportunity to utilize the arts to think critically about their service.

**Materials** \_\_\_\_\_  
VCR/DVD player, film/DVD, response sheets.

**Physical Setting** \_\_\_\_\_  
Comfortable space appropriate for viewing and discussing.

**Description** \_\_\_\_\_  
Many recent films available at rental stores are excellent vehicles for promoting discussion of service experiences. It is non-threatening for students to discuss attitudes and prejudices portrayed in films and then to move from this discussion to recognizing avenues for positive change in their own behaviors and beliefs. The teacher facilitator must be selective in the film segments shown. Those sections do not need to reflect the theme of the film in its entirety, but only the desired topic of discussion. Viewing an entire film might turn the focus of the students away from the particular emphasis that the facilitator desires. In addition, time often does not allow for viewing an entire film. Films rated "R" should not be shown in their entirety to students under age 18, but there may be segments that have educational value that can be shown in age appropriate settings. Conversely, films rated "G" or "PG" such as the Disney animated Hunchback of Notre Dame that is driven by themes of intolerance and cruelty can be used effectively for any age group to clarify opinions and values.

**[continued]**



**Chapter Four**



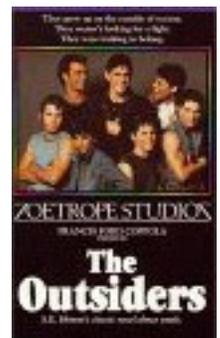
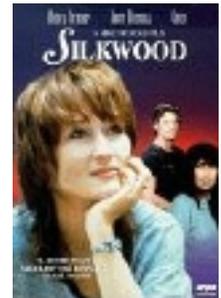
**Reflection**  
**Film Seminar**

**Description**

The possibilities for film selection are many.

A few suggestions include:

<b>Adolescent Issues:</b>	The Outsiders, Breakfast Club, Dead Poet's Society, What's Eating Gilbert Grape?, Life As A House, Separate Peace, Ordinary People, Emperor's Club
<b>Aging Issues:</b>	Driving Miss Daisy, Fried Green Tomatoes, I'm not Rappaport, Tuesdays with Morry
<b>Art and Music:</b>	Amadeus, Pollack, Frida
<b>English/History:</b>	Raisin in the Sun, To Kill A Mockingbird, Robinson Crusoe/ Castaway, Gladiator, Schindler's List, The Pianist, Snow Falling on Cedars
<b>Diversity Acceptance:</b>	Remember the Titans, Finding Forester, Shrek
<b>Disability:</b>	My Left Foot, Forrest Gump, Children of A Lesser God, Miracle Worker, Man Without a Face, Hunchback of Notre Dame(also animated version), Of Mice and Men
<b>Environmental Issues:</b>	Erin Brockovich, A Civil Action, Silkwood
<b>Gender Equity:</b>	The Contender, Bend It Like Beckham
<b>Illness Issues:</b>	The Philadelphia Story, Longtime Companion, Iris
<b>Substance Abuse:</b>	Traffic



**[continued]**

Chapter Four



**Reflection**  
**Film Seminar**



Processing

In processing film discussions, it is important for the facilitator to decide on what issues he/she will focus. In formulating questions for students' reflection the facilitator should always lead the students from what they have seen to how it applies to their service in real life as well as what the students have learned about themselves and whether it has changed their thinking or behavior.

At the conclusion of the processing, we usually ask students to write a response to the film seminar. For example, after our discussion of **Remember the Titans**, they responded to the following:

- By giving specific examples from the film, describe the opening day at TC Williams High School:
  - √ In what ways is this opening day different or similar to opening day at our school?
  - √ What types of intolerance or prejudice have you witnessed in your school or personal life?

**Chapter Four**



**Reflection**  
**Dance Cards**

**Objective**

To give every student the opportunity to talk one on one about the topic.

**Materials**

None required BUT you can use "Dance Cards" and pencils.

**Physical Setting**

None required BUT we recommend chairs set up in pairs so those seated are side by side looking directly into each other's eyes (as in Musical Chairs).

**Description**

Dance partners can pair up by signing each other's "Dance Cards" as was the custom in old fashioned ballroom dancing, or the facilitator can ask them to pair with someone who shares their birthday season or other characteristic. Participants sit facing their partners. The facilitator asks the group for the characteristics of a good speaker (specific details, show-don't tell) and a good listener (asks questions, nods encouragingly, pays close attention). The facilitator gives the topic. It should be a non-threatening topic that can be answered with varying degrees of self-disclosure. The facilitator then gives one minute of silent think time and insists that all participants remain quiet and think about their answers. Then the facilitator announces who will speak first. (Those whose birthday is first in the year or face north, etc.) The facilitator then calls, "Speakers speak; listeners listen!" After about two minutes, he/she calls, "Switch! Speakers listen; listeners speak!"

"Dancers" switch partners and the facilitator gives a new question. Never do more than four "dances" and usually three is enough.

Suggestions for topics include:

- favorite season (vacation, pet) and why
- a person I admire, something of which I am proud
- an ideal in which I believe
- a success/problem of our service

**[continued]**

**Chapter Four**



**Reflection**  
**Dance Cards**

**Processing**

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**Ask:**

- What did you learn from this activity about speaking and listening?
- Which did you prefer speaking or listening? Why?
- What interesting information did you learn?

**Variations**

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**Spinning  
Circles**

Chairs are placed in a circle facing out. Then another circle of chairs is placed around this circle, this time all chairs facing in. Be sure that each chair on the inside has one on the outside directly facing it. Discuss good speaking and listening. Give think time and topic as per Dance Cards. After a dialogue, call "Spin!"

Participants on the inside or outside of the circle move the number of the chairs you direct. They must shake hands with those whom they pass by. They then sit and shake hands with their new partner and the activity continues. This activity is especially useful for reflecting upon any topic. It provides a great preliminary activity to any class discussion.



## Chapter Five    **The Critical Element of Assessment**



[Evaluation Checklist](#)  
page 3.30

[Portfolio](#)  
page 3.32

[Community Web](#)  
page 3.35

It is important that facilitators and students measure the impact of the students' learning experiences and the effectiveness of the service in the school or community. Assessment gives direction for improvement, growth and change. Much of service learning assessment is on-going, but students and teachers need to set aside specific time at the completion (and for long term activities, midpoints) of projects/activities to evaluate them.

We advise those involved in service learning to collect as much data on the program as possible. The more hard evidence service learning educators can collect, the easier it will be for them to finance their activities and to persuade other educators to embrace it. Data such as attendance records, grades, discipline reports, pre and post tests and attitudes and values surveys provide valuable, persuasive support for service learning as an educational pedagogy. Through these strategies character development can also be monitored and evaluated.

It is often difficult for teacher/facilitators (especially those on the secondary level) to collect detailed data and we advise them to do as much as they can. Whenever possible, hire a person skilled in data collection and analysis. If financial and time constraints forbid extensive data collection, facilitators should be certain that every student, agency partner, teacher and administrator involved completes at least a brief **written** evaluation of the project itself as well as the individual's self-analysis of personal growth. Over time, such documents give substantial input into the successes and needs for improvement of any activity.

We utilize a variety of evaluation strategies that not only assist us in improving our activities, but also provide significant, valuable insight for participants. They make the learning involved more vivid and relevant to the participants' lives.

**Chapter Five**



**Assessment**  
**Evaluation Checklist**

**Objective** \_\_\_\_\_  
To provide facilitators and/or students with a quick method of reviewing their service activity.

**Materials** \_\_\_\_\_  
None required BUT you can use a standard form.

**Physical Setting** \_\_\_\_\_  
None required BUT we recommend chair space for sitting so that the group can discuss the checklist.

**Description** \_\_\_\_\_  
The group responds to questions that were developed at the beginning of the activity to correspond with the Critical Elements.

We suggest the following, but every group must adjust them for their own needs.

**Planning and**  
**Community Voice**  
page 3.3

- Did we include the community in determining the focus and plan of our activity? If so, how did we do this effectively? Why/why not?
- How did we insure that there was a real need for our activity?
- Did the students have a voice in selecting and designing the activity?
- Did we make adequate plans for the activity?

**Orientation and**  
**Training**  
page 3.9

- Were students given sufficient knowledge and skills to carry out their assigned responsibilities? If not, what was lacking?
- Did the service receivers have adequate preparation to welcome student assistance?

**Thoughtful Service**  
page 3.13

- Who received the service? When? How often? Where?
- What skills/knowledge did students use and/or gain during the activity?

**[continued]**

**Chapter Five**

**Assessment**  
**Evaluation Checklist**

**Description** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reflection**  
**page 3.14**

- What activities were utilized in reflection?
- Did students have opportunities to review and reflect upon their service actions? Did they read, write and discuss their service?
- Did students demonstrate their understanding of skills and/or knowledge gained through the service?
- Were they able to connect the service to the academic curriculum?
- Did they discuss and/or write about their personal growth?

**Assessment**  
**page 3.29**

- What evaluative tools and/or activities were utilized?
- Was objective as well as subjective data collected? How was it analyzed? By whom?
- Did students have an opportunity for both individual, small and/or large group assessment activities?

**Celebration**  
**page 3.36**

- Did participants have opportunities to celebrate their good works? If so, how effective was this celebration?
- Who was included in the celebration? Parents? Community members? Recipients of the service? Others?

**Processing** \_\_\_\_\_

Students should write and, in some way, share a brief personal summary of their check list responses.

Chapter Five



**Assessment  
Portfolio**

**Objective**

To give students the opportunity to reflect on and evaluate their growth over time.

**Materials**

An attractive folder to which papers can be added and subtracted, pen. Optional: drawing utensils, photos and other assorted objects.

**Physical Setting**

Quiet space.

**Description**

A portfolio is a collection of materials associated with the curriculum and its related service activity from the beginning of the unit until its completion. It may contain reflection documents, class notes, momentos, photos, articles, letters, videos, journals, teacher comments, scored rubrics, evaluation checklists, attendance logs, test results, evidence of constructed service (web site, care bag).

**Metacognition**

At the end of the unit, the students assess their own portfolios and then complete a **metacognition** summary of them. This summary should include students' perceptions of the knowledge and skills they have gained throughout the unit. We ask students to write the following: a summary of a typical service experience, a description of someone they have met through their service, a comment on two of their favorite reflection activities, a summary of their personal and professional growth, and their intentions for the future.

- Where will you go from here with this subject and/or service?

**[continued]**

Chapter Five



**Assessment**  
**Portfolio**

**Processing**

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Students present their portfolios and metacognition papers to small groups of faculty, other students, parents and community members. Sometimes these portfolio presentations cover

**Portfolio Review**

extensive, in-depth work. Students have gathered considerable expertise in the presented subject or issue. Their poise and their ability to articulate the positive impact of their involvement demonstrate not only the worth of the activity, but also the value in students' carefully examining past work and drawing evaluative conclusions.

**Variations**

**(1) Metacognition  
Letter**

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**(1)** This is similar to the metacognition summary. It includes those questions in the summary, but also gives the writer a more specific audience of his/her choice. Thus the letter may be directed toward a fellow student, a teacher, a service receiver, an agency representative, a parent or someone else of the student's choice. This specific point of view helps the student view his experience through a chosen perspective and is often more rewarding for the student. Metacognition letters are often sent to the intended receiver, but can also be shared with others with permission of the writer.

**(2) Letter to Self**

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**(2)** This evaluative activity has always been **VERY** popular with our students. Students write a letter to themselves that will be sent to them in five (10) years. In the letter, they complete some of the following leads:

**Thinking over my service learning activity:**

- The high points were....
- I learned....
- The role I played was....
- The main problems were....

**[continued]**

Chapter Five



**Assessment  
Portfolio**

**Variations**

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- We addressed them by....
- Memorable moments include....
- Our main achievements were....

**Considering my life at this moment:**

- The important people are...because....
- My favorite TV shows, entertainers, books, are....
- My primary concerns are....
- The most serious world problems are....

**(2) Letter to Self Thinking of my future:**

- My goals are...because....
  - Expect to serve my community by....
- 

As with the **Metacognition Letter**, these **Letters to Self** are shared with others only with writer permission. Students hand in the letters and they are put in a sealed envelope and addressed with an address the student thinks will still be available to him/her in five (10) years. We have been sending these for the last fifteen years, and often we get notes and calls from former students who write not only how interesting they found their letters but also that the letter had been the impetus for them to get involved in volunteer service in their present lives.

**Chapter Five**



**Assessment**  
**Community Web**

**Objective**

To give every student an opportunity to comment on an issue to the whole group as they create virtual community connections.

**Materials**

Ball of yarn or string.

**Physical Setting**

Comfortable circle is preferable but any arrangement will work.

**Description**

This activity works well as a final assessment tool, but it can be utilized for reflection at any time during the project/activity. The facilitator requests that the group reflect on the experience as a whole or focus on a specific issue or question. Each student takes time to think about his/her opinion or personal experience relating to the issue. The facilitator begins by modeling an appropriate opinion or story. Then the facilitator lightly tosses the ball of yarn or string to someone else in the group, keeping the end of the string in his/her hand. Each person follows suit, telling his/her story, holding onto the string and tossing the ball. By the last story, everyone in the room is connected to each other by the string. If the group has more than 25 people, then 15 people can suffice to stand for everyone and the fifteenth person can return the ball of string to the facilitator. (If everyone in a large group told a story, participants would lose interest.)

**Processing**

The facilitator congratulates the group on how well they did and explains how they all have separate connections to the issue and have come together to work as a group. The facilitator leads the group into recognizing that a group so woven together is stronger than any single person. The more connections, the stronger the community working together, the better any final outcome should be.

**Variations**

Sometimes this is a very effective planning activity. Each person describes his/her planned contribution to the project. It emphasizes the importance of collaboration and cooperation and self-responsibility in successful group projects.

## Chapter Six

### **The Critical Element of Celebration**

No service learning experience is complete without the opportunity for students to celebrate their experiences and share their accomplishments with others. The celebration may be a small, intimate gathering of the class itself or it may include other classes, faculty, administration, parents, community members, and local businesses. Education and government leaders such as Board of Regents members, representatives of the State Education Department, school board members, legislators, and mayors are often surprisingly willing to attend especially if the invitation makes clear that this is a walk-about event with only brief attendance expected.



[Service Fair](#)  
page 3.37

[Au Revoir Circle](#)  
page 3.39

Sometimes celebrations center upon student creations such as: a mural or quilts, a book/newsletter/news paper articles, or guest speaker. Students also may be honored for their experience through letters to their parents and school administrators commending their participation and commitment. Awards certificates publicly presented at an awards assembly or other event and awards that share service learning awareness such as pins, t-shirts, hats or pens are other possibilities to celebrate and honor the service contributions of the students.

Whatever celebratory/recognition event is chosen, media publicity of this event is good for the program and school community relationship in general. Teaching students the strategies for successful media coverage is not only beneficial to the program, but also a valuable, life long skill. One must be cautious, however, in the recognition and celebration of students' service learning efforts. Too much reward might negate the volunteer spirit of the service itself.

**Chapter Six**



**Celebration**  
**Service Fair**

**Objective**

To give students the opportunity to share the success of their activity with parents, faculty and community members.

**Materials**

Poster boards, photos, colored paper and markers, assorted optional additions.

**Physical Setting**

Space adequate for display and for guests to move about.

**Description**

Service learning fairs have been extremely successful celebration events. Here students from multiple classes or schools come together to showcase their SL activities through poster displays, photographs, videos, mementos and written materials. Students take turns welcoming visitors to their display and explaining their project. All who attend such a celebration should be encouraged to ask questions, which give the students an opportunity to talk about their service.

“I am surprised by the great work these students have done.”

Parent Guest

Invited guests should be given a brochure that explains service learning and suggests some appropriate questions to ask the students. Although the celebration need not be elaborate, there should be refreshments and other refinements to make it a special occasion. Music, candles, table linens etc. add to the celebratory atmosphere. The more elegant it is, the more special it becomes to students and their families. Possible sites for the celebrations are many and varied, but they must offer adequate space for guests to circulate throughout the display booths.

**[continued]**

**Chapter Six**



**Celebration**  
**Service Fair**

**Description**

A celebration site other than the classroom sends a message that this is a special occasion and not just a routine class event. When finances allow, utilizing a catering service should be considered. If catering services prove too costly, local businesses are often willing to donate the refreshments.

**Suggested sites include:**

- school libraries and cafeterias
- colleges and universities
- service sites
- restaurants and conference centers
- museums, public libraries
- public buildings
- parks and gardens (Covered pavilions eliminate the risk of inclement weather.)
- shopping centers/malls
- banks
- libraries
- recreation centers
- churches
- local businesses

**Sites that our Capital Region Network has utilized include:**

- school libraries and cafeterias
- community colleges
- colleges and universities
- senior citizen centers
- restaurants and conference centers
- community centers
- Observation Deck at Albany International Airport
- town halls
- museum exhibition halls
- NYS Legislative Buildings
- Rockefeller Plaza Egg Performance Center
- city park pavilions

**Chapter Six**



**Celebration**  
**Au Revoir Circle**

**Objective**

To offer all participants the opportunity to participate in a formal closure that enables them to look into the eyes of every other participant, make final comments to the entire group and better understand the purpose of the day.

**Materials**

None.

**Physical Setting**

Space large enough for all participants to stand in a circle.

**Description**

**Number of  
Participants:**  
10-100

Participants stand in a large circle holding hands. The facilitator explains that they have come together after a day (afternoon, evening, week) of working together for a common cause. This exact group will probably never be together again under these circumstances. This activity gives participants a chance to make a final comment to the group on the group's work. Then the entire group moves slowly in a clockwise direction until someone says, "STOP!" This person takes two steps into the circle and speaks to the group. The person steps back into the circle, and the facilitator says, "thank you" and the entire group moves in a counter-clockwise direction. This continues until five or six people have spoken to the group. The facilitator announces, "One more!" and after that final person the facilitator congratulates the group on its fine work and reiterates that today (tonight) the group came together to collaboratively work on a project. They now each take what they have gained from each other out into the world to make a difference in the world.

The next part of this activity they must do in silence just taking a moment to smile a final goodbye into each person's eyes. Then the facilitator breaks hands with person on his/her left and instructs the group that when he rejoins hands with that person the group will be facing out into the world rather than in toward each other as they are now. At that moment they will all raise

**[continued]**

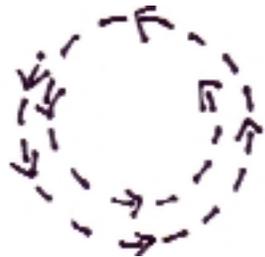
Chapter Six



**Celebration**  
**Au Revoir Circle**

**Description**

their hands and shout, "YES!" The facilitator then slowly leads the group in front of the person whose hand he/she has just dropped. He/she weaves slowly around the inside of the circle spiraling in further and further until he/she is at the center of a tight knot. He/she then turns directly about and leads the group back through the winding circle of people so some are still winding inward and others are winding out between them.



When the group finally has returned to one single circle and the facilitator rejoined hands with the person originally on his/her left, the group raises their hands and shouts, "YES!" Then everyone drops hands and cheers:

