Special Olympics

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education and engagement tools
for teachers and students

Service-Learning
Instructional Planning Guide

A Guide to Implementing Quality
Academic Service-Learning

"Service-learning has made me a better teacher. I can finally push my students to meaningfully apply and transfer skills they learn."

Why Service–Learning

Research has shown that service-learning is a promising strategy for dropout prevention (Billig, 2000; Billig, Root, & Jesse, 2005; Bridgeland, DiIulio, & Wulsin, 2008). Service-learning activities address various components or strategies identified as important to dropout prevention such as engaging teaching and curricula, connections between school and work, adult and student relationships, communication skills, and community engagement.

Highlights from some of the service-learning research that has been published to date includes:
- Service-Learning can significantly reduce the achievement gap between affluent and low-income students. Low-income students who participated in service opportunities and had lengthier participation in service-learning had better school attendance and grades than low-income students who did not participate. (Scales, Roehlkepartain, Neal, Kielsmeier, & Benson, 2006).

- A review of data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS) suggested that:

  - Civic engagement activities raised the odds of graduation and improved high school students' progress in reading, math, science and history.

  - Students who participated in service-learning activities in high school were 22 percent more likely to graduate from college than those who did not participate.

  - Students who participated in service-learning scored 6.7 percent higher in reading achievement and 5.9 percent higher in science achievement than those who did not participate in service-learning.

- RMC Research evaluated a service-learning program focused on the environment in several New England schools (Klute, 2002). Participating students showed that sixth grade service-learning participants in New Hampshire demonstrated statistically significant gains in achievement scores on state assessments relative to their own performance in the past.

- A review of research (Furco, 2007) indicates that high quality service-learning, because it uses effective, experiential learning strategies, can enhance academic outcomes in such content areas as reading, writing, mathematics, and science. A variety of studies have shown a range of achievement-related benefits from service-learning, including improved attendance, higher grade point averages, enhanced preparation for the workforce, enhanced awareness and understanding of social issues, greater motivation for learning, and heightened engagement in prosocial behaviors.

Academic service-learning holds tremendous promise for increasing graduation rates. We know that academic service-learning reflects sound instructional practices. We know that increasing the use of instructional strategies grounded in inquiry-based teaching, high-level thinking skills, and methods reflecting brain research moves learning to a higher level. We also know that using strategies that require students to take an active role in both the learning and assessment process and take greater ownership of their learning will result in higher academic growth. As importantly, we know that providing students opportunities to practice active citizenship throughout their educational career increases the likelihood of lifelong engagement in their communities. High quality service-learning puts these principles into practice.

Service-learning parallels the lessons we've learned about what effective instruction looks like. School reform efforts should always demonstrate best practices in education. Many of these best practices are exemplified in the use of high quality service-learning and produce meaningful results.

Why Service-Learning

Service-learning is an instructional method that:

1. develops critical 21st century skills, including critical thinking, problem solving, communication, teamwork, creativity, information literacy, and action planning that will prepare students to compete in a global economy;

2. is integrated intentionally into students' academic curriculum;

3. lets students learn and develop by actively participating in meeting community needs via school-community collaboration;

4. uses regular assessment to engage in data-based decision-making and continuous growth and development.

"The first time we went to city council meetings, everyone was afraid. But we began to see that they were just people, too, and they thought we had good ideas and we started to feel like we were working together with them."

Overview
Why Service–Learning

The following diagram compares effective instructional practices to service-learning. It illustrates the propensity of these strategies to not only produce actively engaged citizens, but also to strengthen academic achievement across all subjects.

Effective Instructional Practices

Service-Learning

Weed the Garden – Less is more
Students are able to perform at a higher level academically when curriculum is deeper in content.
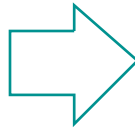
Through service-learning, students delve deeper into fewer topics, allowing them to learn and integrate knowledge more fully.

Inquiry Teaching and Higher-Level Thinking
Involving students in posing questions, analyzing data, and developing conclusions or generalizations moves their learning to a higher level.
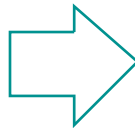
In identifying a community need and carrying out a project designed to address that need, students must be able to integrate critical thinking skills and interact with knowledge and concepts meaningfully.

Active Engagement
When students take an active role in both the learning and assessment process, mastery of academic skills increases along with motivation and self-responsibility.
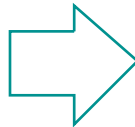
Students become actively engaged not only in what they need to learn, but how to learn and apply concepts through connecting the learning to a project they care about.

Student Ownership
Students learn more when they feel personally invested in the process.
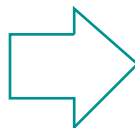
Youth voice and student ownership of project development is core to service-learning.

Create a democratic environment
Classrooms that involve students in decision making and classroom management processes develop more actively engaged students and stronger citizens.
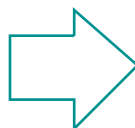
Classrooms that embrace quality service-learning methodology view students as an asset to our communities and seek to empower them through active citizenship.

Reflection
Effective learning must involve a process of meaningful reflection embedded throughout the learning experience.

Ongoing, meaningful reflection is a critical component of high quality service-learning.

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Why Service-Learning

A typical high quality service-learning experience

Hayes Bilingual Elementary School Service-Learning Project
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

What began as a simple example of high quality instruction evolved into a deep service-learning experience for two fifth grade classrooms and the library media specialist at Hayes Bilingual Elementary School in Milwaukee.

School librarian Tomás Kelnhofer and two fifth grade teachers at Hayes used a project-based learning framework to investigate the Kinnickinnic River. They implemented a service-learning project in partnership with Friends of Milwaukee's Rivers, Sixteenth Street Community Health Center, The Park People of Milwaukee, and University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee School of Architecture and Urban Planning. Fifth-grade students also engaged the rest of the school in portions of this project as they sought to increase awareness of the effect of pollution on our environment. Through their advocacy efforts, a team of educators were recruited to increase the use of service-learning as an instructional pedagogy at other grade levels next year.

Most students at the school are Latino. Teachers provided for differentiated involvement and addressed diversity throughout the project to broaden students' understanding of themselves and their community. The project involved a high level of coordination between the school and Friends of Milwaukee Rivers and Sixteenth Street Health Center. They worked together to organize an art project from junk collected during a spring clean-up, collaboratively researched issues, and developed an action plan to address needs in multiple ways. The sculpture they created was used as an outreach tool to educate the public about why they should care about cleaning up the Kinnickinnic River, one of three major rivers that empty into Milwaukee harbor.

The project began within the context of an ecological anthropology unit on the nearby Kinnickinnic River, with service-learning elements being incorporated during instructional planning. The unit focused on the relationship between Milwaukeeans and this urban river over the course of time. At the beginning of the unit, many students reported that they didn't even understand that it was a river, as in their neighborhood, it looked more like a drainage ditch and was often used as a dumping ground for garbage.

The students started by investigating essential questions to build background knowledge. They teamed up with local river experts, a nearby high school, and other concerned citizens to sample and monitor the water quality of the river and look for trends in river health. Students examined a broad range of topics, from environmentalist movements and wildlife and habitat conservation, to traditional ecological knowledge and best practices. Students researched articles and other web resources on related topics at differentiated reading levels which were placed in a Moodle course for students to access online. The information they acquired was used in class discussions to further their learning and address ethical issues related to the environmental problems. These classroom discussions continued in online discussion groups in the Moodle course.

Get into it

Why Service-Learning

The project covered several subject areas, including science, language arts, social studies, math, and technology. Students kept science notebooks and built reflection into their data collections. They used technology to gather information for their research, enter data in spreadsheets, analyze information in graphs, and communicate in written documents. Students developed PowerPoint presentations to synthesize and convey learning throughout this unit. They discussed the ethical issues of polluting the river and learned about the history of the river. In collaboration with community-based organizations and a high school located on the river, students explored the river in canoes and did water quality testing. Students continued to assess the effectiveness of their project throughout implementation. As the project continued, students are working to keep the community safe from dangers around the river, as well as help reduce the waste polluting the river.

Fifth graders had a great deal to say about all they learned during the Kinnikinnic River project. They analyzed how their learning was more effective because of the service-learning experiences, the effect it had on student attendance, and how they felt valued as community members due to their work. Their comments included:

- "Service-learning makes school more interesting."

- "We learned a lot more. We learned a fun way, not just sitting in the chair and doing normal stuff."

- "Almost no one is absent anymore unless they're really sick."

- "We learned about all of our subjects, and now people know that it's a river and is something important to our environment. Many people used to think it was just a place to throw garbage."

- "We want the city to use less salt on the roads. Salt hurts the river, because the runoff goes into the storm drains and causes animals to die."

- "We like to help our community. If we get it cleaned up the health center is going to help us build a bikeway so we can have picnics by the river."

- "Service-learning helps our learning because we learn how to cooperate and work in groups."

In addition to these advocacy efforts, students helped design the layout for rain gardens at Cleveland Park, created informational signs about the benefits of rain gardens, and placed informative stickers on storm drains to educate the public about how to keep chemicals out of the river. Their long-range goal is to build a natural filtration along the river and have a bike path developed as a cooperative effort between community agencies and a local health clinic so the community can easily access a picnic area that will be established.

"Service-learning makes my classes more interesting. I learn so much more when I see why I need to learn the things I'm learning."

SERVICE–LEARNING BACKGROUND

What High Quality Service–Learning Looks Like

Research indicates a significant variation in outcomes related to service-learning unless practice is of high quality. Based on the results of this research, the service-learning field collaboratively developed a set of eight standards and 35 indicators to guide high quality practice. When these standards and indicators are met, research predicts that service-learning experiences will yield greater student engagement; increased academic achievement; stronger civic knowledge, skills and dispositions; and positive social-emotional outcomes.

The K-12 Service –Learning Standards for Quality Practice[1] were developed through a series of "reactor panels" convened nationwide by the National Youth Leadership Council and RMC Research Corporation. The panels were comprised of representatives from every sector of the service-learning field: students, teachers, administrators and other education leaders, policy-makers, staff from community-based organizations, community members, and others interested in service-learning. Each of the standards and indicators are grounded in service-learning research and has been shown to consistently lead to positive outcomes. To achieve optimal outcomes, each of these standards should be embedded into every school service-learning experience.

Duration and Intensity

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

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.

"Service Learning has become an essential part my curriculum planning."

[1]K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice. National Youth Leadership Council, 2008.

Partnerships

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.

Meaningful Service

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

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.

What High Quality Service–Learning Looks Like

5. Service-learning involves youth in evaluating the quality and effectiveness of the service-learning experience.

Diversity

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.

Reflection

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.

"Service Learning excites and motivates my students to want to help others."

get into it

What High Quality Service-Learning Looks Like

Progress Monitoring

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.

Continuous Improvement

As you proceed with developing your understanding and quality implementation of service-learning, it is important to remember that this is a learning journey. Any change worth seeking is worth investing in, and service-learning is no different. While this pedagogy is a complex process and takes time to learn how to use effectively, service-learning yields tremendous results that are well worth the investment of professional time and energy.

The rubrics on the following page offer guidance for educators seeking to continuously improve their service-learning practice as they journey from novice to advanced practitioner.

"Service Learning helps my students to realize that they can make a difference in their school, homes and community even though they are only nine. They truly have a voice!"

Rubric for Continuous Improvement of the Service–Learning Experience[2]

	Novice	Introductory	Experienced	Advanced
Duration and Intensity *Service–learning has sufficient duration and intensity to address community needs and meet specified outcomes.*	Project is brief (less than two weeks) and addresses an immediate need without providing a long term solution. Process of investigation, planning, action, reflection, and demonstration/ celebration of impacts is weak. Minimal amount of time and intensity is provided.	The Service–Learning experience is carried out over a short time period (a few weeks), addresses an immediate need and provides only a start to a long term solution. The process of investigating community needs, planning, action, reflection, and demonstration/celebration drives the project somewhat, resulting in limited time and intensity.	The process of investigating community needs, planning, action, reflection, and demonstration/celebration is used on a limited basis. Service–Learning is conducted over a significant period of time. The project addresses community need but falls short of achieving all learning outcomes.	The process of investigating community needs, planning, action, reflection, and demonstration/celebration of learning and impacts on self and community is used consistently. Service–learning is conducted during concentrated blocks of time across a period of several weeks or months, providing adequate time to address identified community needs and achieve learning outcomes.
Link to Curriculum *Service–learning is intentionally used as an instructional strategy to meet learning goals and/or content standards.*	Project uses skills which can be found in the standards, but they aren't the foundation out of which the project grows. Skills incorporated into the experience are at lower levels on the hierarchy of learning. Service is not intentionally connected to learning and is seen as mainly an add-on or enrichment activity.	Students master basic skills through the service–learning project but the link to curriculum is weak and not intentional. Experience does not align with content standards and is not used to push learning to higher levels of application. Student is recognized on school records, but no formal district policy is in place.	Project work leads students toward mastery of more complex skills in a rigorous and relevant curriculum. Instruction assists students in completion of project, though the link may not be direct and intentional. Service–learning is an integral part of the academic expectations for students throughout the district.	Participants learn how to transfer knowledge and skills from one setting to another. Service–learning is explicitly aligned with the academic curriculum; learning goals are clearly articulated. Students construct knowledge through challenging tasks in a rigorous and relevant curriculum. Service–learning is formally recognized in school board policies and student records.
Partnerships *Service–learning partnerships are collaborative, mutually beneficial, and address community needs.*	Project is determined and implemented with little involvement from community partners or is grounded in meeting a need for service presented by the community partner or school. A shared vision and collaborative partnership has not been established or maintained.	Partnerships are few in number, weak, or non-existent. Limited interactions with community partners lead to meeting a minimal community need. Project reflects a partial shared vision with minimal collaborative work between the partners. Service is not reciprocal or of mutual benefit.	Some communication and ongoing interaction with community partners is central to the project. Students work with partners to develop common goals. More opportunities could be provided to encourage students to see community members as collaborative partners and resources, and not just recipients of service.	A variety of partners are engaged. Partnerships engage in frequent and regular communication, establish a shared vision and set common goals, and collaboratively develop and implement action plans to meet specified goals. Partners share knowledge and understanding of school and community assets and needs, and view each other as valued resources.
Meaningful Service *Service–learning actively engages participants in meaningful and personally relevant service activities.*	Students provide indirect service with no contact with population being served. Project is determined without a community needs assessment and does not lead to attainable and visible outcomes. Experience is not appropriate for students' age and developmental level and/or issue is not personally relevant.	Community needs assessment is done in isolation from the community. Project includes minimal direct contact with those being served. Outcomes are attainable and visible, but do little to contribute toward lasting change. Students do not understand their service experiences in the context of the underlying societal issues being addressed.	Project addresses a real need connected to a personally relevant issue and provides direct contact with those being served. Outcomes are attainable and visible, but may not be highly valued by those being served in the school, local, and/or global community.	Experiences are developmentally appropriate, address personally relevant issues, and encourage participants to understand their service experiences in the context of the underlying societal issues being addressed. Interesting and engaging service activities lead to attainable and visible outcomes that have significant impact on participants and others in the school, local, and/or global community.

Rubric for Assessing Quality of the Service–Learning Experience[3]

	Novice	Introductory	Experienced	Advanced
Youth Voice Service-learning provides youth with a strong voice in planning, implementing, and evaluating service-learning experiences with guidance from adults.	Teacher determines project with very limited or without student input. Task completion is determined and monitored by the teacher. Teacher evaluates quality and effectiveness of the service-learning experience without student input.	Teacher determines project and offers strong guidance in organizing and completing project tasks. Students are allowed to provide input into decisions, but final determination is made by the teacher. Youth have limited opportunities to demonstrate their abilities and decision-making skills.	Teacher works with students in determining project based on standards. All students work collaboratively to develop project plan and take leadership in carrying out tasks. Teacher helps to shape decisions throughout the process, but places primary emphasis on student voice.	Youth are engaged in generating ideas, identifying learning outcomes, and decision-making during planning, implementation, and evaluation. Youth acquire knowledge and skills to enhance leadership and decision-making and are involved in evaluating the quality and effectiveness of the service-learning experience. Youth and adults are involved in creating an environment that supports trust and open expression of ideas.
Diversity Service-learning promotes understanding of diversity and mutual respect among all participants.	Students' pre-conceptions and stereotypes are not challenged. Multiple perspectives are not intentionally sought or incorporated into service-learning experience. Decisions are made by vote rather than consensus.	Understanding of multiple perspectives is limited to tolerance and acceptance of others. Students' pre-conceptions are challenged on a limited basis but project could do more to address engaging the perspective of recipients of the service (people and/or places).	Some time is spent identifying and overcoming stereotypes and valuing different points of view. Students' pre-conceptions and stereotypes are somewhat challenged. Some collaboration incorporating multiple perspectives is developed.	Participants analyze different points of view to gain understanding of multiple perspectives, develop interpersonal skills in conflict resolution and decision-making, recognize and overcome stereotypes, and understand and value the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of those offering and receiving service. Decisions are made through a consensus process.
Reflection 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.	Basic reflection is provided for at the end of the service-learning experience using one or two different methods. Reflection is limited in its depth and does not demonstrate complex analysis of social and civic issues. Examination of preconceptions and assumptions is not incorporated into reflective process.	Reflection consists of documenting progress of project and has no clear connection to skills being developed. Project could do more to deepen the level of reflection for students and challenge them to identify, research, and discuss alternative solutions.	Meaningful reflection is planned and integral to the project and is used to teach and/or reinforce core academic skills and/or content. Reflection includes some emphasis on higher order thinking skills. Students are prepared for service-related tasks in connection with skill instruction. Project challenges students to identify, research and implement alternative solutions.	Participants think deeply about complex community problems and alternative solutions and examine a variety of social and civic issues. Participants examine preconceptions in understanding their roles and responsibilities as citizens. It occurs before, during, and after the experience and includes a variety of verbal, written, artistic, and nonverbal activities to demonstrate changes in participants' knowledge, skills, and/or attitudes.
Progress Monitoring 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.	Teacher and students follow implementation plans without collecting data to guide decisions. No clear connection exists to specific goals and learning outcomes.	Teacher assesses outcome of learning activities separate from service-learning experience. Teacher and students gather evidence of progress, but do not base decisions on data collected.	Evidence collected provides a picture of student progress throughout the service-learning experience and guides both instruction and project implementation.	Evidence of quality service-learning implementation and progress toward meeting specific goals and learning outcomes is collected from multiple sources throughout. Evidence is used to improve experiences and progress toward goals. Evidence of progress is communicated with the broader community to deepen understanding of service-learning and ensure high quality practices.

[3]Based on the *K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice*. National Youth Leadership Council, 2008.

Service-Learning Instructional Planning Guide

As you work to implement high quality service-learning in your classroom, remember the following guidelines:

- **Start From Where You Are** – Find your comfort zone and find ways to incorporate service-learning into your instructional practices.

- **Start Small** – Give yourself permission to be a novice practitioner.

- **Seek Continuous Improvement** – Gather evidence on the quality of your service-learning practice and continue to grow your skills over time.

The pathway to high quality service-learning begins with the premise that effective service-learning is an outgrowth of the classroom curriculum. A service-learning experience is designed as a civic outcome stemming from the intentional application of knowledge gained through formal instruction as a means to furthering student mastery of the content.

In planning units that incorporate a service-learning experience, it is important to remember that this process is cyclical, rather than linear in nature. You will need to revisit your plans as you work to incorporate students' ideas and the issues that are important to them. Youth ownership is a significant component to securing buy-in, which leads to a higher level of engagement and participation in learning. As you mesh student issues with your instructional goals, you will be able to identify opportunities for your instruction to support and facilitate their work in meaningful ways.

As the diagram below shows, each piece of the planning process is filtered through the instructional lens that you set in place at the beginning of the unit by identifying the performance standards and instructional content to be delivered. The Instructional Plan provides the outline for skill development and instructional context for the service-learning experience. Once you have set the context, the sequence outlined along the arrow depicts the IPARDC process, which comprises the five core elements in a quality service-learning experience. It is important to note that reflection isn't a single step within the process; it is to be incorporated throughout the service-learning experience.

Introduction and Overview

This guide provides a sequence for implementing high quality service-learning experiences based on the National K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice. Research shows that service-learning experiences which incorporate these standards and indicators result in positive academic, civic, and social-emotional outcomes. In high quality service-learning practice, the standards and indicators are met throughout the implementation process, which includes five components:

1. Investigation
2. Planning
3. Action
4. Reflection
5. Demonstration/Celebration

Using the IPARDC process as the framework within which your students will design and carry out their service-learning experience, this guide will help you to blend instruction in core academic skills to intentionally achieve your intended goals. The first section walks you through the entire IPARDC process from start to finish. Within each section are suggested questions and resources for guiding students through each step, including segments of planning worksheets and tips for ensuring that each phase meets the K-12 Service-Learning Standards for Quality Practice. Following this section you will find the complete instructional planning and student planning worksheets which can be used by both you and your students in designing any service-learning experience. As you proceed through the design and implementation of a high quality service-learning experience, you will work your way through the following process:

Setting the Context [4]
1. Identify instructional goals
2. Develop essential questions
3. Determine assessments

Investigation
1. Identify the "community to serve"
2. Assess community needs
3. Select community need
4. Research issue
5. Weaving in reflection
6. Assess progress

Planning
1. Preparation
2. Develop an action plan
3. Integrate instruction
4. Weaving in reflection
5. Assess progress

Action
1. Implement action plan
2. Weaving in reflection
3. Assess progress

Reflection
1. Connect classroom learning with learning from service
2. Question assumptions
3. Develop deeper understanding of their roles as citizens
4. Improve problem solving

Demonstration/Celebration
1. Demonstrate impact on community
2. Demonstrate impact on self
3. Celebrate accomplishments

Reflection and Progress Monitoring

Reflection and Progress Monitoring

Reflection and Progress Monitoring

Reflection and Progress Monitoring

Reflection and Progress Monitoring

[4]Adapted with permission from *K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit*. Denver: RMC Research for Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2009.

1. Setting the Context

While there are a number of ways you and your students may come up with ideas for a service-learning project, it's important to always filter it through your instructional lens. Service-learning is a pedagogy which effectively teaches core academic skills. Think of this process in the same way you design any instructional unit. You may decide to explore a set of skills based on a particular "teachable moment," a current issue in the community, or because of the timing or sequence of your curriculum.
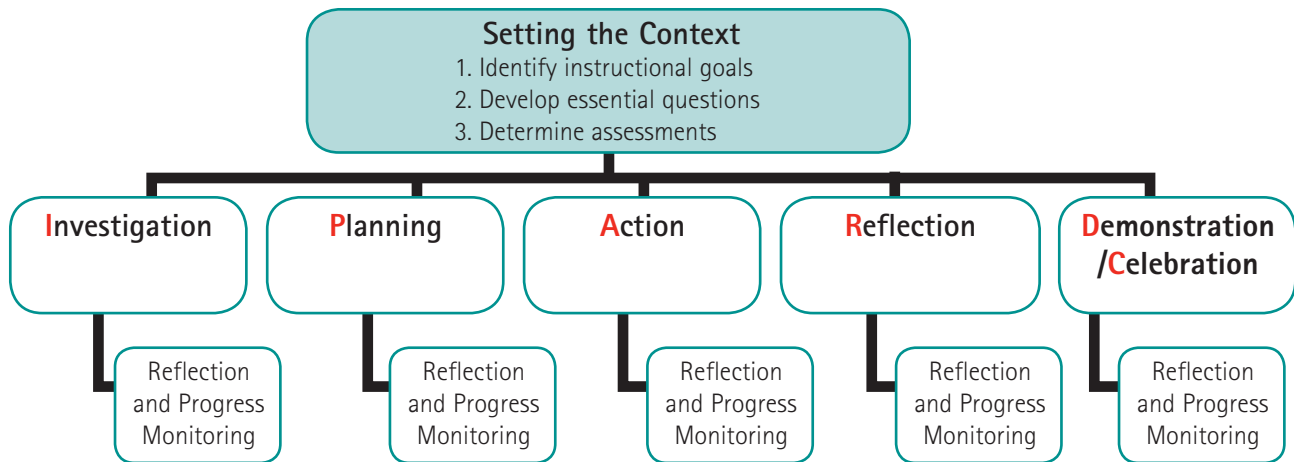
However you decide to embark on teaching a set of skills, the first step to a quality service-learning experience is to identify your instructional goals. This type of planning, known as backward curriculum design, asks teachers to intentionally plan the desired outcomes for instruction prior to engaging students in learning. As the saying goes, "If you don't know exactly where you're headed, then any road will get you there." This guide seeks to incorporate service-learning as an effective method leading to student mastery of the core academic standards. Once you know where you're going instructionally, service-learning will become one of the pedagogies you'll turn to again and again to teach those skills.

Setting the Context
1. Identify instructional goals
2. Develop essential questions
3. Determine assessments

Investigation	**P**lanning	**A**ction	**R**eflection	**D**emonstration /**C**elebration
Reflection and Progress Monitoring	Reflection and Progress Monitoring	Reflection and Progress Monitoring	Reflection and Progress Monitoring	Reflection and Progress Monitoring

Develop the framework

Like any instructional strategy, service-learning helps students meet identified instructional goals. Before students identify a community need, it is important for the teacher to identify the essential questions and performance standards that will be addressed in this curriculum unit. This process forms the academic context for the skills that will be applied through the service-learning experience.

1. **Identify instructional unit and the relevant performance standards**

   The first step in planning a unit infused with a service-learning experience is to consider how your unit is laid out and which standards will be addressed. Most curricula cover a lot breadth, but service-learning is best used for depth of skill development. When considering this form of instruction, identify the most important concepts you want students to grapple with in depth and design a service-learning experience with those concepts and skills in mind. With practice, you'll learn how to balance direct instruction with service-learning to cover all material. New practitioners are encouraged to start small as you work to increase your comfort level with this pedagogy.

   Begin by framing the service-learning experience within the context of a specific instructional unit. Several related standards from other subjects can be readily identified for each unit as well, creating an excellent opportunity for cross-disciplinary work. You may also find it helpful to identify the civic knowledge, skills and dispositions that will be addressed, along with any character education or social skills curriculum and

career or workplace skills. Students should understand your core expectations at the beginning of the unit, should be involved in identifying the skills they need to acquire throughout the unit, and should monitor their progress toward mastering those skills.

[5]

Unit Description:		
Key Performance Standards to be Addressed		
Number	Standard	
Related Performance Standards from other subject areas		
Subject	Number	Standard
Civic Goals		
Civic Knowledge		
Civic Skills		
Civic Attitudes and Values		
Character and Social Skills		
Career Skills		

2. **Brainstorm essential and unit questions related to the topic**

   High quality teaching calls for more than didactic instruction, which often fails to move students beyond basic knowledge and comprehension. To prepare students for success in the 21st century, we need to move them toward deeper levels of understanding. Essential questions focus on key concepts that help students make sense out of the world around them. They provide the "So what?" for your unit, pointing the way toward key inquiries within a subject. They give purpose to the learning and provide a context in which to engage students in rigorous inquiry, complex thinking, and problem solving. Essential questions open the door to meaningful service as an application and extension of learning into real-world, unpredictable settings.

   The essential and unit questions help define the instructional tasks and topics to be addressed. They may also introduce relevant questions or issues you hadn't previously considered covering in the unit. What are the big picture concepts that you want students to know, understand, and/or wrestle with? These questions should be open-ended, prompt deeper thinking, and address the core concepts rather than discrete facts that form the "So what?" of learning. Examples of essential questions might be:

   • Are human needs more or less important than the needs of the environment?

   • What is our responsibility to others in our community?

   • How does the financial welfare of individuals affect the whole community?

   • How does literature affect people's opinions?

   • What impact do stereotypes have on the social and economic health of our community?

   • In what ways is the Civil War still being fought today?

List the essential and unit questions to be addressed in this unit.
1.
2.
3.

3. **Determine how skills will be assessed**

   It is important to be intentional about the academic skills you address through service-learning rather than use the experience merely as a way to justify the use of instructional time. A good litmus test is to ask yourself, "Am I going to assess student progress on mastering the identified skills?" If students have already mastered the skill or if you don't plan to assess student progress, you probably aren't intentionally teaching it. For example, you might identify letter writing as a skill that students will use in a particular project. A high quality service-learning experience would be designed so that students will learn how to write effective letters through the process of investigating and taking action on an issue. Rubrics or other forms of assessment would be used to measure student progress, students would have opportunities to apply their letter writing in

new situations, and mastery would be determined based on criteria set prior to the experience. In backward curriculum design, once the learning objectives have been identified, the next step is to determine which core skills will be assessed and then develop a balanced assessment process for measuring progress toward those goals. In the worksheet below, identify the skills students will be held accountable for in this unit and the assessment tools that will be utilized in gathering evidence of progress throughout the experience.

Skills to be Mastered	Balanced Assessment Process *(List the tools you will use to collect data on student progress to ensure continuous improvement such as observation, written test, written report, oral presentation, etc.)*		
	Formative	Benchmark	Summative

Questions to guide instructional decisions as you prepare for Investigation: [6]

1. What is the overall purpose of the service-learning experience? What impacts do you hope the experience 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 help students assess 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 issue for the project?

5. What content standards and benchmarks will students master through their work on the project?

6. What civic and other learning goals do you hope to meet within the project?

[6]Adapted with permission from *K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit*. Denver: RMC Research for Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2009.

2. Investigation

Now that you know where you're headed with your instruction, it's time to engage students in designing a high quality service-learning experience to meet your identified goals. Investigation is the lynchpin to a high quality service-learning experience. By guiding your students through a rich process of assessing, researching, and analyzing community needs, they'll be better prepared to make a lasting impact on their community.

Before your students can embark on this process, however, it's critical to introduce them to the instructional plan you developed in "Setting the Context." By making them aware of instructional goals and expectations, students are more likely to take ownership of the learning process. Sharing the context for the service-learning experience also more deeply infuses the learning and service components.

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                    │      Setting the Context      │
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Setting the Context

Investigation	**P**lanning	**A**ction	**R**eflection	**D**emonstration /**C**elebration
1. Identify the "community to serve" 2. Assess community needs 3. Select community need 4. Research issue 5. Weaving in reflection 6. Assess progress				

Reflection and Progress Monitoring (under each: Investigation, Planning, Action, Reflection, Demonstration/Celebration)

1. **Identify the "community" to serve**

   Investigation begins with determining which community to use as a focus for this service-learning experience. Depending on your instructional goals, you may want to identify the community for your students or you may want to let them decide. For example, if you have planned to incorporate service-learning into a unit on nutrition, you may want your students to focus on their local community. Alternatively, you may opt to allow students to determine whether they want to focus on their neighborhood, city, or other definition of community. It's important to help them identify a community in which they will be able to obtain measurable results over the course of their project.

2. **Assess Community Needs**

   A number of effective approaches can help students identify authentic needs in the community. One effective way to engage students in an assessment of community assets and needs is to conduct a youth forum. The youth forum may take place within your classroom or may be expanded to include other classes, community partners, parents, or other school staff.

2. Investigation

The youth forum provides space for a structured dialogue that lets students voice their ideas for change and identify ways to turn their ideas into action. Ideally, the forum includes members of the community and other stakeholders who can form and grow meaningful partnerships with students over the course of the service-learning experience.

Using the process outlined below, lead students in conducting a forum to identify community needs and potential project ideas. The forum is one mechanism through which students can identify resources and authentic needs in their community. The purpose of this activity is to familiarize young people with their community, as well as identify the issues or areas in which they would like to bring about positive change. Students will also align their project ideas with the instructional objectives as a tangible way to apply and demonstrate mastery of skills. This provides students with ownership of the learning process, making the purpose for learning what it should be: to benefit their skill development, not "to get a good grade."

The outcome of this process is to:

- Identify a core set of issues that students would like to address.
- Begin to form community partnerships that could help students address the identified issues.
- Understand resources in the community available to help students carry out service-learning projects.

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Youth Forum Process

Invite Community Partners

Invite local business representatives, parents, local government officials, representatives of community organizations, or other members of the community who may be interested in this topic to join your class in conducting an issues forum.

Introduce students and community members to the concept of the Issues Forum. Explain that the forum will help students identify community needs and plan for how they might take positive action on issues that matter to them. Frame the forum by describing the topics/themes identified in your initial instructional planning process.

Determine Community Assets

Divide into small groups. Ask each group to develop a common definition of "community." You may wish to define this for them, depending upon the focus of the unit. The definition can be as narrow as your school or a neighborhood, or span the globe. If you are using one definition for the entire class, post that on large paper at the front of the room. If you are allowing each small group to determine its own definition as a way of focusing their work, provide each group with a large sheet of paper to write their definition on.

Next, ask groups to create a community map of what their community (based on their definition) currently looks like. Groups should identify all physical locations, as well as the resources, people, and societal elements that contribute to the community's existence. This may be done as a physical map, conceptual map, or other visual representation of the community. The key is for students to depict all possible elements that merge to form this community and, where possible, identify how these assets overlap, connect with each other, and create gaps.

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Identify Community Issues

After creating their community maps, ask groups to identify any issues or problems that exist within this picture. Examples might include neglect of physical property, groups that are unable to collaborate, lack of financial resources, etc.

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As identified in the *K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit*, following are other options often used by teachers to guide students in this process:

a. Neighborhood Walk

In this type of community mapping activity, 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 such as the Neighborhood Walk often lead to selection of issues such as working with the environment, the homeless, senior citizens, hospitals, and other agencies in the neighborhood. Younger children may use a school mapping activity withto investigate issues around the school,"[7] such as students pushing in line at the water fountains, students not engaged in activities on the playground during recess, or a need for handicap-accessible entry into the school.

b. Newspaper Investigation

"Collect newspapers for a week or two before 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."[8]

3. **Select a Community Need Based on Criteria**

Through a collaborative decision making process, target one issue to address in this instructional unit. You may want to combine ideas from several groups, or let small groups address separate issues.

Using the list of issues generated through one of the above brainstorming methods, students will come to consensus on what community need they would like to address. Because it is important that the service-learning experience be relevant and personally meaningful for each student, it is helpful to work toward consensus-building rather than simple decision making processes such as voting. In voting, at least a few students will be likely to lack ownership in the identified issue. They may become disengaged from the process, reducing the impact on their academic, social-emotional, and civic outcomes.

A variety of decision making processes can guide your students through consensus building. It's important to help your students make informed decisions by using a set of criteria through which each idea will be

[8]*K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit*. Denver: RMC Research for Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2009.

measured. The following set of questions may help guide the process. By consensus, students can eliminate issues that don't meet the proposed criteria:

    a. Do we have evidence that this is a meaningful need in our community?

    b. Does this issue require us to apply the skills we are accountable for?

    c. Is this an issue that we'll be able to have a measurable impact on?

    d. Does everyone in our class agree that this issue is meaningful?

After students have reached consensus on a community need to address, guide them in creating a vision statement for their work.

Envision Change

We will help make our community of _____ *become a place where*

_____.

This civic outcome is important to us because it will _____

_____.

---

4. **Research Issue and Explore Alternative Solutions**
   Next, guide students in researching the identified issue and exploring alternative solutions. In this process, it is important that they understand the issue from multiple perspectives by gathering information on the issue's history and attempts to resolve it, and exploring root causes of the problem. Students also need to collect evidence on the effectiveness of previous solutions and how this issue is affected by and impacts other aspects of the community.

   The questions below may help students research the identified issue. You may elect to assign specific questions to small groups as a collaborative research project, with small groups sharing results with the whole group as the class works to develop a list of alternative solutions to explore. It will be important to feed this process with Internet access and other resources to inform your students' information gathering.

2. Investigation

Use this framework to guide your students in researching the issue they identify.

1. What are the underlying causes of the issue in the community?

2. How do various stakeholders in the community view the problem? What other perspectives might help provide insight into the issue?

3. How does this issue affect other aspects of the community? How does it impact other issues or how might it affect things that are working well?

4. What is happening in the community as a result of these issues?

5. Who has tried to address this issue in the past?

6. What solutions have they tried?

7. What worked? What didn't work?

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 email. [9]

Our baseline statement:	Sources of Evidence:

[9]*K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit*. Denver: RMC Research for Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2009.

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Once students fully understand the issue and implications of any actions they decide to take, have them identify three possible solutions to the problem.

Identify three alternative solutions to consider in addressing this need.

1.

2.

3.

Using the decision-making criteria below, ask students to assess each of the proposed solutions. Guide students in discussing how they ranked each solution. Build consensus around the solution that the whole class is most comfortable with. For older students, you may want to have small groups develop a proposal to present to the rest of the class in making the case that their solution best meets the identified need. Younger students can evaluate the top three solutions as a whole class, using consensus building to determine the solution the class will pursue.

The decision making process below will help develop consensus on the most viable solution to pursue in this service-learning experience. Enter one alternative solution in each row. Assess each solution using the criteria below. Include comments that justify the ratings for each solution. Add the numbers for each solution to rank the three alternatives according to how viable each alternative is for this project.

Criteria to use in evaluating the viability of each alternative solution:

Saleable: *Can you convince others this is a good idea?*

Affordable: *Is the cost reasonable? Will you be able to get the necessary funding?*

Workable: *Is it an appropriate solution and are we able to do it?*

Effective: *Will it be likely to meet our identified need?*

Rating System: 3 = Good or High 2= Okay 1= Low or Poor						
Alternative Solution	Saleable	Affordable	Workable	Effective	Total	Justification

2. Investigation

5. **Weaving in Reflection**

   All phases of service-learning should have a reflection component. You can weave reflection in during investigation activities or while assessing progress at the end of the phase. Examples of reflection activities can be found on the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse website (www.servicelearning.org). Sample activities from the publication, Connecting Thinking and Action: Ideas for Service-Learning Reflection, found on the Clearinghouse website include:

   • If I Had a Million Dollars: This is a fun way for students to think about community problems that are important to them by using a pie chart and dividing up their funds for philanthropic purposes.

   • What Worked and How Did I Do?: In this activity, participants examine their own behaviors in helping the group come to consensus, and investigate ways to persuade others.[10]

6. **Progress Monitoring**

   How will you know you were successful in the Investigation phase? What assessment tools will you use? You might consider using assessments such as a checklist of research skills acquired, a rubric to assess collaboration and group problem-solving skills, having students write an essay on steps for effective decision making, or an assessment of interview skills.

   Your assessment plan: [11]

Skills to be Assessed	Assessment Method

[10]Adapted with permission from *K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit.* Denver: RMC Research for Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2009.

[11]Adapted with permission from *K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit.* Denver: RMC Research for Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2009.

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Questions to guide instructional decisions during Investigation:

[12]

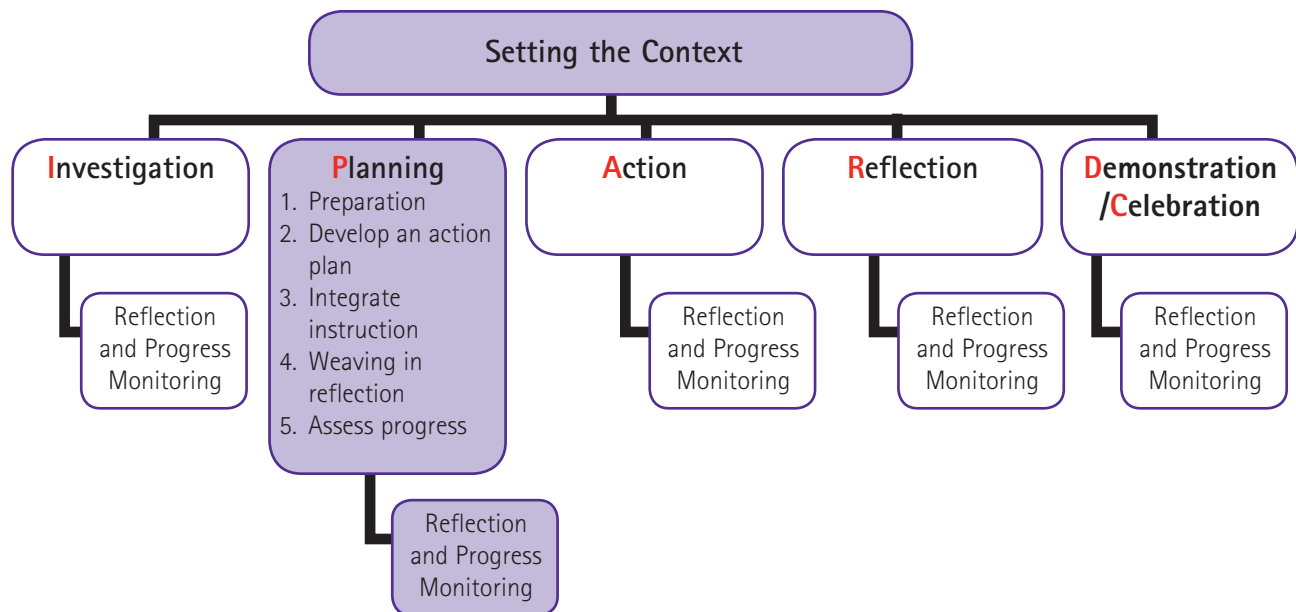| |
|---|
| How will you help the students identify a community problem?
• Youth Forum
• Neighborhood Walk
• Newspaper Investigation
• Other? |
| How will you help students develop investigation or research skills?
• Teach them how to construct and administer a survey and analyze results?
• Teach them 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 issues to address?
• Decision-making criteria?
• Consensus building?
• Dot voting?
• Other? |
| How will you ensure that the project has:
• A link to curricular objectives?
• Urgency and importance?
• Sufficient duration and intensity?
• Measurable outcomes?
• Student interest and engagement?
• Efficacy? |

3. Planning

In the second phase of a service-learning experience, students work with community partners as they design and implement their service-learning project. In this phase, you and your students will determine the nature of the specific service to be provided, develop an action plan to integrate academic skills with the service project, reflect, and conduct progress monitoring.

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                          │   Setting the Context     │
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Investigation	**Planning** 1. Preparation 2. Develop an action plan 3. Integrate instruction 4. Weaving in reflection 5. Assess progress	**Action**	**Reflection**	**Demonstration/Celebration**
Reflection and Progress Monitoring		Reflection and Progress Monitoring	Reflection and Progress Monitoring	Reflection and Progress Monitoring

Reflection and Progress Monitoring

1. **Preparation**

   As you prepare students for a successful service-learning experience, be sure to always be watchful for opportunities to let students lead. Nurture youth voice throughout the experience, offering significant opportunities for students to make decisions about their project from start to finish. Your role as a teacher, and that of other community partners, is to guide effective decisions and offer resources and support to inform those decisions along the way.

3. Planning

Questions to guide instructional decisions during Planning:

[13]

What specific service will 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 students and the community?
 	
   • Will it successfully address the area that you measured to establish the baseline of the problem?

How will you facilitate student decision-making about the specific type of service to be provided and the division of labor needed to implement the project?
   • 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?

What content standards and benchmarks will be met as students plan and provide the service?
   • What civic goals will the project address?
 	
   • What civic knowledge, skills (e.g., informed decision making, listening, expressing opinions) and dispositions (e.g., tolerance, sense of responsibility for others, believing they can make a difference in the world) will be acquired?
 	
   • 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)?

How can you ensure that the community partners are part of the vision, planning, and preparation phases?
   • How will community partners help facilitate youth voice and decision making?
 	
   • How will community partners be meaningfully engaged in ways that are mutually beneficial?
 	
   • What strategies will be used to maintain regular ongoing communication?

How will you weave reflection activities into this component?
What types of assessment will you use to determine progress toward meeting specific service-learning project goals and learning objectives while students work on this phase of the project?

[13] Adapted with permission from *K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit.* Denver: RMC Research for Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2009.

2. **Students Develop an Action Plan**

   Once students have fully explored the issue they want to address, they'll begin to shape their project. This strategic planning process guides students in planning and implementing a service-learning project within the instructional setting. Notice that the plan asks students to also consider the skills that they will learn and apply throughout this project, encouraging their active participation in improving and evaluating their academic performance. Transparency in the learning process will help increase student ownership in their learning, deepen understanding of the skills they are developing, and increase transfer of learning as students use these skills in new situations. This document will be a work in progress throughout the project, with additions and revisions to be made as students reflect upon and adapt their work to the realities of project implementation.

Develop and Apply Skills

While we are engaging in this service-learning experience, we will learn and be evaluated on these skills:

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

_____   _____

Some of the products I will collect to document my learning are:

❏ Reflection Journal   ❏ Letters   ❏ Newspaper Articles

❏ Reflection Essays   ❏ Self-assessment   ❏ Videos

❏ Peer Assessment   ❏ Photo Journal   ❏ Parent Feedback

❏ Feedback from Community Contacts   ❏ Other _____

Measure Progress

Challenges

Before a project begins, it's a good idea to think about any obstacles that might be encountered. Small details like getting permissions, arranging for buses, or encountering resistance to change may cause difficulties along the way. Thinking about each specific task in your list of steps and planning for solutions to obstacles before they occur, can make your efforts more proactive.

Action Step/Task	Possible Obstacles	Potential Solutions

3. Planning

Evaluation

How will we measure the success of our project? How will we know that our project met our goal? Using the baseline we documented, what measurable change will we be able to observe?

By _____(date), our project will result in the following change:

Reflecting on Process

It's important to reflect not only on the progress you're making toward meeting the identified outcomes, but also to look at how you're getting there.

How is your understanding of the knowledge and skills being taught in this unit increasing?

What are some ways to show you are learning the skills identified?

How are the skills you're learning connected to your service-learning project?

How are you working collaboratively with your community partner?

What are some ways you might communicate more effectively with your community partner and/or the community?

How might your class work more effectively together?

How can you increase your leadership and the leadership of others in your class?

How are your views about your community changing?

How can we take our work to the next level?

What other changes might help solve this issue?

Who else might we be able to get involved in our efforts?

3. Planning

Student Action Plan

Remember, this is a work in progress. Make additions and changes as you implement the project.

Major Tasks	When will this task be completed?	Who will oversee this task?	What resources do we need?	Who can help?

1.
  a.
 	
  b.
 	
  c.
 	
  d.				

2.
  a.
 	
  b.
 	
  c.
 	
  d.				

3.
  a.
 	
  b.
 	
  c.
 	
  d.				

4.
  a.
 	
  b.
 	
  c.
 	
  d.				

5.
  a.
 	
  b.
 	
  c.
 	
  d.				

get into it

For younger students, the following flowchart may be used as an alternative to the above chart in planning major project steps as a large group. Younger students may find it easier to start at the end with a completion date and then work their way back through the steps to get them there. Posting the steps on large sheets of paper is a great way to track progress and make adjustments as the work continues.

Action Plan Flowchart

Project Begins

Completed Project Data

3. **Integrate Instruction**

As preparation and planning proceed, design the instruction that supports the project and moves students toward mastery of the identified standards. The instructional strategies that will support skill development are woven into student exploration of the topic. As students develop skills, they will identify, plan, and implement their service-learning project. This project may continue beyond the current unit of study, incorporating new skills acquired in subsequent units. Your role is to implement instruction that strengthens and facilitates students' work while allowing them to construct meaning and build their own skills. Always be on the lookout for opportunities to step back and let students take leadership roles. Youth ownership propels the project forward and develops students' leadership skills while engaging students in a rigorous, relevant learning process.

You may find it helpful to create a concept map outlining any connections that exist between the concepts that will be covered in the unit, skills to be addressed, and the identified service-learning project.

Next Steps

What topics of study might you want to address next to build upon skills developed during this unit?

Use the chart below as a guide to plan instruction that will support your students' project and meet your instructional goals as they carry out their Action Plan. You can add columns, such as a "Completed" or an "Assignments" column, so you can denote when instruction has been completed.

Project-Related Skills	Instructional Resources

Challenges

What are the different instructional challenges that might arise mid-project? It's always a good idea to think about these things in advance. Are there community groups or resources that you may want to bring in at key points? Permissions that must be obtained? Scheduling concerns or other logistics you'll need to deal with in the course of the project? Managing a project that encompasses such a spectrum of skills and disciplines will be a challenge. Students will need strong organization and project management skills.

[14]

Administrative Issue	Challenges	Resources	Strategies
Gaining administrator permission and support			
Gaining parent permission and support			
Making logistical arrangements (e.g. scheduling, transportation, chaperones)			
Materials and equipment needs			
Other challenges			

4. **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 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:

   • 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 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 process they used to plan their service-learning project. Then ask them to list the steps they'd take to plan a vacation, buy a car, or plan a party, 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, and the same sorts of assessments (how will you know you were successful?).[15]

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[14]Adapted with permission from *K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit.* Denver: RMC Research for Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2009.

[15]Adapted with permission from *K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit.* Denver: RMC Research for Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2009.

5. **Progress Monitoring**

How will you know you were successful in the Planning phase? What assessment tools will you use? You might consider using assessments such as a rubric to assess collaboration and group problem-solving skills, a peer or self-assessment of their group's action planning process, a checklist of steps completed, or asking students to write an essay about their plans for conducting a service project.

Your assessment plan:

Skills to be Assessed	Assessment Method

4. Action

The Action phase is the culmination of all that students have learned through their service-learning experience thus far. This phase will typically intertwine with the Planning phase as students take steps to complete their project while continuing to monitor progress and make necessary revisions to their plans. It's important to guide students in carrying out tasks, collecting evidence, analyzing progress, and making adjustments so students develop critical skills in problem solving and decision making.

Setting the Context

Investigation	**P**lanning	**A**ction	**R**eflection	**D**emonstration /**C**elebration
		1. Implement action plan 2. Weaving in reflection 3. Assess progress		
Reflection and Progress Monitoring	Reflection and Progress Monitoring		Reflection and Progress Monitoring	Reflection and Progress Monitoring
		Reflection and Progress Monitoring		

1. **Implement Action Plan**

   Using the Action Plan developed by the group, students work together to revise, add details, and carry out identified tasks. Students will benefit from opportunities to make meaningful decisions throughout this process, and from ongoing reflection about their progress to develop and implement this plan.

   Checklist for Implementing the Action Plan

   _____ Students know what is expected of them and possess the necessary skills.

   _____ All students have meaningful roles to play.

   _____ Students know how to perform tasks well collaboratively.

   _____ The community partner is on board with all activities.

   _____ Students have engaged in troubleshooting conversations (what to do if…).

   _____ Transportation has been arranged as needed.

   _____ All safety and other risk protections are in place.

   _____ Any necessary parent permission forms have been collected.

   _____ Permission for pictures and publications have been obtained.

   _____ The media have been informed and invited as appropriate.

   _____ Reflection activities to take place during service have been planned.

   _____ Intentional links to curriculum have been made.

   _____ Administrators are aware of and support the Action Plan.[16]

[16]Adapted with permission from *K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit*. Denver: RMC Research for Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2009.
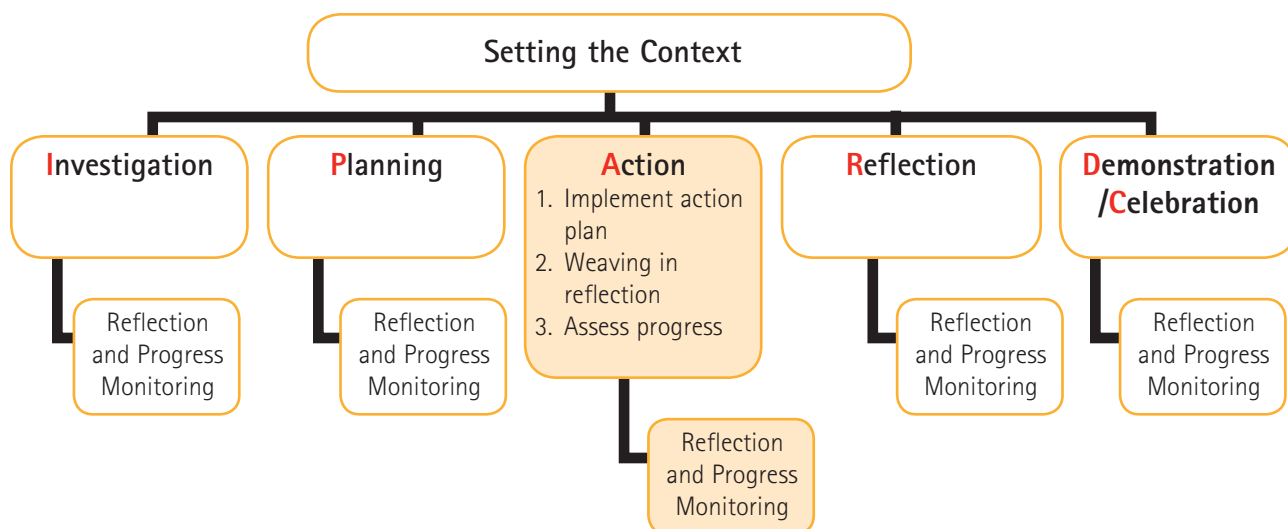
2. **Weaving in Reflection**

   Remember that all phases of service-learning should have a reflection component. During the Action phase, students should have many opportunities of varying types of activities 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 through deliberative dialogue, artistic means, or any of a multitude of different means. Examples of reflection activities can be found on the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse website (www.servicelearning.org). Sample reflection activities include:

   - *Create a storyboard:* A storyboard is the device cartoonists, advertisers, and some novelists use to capture phases or tell the story that is unfolding. Students can storyboard their service-learning experience, reflecting on the planning, preparation, and specific action steps.

   - *Make a mobile or create another type of metaphor:* Students are often asked to represent their thinking in different ways on tests. This reflection activity can be simple, such as asking, "What type of traffic sign does this experience bring to mind?" which may stimulate such answers as "Yield," "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 about their service-learning experience as a whole or by specific tasks. Use results to revise the next set of activities.[17]

3. **Progress Monitoring**

   How will you know you were successful in the Action phase? What assessment tools will you use? You might consider using assessments such as a checklist of steps students took to complete a task; peer, self or community partner assessments; rubrics to assess students' effectiveness in carrying out tasks collaboratively, or documenting progress in a service-learning portfolio.

Your assessment plan:

Skills to be Assessed	Assessment Method

[17]Adapted with permission from *K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit.* Denver: RMC Research for Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2009.

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Questions to guide instructional decisions during Action:
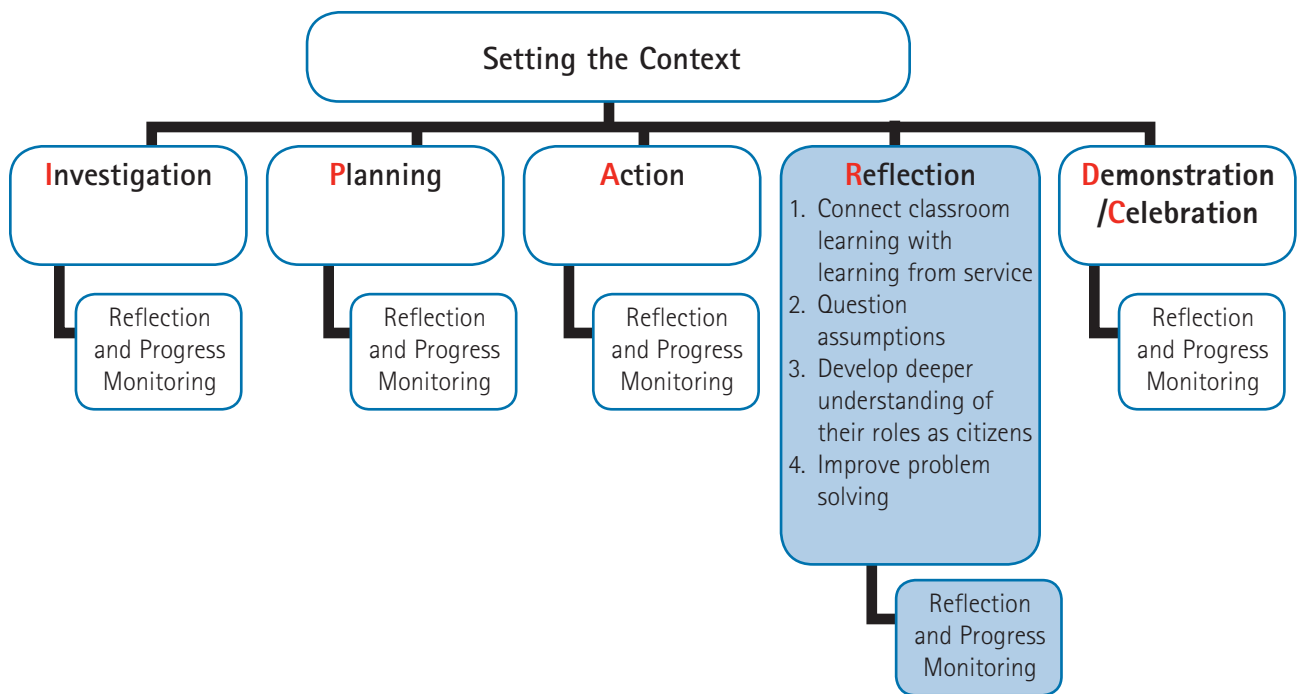
[18]

In direct service activities, students interact with recipients of service or the physical environment they have targeted for improvement.
   • Given the issue identified, what types of direct service activity could the students perform?
 	
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?

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?

How can you ensure that all students benefit from the service activities and that all students find them meaningful?
   • How can you ensure that all students' capabilities are utilized in completing the service activity?
   • How can you ensure that all students feel ownership of the process?
   • How can you ensure that all students feel they are an important part of the project's success?

How can you ensure that all students understand and find mutual benefit with service recipients

How will community partners contribute to the success of the service-learning experience?
   • 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?

How will you address diversity issues within the service projects, both before, during, and after the service?
   • How can you help students identify and analyze different points of view to gain an understanding of multiple perspectives?
   • How can you help students understand and value diverse backgrounds of both those offering and receiving service?
   • How can you help students recognize and overcome stereotypes?

How will you keep students engaged in the service over time?
How can you implement service-learning so that teachers and other adults also find the service fulfilling?

[18]Adapted with permission from *K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit.* Denver: RMC Research for Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2009.

5. 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.[1]

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                        ┌─────────────────────────┐
                        │   Setting the Context   │
                        └─────────────────────────┘
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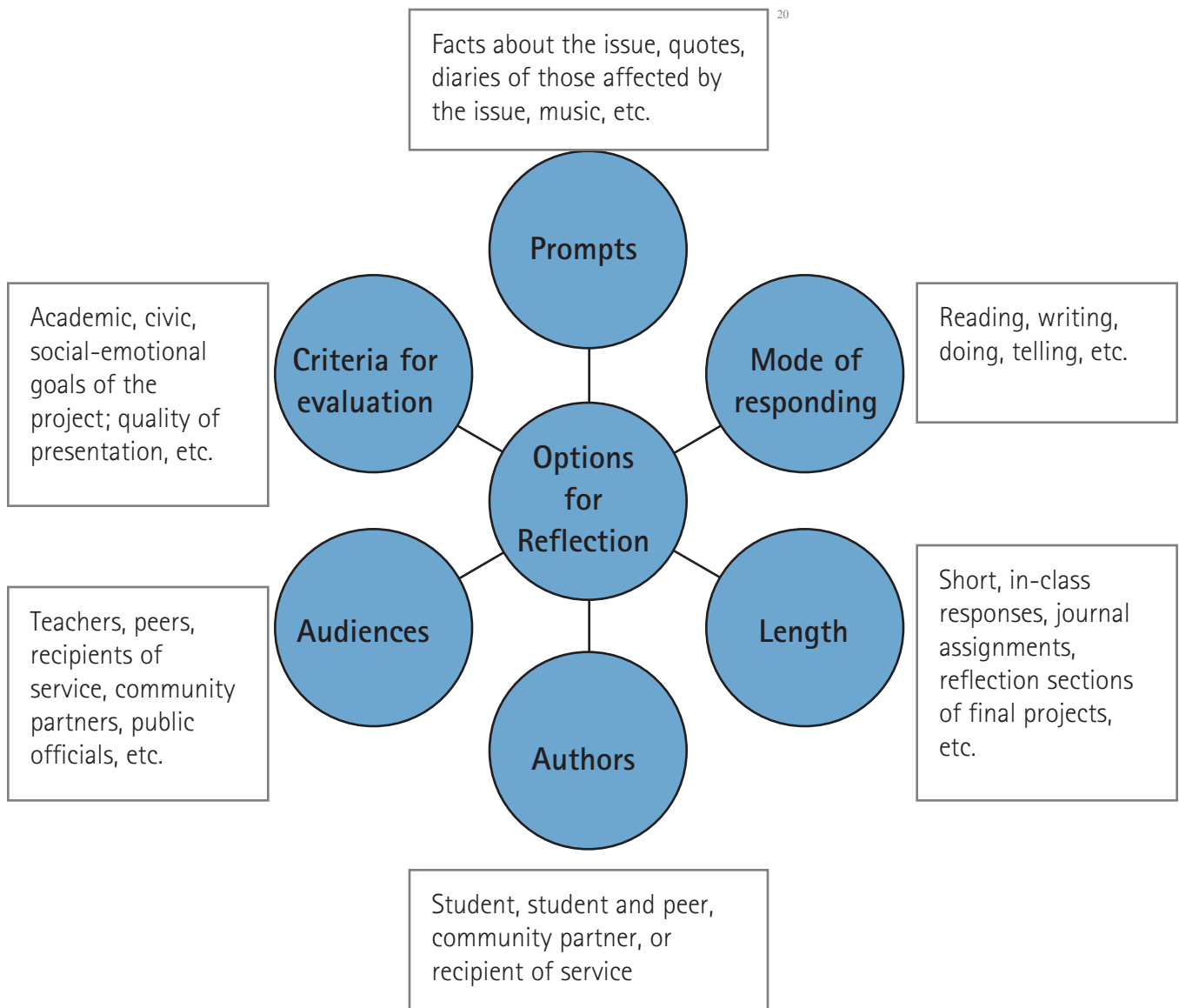| Investigation	Planning	Action	Reflection	Demonstration /Celebration
Reflection and Progress Monitoring	Reflection and Progress Monitoring	Reflection and Progress Monitoring	1. Connect classroom learning with learning from service 2. Question assumptions 3. Develop deeper understanding of their roles as citizens 4. Improve problem solving	Reflection and Progress Monitoring
			Reflection and Progress Monitoring	

Multiple methods of reflection that challenge students to deepen their understandings are critical throughout the service-learning experience. Reflection should serve as a method for students to gather evidence about their progress toward identified goals as well as the process they are using to get there. A variety of activities should be used regularly, incorporating multiple intelligences (linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, musical, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and naturalist) and using verbal, written, and nonverbal methods. Through reflection, students should be challenged to think deeply about their participation, their understanding of themselves and others, and analyze their relationship to society.

[19]*K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit.* Denver: RMC Research for Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2009.

5. Reflection

As the following diagram indicates, teachers can create a multitude of reflection activities by varying the elements in the design of the activity.

Facts about the issue, quotes, diaries of those affected by the issue, music, etc. [20]

Academic, civic, social-emotional goals of the project; quality of presentation, etc.

Reading, writing, doing, telling, etc.

Prompts

Criteria for evaluation

Mode of responding

Options for Reflection

Audiences

Length

Authors

Teachers, peers, recipients of service, community partners, public officials, etc.

Short, in-class responses, journal assignments, reflection sections of final projects, etc.

Student, student and peer, community partner, or recipient of service

[20]*K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit.* Denver: RMC Research for Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2009.

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5. Reflection

Questions to guide instructional decisions during the Reflection phase:

1. What reflection activities could you use to support the academic, civic, and social-emotional learning goals of the service-learning experience before, during, and after completion?

2. If you plan to use discussion and journaling, are there forms of reflection you could use or 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 a teacher to make it more authentic?

Using the above chart of options, plan the reflection assignments you will use before, during, and at the conclusion of the service-learning experience. [21]
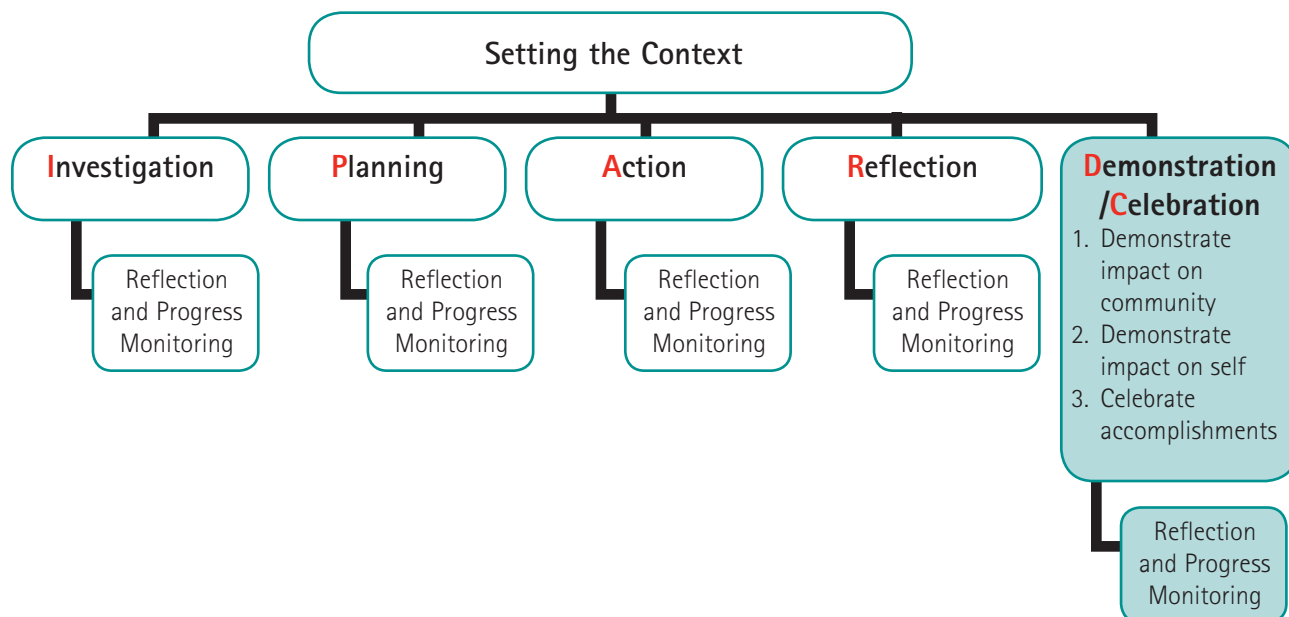
Phase of Service-Learning	Investigation	Planning and Preparation	During the Service Activity	During the Culminating Event
Reflection Assignment				
Prompts				
Mode of Responding				
Length				
Authors				
Audiences				
What goals will each reflection activity allow you to meet?				

[21] *K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit.* Denver: RMC Research for Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2009.

6. Demonstrate Success and Celebrate

Take time to showcase your students' work through a school and/or community-wide event. The recognition will reinforce the skills students learned and celebrate their success. Consider hosting an assembly highlighting community-building work, a community fair showcasing projects, a pictorial essay in the newspaper, or a display in a public area such as a mall or public library. Critical to the success of this step is asking students to reflect on how they can demonstrate their project success and mastery of skills to others.

Setting the Context

Investigation	Planning	Action	Reflection	Demonstration /Celebration
Reflection and Progress Monitoring	Reflection and Progress Monitoring	Reflection and Progress Monitoring	Reflection and Progress Monitoring	1. Demonstrate impact on community 2. Demonstrate impact on self 3. Celebrate accomplishments

Reflection and Progress Monitoring

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 experience. 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 work. 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 issue. Finally, a high quality demonstration and celebration event engages participants in analyzing and developing potential future solutions to the new set of social issues signaled by the end of the service-learning project, further enhancing their problem solving skills and dedication to service.[22]

In preparing for the Demonstration/Celebration event, it is important to engage students in analyzing and preparing products which communicate the impact of their work on the community as well as on themselves, personally. Using the baseline data obtained during Investigation, work with students to collect evidence of impact on themselves as well as on their community. Then determine which type of event will be most effective to share these outcomes with the broader community.

[22]*K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit.* Denver: RMC Research for Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2009.

Teachers have several options for Demonstration/Celebration events, including: [23]

Demonstrating Impact on the Community	Demonstrating Impact on Self	Celebrating Accomplishments
• Measurement on a neighborhood quality index • Poster exhibition • Showcase • Portfolio fair • Development of products such as PowerPoints, oral presentations, websites, videos, booklets, before/after pictures of the community • Testimonials by service recipients	• Self portraits • Autobiographies • Storyboards • Pre/post measures of knowledge, skills, and behaviors • Evaluation of student work by experts, community partners, recipients of service, or panels of judges • Sharing insights through issue forums	• Recognition at a school-wide ceremony • Awards • Tour of the service site to observe progress • Letters of recognition from community partners, elected officials, etc. • Service credits on student transcripts • Creation of a fund to support future service around the issue • Recognition during a traditional ceremony such as graduation

Questions to guide instructional decisions during the Demonstration/Celebration phase: [24]

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? How will demonstration be paired with celebration to increase student efficacy?

3. What plans for demonstration will best all your students to meet the academic goals of the service-learning experience?

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 Demonstration/Celebration 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?

[23]*K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit.* Denver: RMC Research for Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2009.

[24]*K-12 Service-Learning Project Planning Toolkit.* Denver: RMC Research for Learn and Serve America's National Service-Learning Clearinghouse, 2009.

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The purpose of the template below is to help plan a final event that honors student's achievements, allows them to share what they learned and the impact on the community, and build on their service-learning for the future.[25]

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

Complete Student and Teacher Worksheets

Following is the complete collection of worksheets to guide you and your students in planning and implementing a high quality service-learning experience.

Unit Description:	
Key Performance Standards to be Addressed	
Number	Standard

Related Performance Standards from other subject areas		
Subject	Number	Standard

Civic Goals	
Civic Knowledge	
Civic Skills	
Civic Attitudes and Values	

Character and Social Skills	

Career Skills	

List the essential and unit questions to be addressed in this unit.

1.

2.

3.

Assessment Plan

Skills to be Mastered	Balanced Assessment Process *(List the tools you will use to collect data on student progress to ensure continuous improvement such as observation, written test, written report, oral presentation, etc.)*		
	Formative	Benchmark	Summative

After students have reached consensus on a community need to address, guide them in creating a vision statement for their work.

Envision Change

We will help make our community of _____ *become a place where*

_____.

This civic outcome is important to us because it will _____

_____.

Use this framework to guide your students in researching the issue they identify.

1. What are the underlying causes of the issue in the community?

2. How do various stakeholders in the community view the problem? What other perspectives might help provide insight into the issue?

3. How does this issue affect other aspects of the community? How does it impact other issues or how might it affect things that are working well?

4. What is happening in the community as a result of these issues?

5. Who has tried to address this issue in the past?

6. What solutions have they tried?

7. What worked? What didn't work?

Our baseline statement:	*Sources of Evidence:*

Identify three alternative solutions to consider in addressing this need.

1.

2.

3.

Criteria to use in evaluating the viability of each alternative solution:

Saleable: *Can you convince others this is a good idea?*

Affordable: *Is the cost reasonable? Will you be able to get the necessary funding?*

Workable: *Is it an appropriate solution and are we able to do it?*

Effective: *Will it be likely to meet our identified need?*

Rating System:	3 = Good or High		2= Okay	1= Low or Poor		
Alternative Solution	Saleable	Affordable	Workable	Effective	Total	Justification

The solution we think will best address this issue and help us achieve our vision is:

_____.

Your Investigation assessment plan:

Skills to be Assessed	Assessment Method

Student Action Plan

Remember, this is a work in progress. Make additions and changes as you implement the project.

Develop and Apply Skills

While we are engaging in this service-learning experience, we will learn and be evaluated on these skills:

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

_____ _____

Some of the products I will collect to document my learning are:

❏ Reflection Journal ❏ Letters ❏ Newspaper Articles

❏ Reflection Essays ❏ Self-assessment ❏ Videos

❏ Peer Assessment ❏ Photo Journal ❏ Parent Feedback

❏ Feedback from Community Contacts ❏ Other _____

Action Step/Task	Possible Obstacles	Potential Solutions

Evaluation

How will we measure the success of our project? How will we know that our project met our goal? Using the baseline we documented, what measurable change will we be able to observe?

By _____(date), our project will result in the following change:
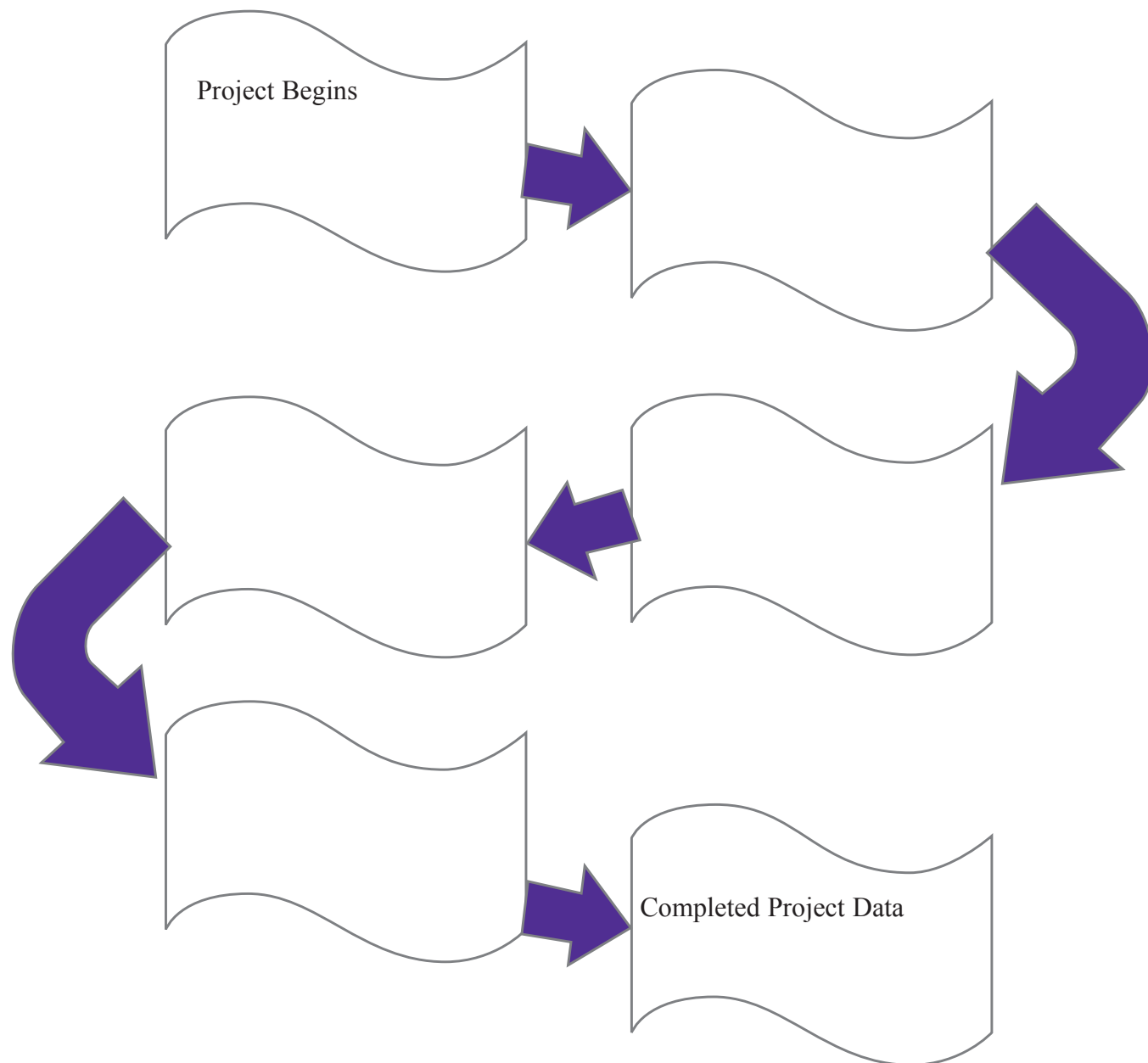
Student Action Plan

Remember, this is a work in progress. Make additions and changes as you implement the project.

Major Tasks	When will this task be completed?	Who will oversee this task?	What resources do we need?	Who can help?

1.
  a.
 	
  b.
 	
  c.
 	
  d.				

2.
  a.
 	
  b.
 	
  c.
 	
  d.				

3.
  a.
 	
  b.
 	
  c.
 	
  d.				

4.
  a.
 	
  b.
 	
  c.
 	
  d.				

5.
  a.
 	
  b.
 	
  c.
 	
  d.				

For younger students, the following flowchart may be used as an alternative to the above chart in planning major project steps as a large group. Younger students may find it easier to start at the end with a completion date and then work their way back through the steps to get them there. Posting the steps on large sheets of paper is a great way to track progress and make adjustments as the work continues.

Action Plan Flowchart

Project Begins

Completed Project Data

Integrate Instruction

You may find it helpful to create a concept map outlining any connections that exist between the concepts that will be covered in the unit, skills to be addressed, and the identified service-learning project.

Next Steps

What topics of study might you want to address next to build upon skills developed during this unit?

Project-Related Skills	*Instructional Resources*

Challenges

What are the different instructional challenges that might arise mid-project?

Administrative Issue	Challenges	Resources	Strategies
Gaining administrator permission and support			
Gaining parent permission and support			
Making logistical arrangements (e.g. scheduling, transportation, chaperones)			
Materials and equipment needs			
Other challenges			

Get into it

Your Planning Phase assessment plan:

Skills to be Assessed	Assessment Method

Checklist for Implementing the Action Plan

_____ Students know what is expected of them and possess the necessary skills.

_____ All students have meaningful roles to play.

_____ Students know how to perform tasks well collaboratively.

_____ The community partner is on board with all activities.

_____ Students have engaged in troubleshooting conversations (what to do if…).

_____ Transportation has been arranged as needed.

_____ All safety and other risk protections are in place.

_____ Any necessary parent permission forms have been collected.

_____ Permission for pictures and publications have been obtained.

_____ The media have been informed and invited as appropriate.

_____ Reflection activities to take place during service have been planned.

_____ Intentional links to curriculum have been made.

_____ Administrators are aware of and support the Action Plan.

Your assessment plan for the Action phase:

Skills to be Assessed	Assessment Method

Your plan for reflection assignments you will use before, during, and at the conclusion of the service-learning experience:

Phase of Service-Learning	Investigation	Planning and Preparation	During the Service Activity	During the Culminating Event
Reflection Assignment				
Prompts				
Mode of Responding				
Length				
Authors				
Audiences				
What goals will each reflection activity allow you to meet?				

Your plan for Demonstration/Celebration:

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

Notable State Education Agency Service-Learning Websites

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction

http://dpi.wi.gov/fscp/slhmpage.html

DPI's service-learning page offers resources for both administrators and teachers, including: funding opportunities, presentation and Internet resources, service-learning publications and research, and examples of service-learning projects.

State Education Agency K-12 Service-Learning Network

www.seanetonline.org

Arizona Department of Education

http://www.learnandservearizona.com

California Department of Education

http://www.cde.ca.gov/ci/cr/sl/districttools.asp

Colorado Department of Education

http://www.cde.state.co.us/servicelearning

Florida Learn and Serve

http://www.fsu.edu/~flserve/sl/sl.html

Learn and Serve Hawaii

http://www.k12.hi.us/~svclearn/theoretical.htm

Idaho Department of Education

http://www.sde.idaho.gov/site/learn_serve/service_learning.htm

Illinois State Board of Education

http://www.isbe.net/curriculum/service_learning/html/resources.htm

Indiana Department of Education

http://www.doe.in.gov/servicelearning

Maryland State Department of Education

http://www.marylandpublicschools.org/MSDE/programs/servicelearning

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

http://www.doe.mass.edu/csl

New York State Department of Education

http://www.highered.nysed.gov/kiap/precoll/service_learn/home.html

Oregon Department of Education

http://www.ode.state.or.us/pubs/eii/servicelearningbrief.pdf

Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

http://www.k12.wa.us/LearnServe/pubdocs/DistrictPlanningGuide.pdf