



The Five Stages of Service Learning

Inventory and Investigation

Using interviewing and other means of social analysis, students:

- catalog the interests, skills, and talents of their peers and partners.
- identify a need.
- analyze the underlying problem.
- establish a baseline of the need.
- begin to accumulate partners.

Preparation and Planning

With guidance from their teacher, students:

- draw upon previously acquired skills and knowledge.
- acquire new information through varied, engaging means and methods.
- collaborate with community partners.
- develop a plan that encourages responsibility.
- recognize the integration of service and learning.
- become ready to provide meaningful service.
- articulate roles and responsibilities of all involved.
- define realistic parameters for implementation.

Action

Through direct service, indirect service, research, advocacy, or a combination of these approaches, students take action that:

- has value, purpose, and meaning.
- uses previously learned and newly acquired academic skills and knowledge.
- offers unique learning experiences.
- has real consequences.
- offers a safe environment to learn, to make mistakes, and to succeed.

Reflection

During systematic reflection, the teacher or students guide the process using various modalities, such as role play, discussion, and journal writing. Participating students:

- describe what happened.
- examine the difference made.
- discuss thoughts and feelings.
- place experience in a larger context.
- consider project improvements.
- generate ideas.
- identify questions.
- encourage comments from partners and recipients.
- receive feedback.

Demonstration

Students showcase what and how they have learned, along with demonstrating skills, insights, and outcomes of service provided to an outside group. Students may:

- report to peers, faculty, parents, and/or community members.
- write articles or letters to local newspapers regarding issues of public concern.
- create a publication or Web site that helps others learn from students' experiences.
- make presentations and performances.
- create displays of public art with murals or photography.