



# Thinking Creatively About Service Learning Reflection

## **Collages**

1. Ask students to cut out images from various print resources (magazines, newspapers, etc.) that metaphorically represent the social problem, or some aspect of it, studied in their service learning experience.
2. Have each student combine these images into an aesthetically pleasing collage.
3. Display the collages around the room.
4. Starting with their own, have students visit each collage and choose a single image that metaphorically represents their service learning experience or related social problem.
5. Have them write down a description of the image along with how it is related to their service experience.
6. After students have traveled around the room and collected multiple image metaphors, have them combine them in a written reflection about their service experience.

## **Solution Walk**

1. Take a ten to fifteen-minute walk around the classroom, building, or campus and look for ten objects, events or situations. Have students make a list of the objects, events or situations that they observe.
2. After the walk, have students choose three items from their list that they can metaphorically link to their service learning experience or social problem.
3. Using the three items selected, have students create a list of metaphors linking the items to their service learning experience or social problem.
4. Have students compare and contrast their metaphors looking for similarities and differences among them.
5. Have students choose three metaphors from their list and develop the metaphors into solutions for the social problem studied in their service learning experience.
6. Have students elaborate on their proposed solutions by providing evidence from their service experience as to why each solution was selected, how it would occur and the desired or expected outcome from the proposed solution.

## **Photo Walk**

1. Throughout the service experience, ask students to take pictures of various events, situations and locations that they come in contact with.
2. After they complete their service, have students look through their photographs and select ten to fifteen pictures that effectively communicate significant events from their service experience.
3. For each photograph, have students write a single sentence caption that defines the experience illustrated in the photograph.
4. Students can combine the photographs to create a visual storyboard or memory book. Students can also elaborate on their captions by composing a short paragraph to accompany each photo and caption.

## **Five Senses**

1. Have students create five columns on a piece of paper and write one of the five senses in each column; sight, smell, taste, touch, and hearing.
2. In each column, have students list reflective thoughts of their service experience that relate to each sense.
3. Have students combine these thoughts into a reflection essay, presentation, poster or diagram.



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## Reverse Your Perspective

1. State the social problem your service site addresses in the form of a question.  
Ex: *"How can I decrease the amount of pollution in local rivers and streams?"*
2. Reverse the essence of the question.  
Ex: *"How can I increase the amount of pollution in local rivers and streams?"*
3. List all the ways you can think of to accomplish the reversed question.  
Ex: *"Stop recycling, dump trash into the waterways, never clean-up the waterways, etc."*
4. Evaluate every idea on the list by assigning a numerical rating from one to ten (ten being the most significant) to each idea.
5. Focus on the highest rated items as these are the most probable causes of the social problem.  
Ex: *"dump trash into the waterways" is the highest rated*
6. Reverse back to the original question to get a new perspective.  
Ex: *"How can I decrease the amount of pollution in local rivers and streams by not dumping trash into the waterways?"*
7. List all the ways that you helped accomplish this during your service experience.
8. List all the ways you could help accomplish this in the future.
9. Use the lists create a reflective statement or project about your service experience.

## Working Backwards

1. Write the social problem your service site addresses on a piece of paper. Include a brief explanation about how you feel about the social problem and how you are affected by it.
2. Close your eyes and imagine the best possible solution to the social problem. Write the solution on the paper below the social problem.
3. Write a brief explanation about how you would benefit from the solution, how the community would benefit from the solution and how you feel about the solution.
4. Write down how you would set your solution in motion.
5. List the people, situations and events that would contribute to the solution.
6. Use the lists you generated to create a step by step plan to reach your solution. Include specifics about who, what, where, when and how for each step.
7. Keep generating steps until you can fully link your social problem to your ideal solution.
8. How does or would your service site, and other sites like it, play a role in reaching the ideal solution?
9. What knowledge from your service experience helped you generate your plan and solution?

## Plus—Minus—Interesting (PMI)

1. Make three columns on a sheet of paper. Title the columns "Plus," "Minus," and "Interesting."
2. Under the "Plus" column, list all of the positive aspects of your service experience.
3. Under the "Minus" column, list all of the negative aspects of your service experience.
4. Under the "Interesting" column, list all of the aspects of your service experience that do not fit in the other two categories, but are worth noting.
5. Use the three lists to generate and organize a reflective essay or presentation about your service experience.

*The PMI can be done at the end of the service experience or after each visit to a service site. If used throughout the service experience, the multiple PMI lists can help generate a post reflection project by incorporating the thoughts recorded throughout the experience into a final reflective account.*