

Implementing a Service-Learning Project

Reflection Questions for Course Instructors

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The following are the foundational questions that you as an instructor should consider and reflect upon prior to implementing a service-learning project. This list is not meant to be chronological though some aspects will naturally precede others. Start by considering the course learning objectives and your method of assessing those objectives and then go from there.

1. What are the major learning objectives/big ideas/enduring understandings for your course?
2. What are real-world situations where students can apply the concepts studied in your course?
3. List some potential community partners along with some basic descriptors that may impact how your students work with each partner (ex: What is the size of the organization? What issues does the organization address? Is the organization non-profit, governmental, religiously affiliated? Etc.) In lieu of a partner organization you can also consider a general community need for students to address. List some general descriptors of the project involved in addressing this community need.
4. Look for potential matches between organizations on your list from question 3 and your responses to questions 1 and 2. If there are multiple potential matches then consider the pros/cons of each and list them. Be sure to recognize how your matching affects the organization of the project (large scale as a class v. small scale as groups), which in turn may affect your response to question 5 below.

5. Once you have begun narrowing potential community partners that offer opportunities for students to interact with course content, consider how will you assess students? What will be the final product? What expectations will you have for students throughout the project and how will you communicate that to the students?
6. How will students be organized to meet the objectives that they will be assessed on? Will students work as individuals, teams, as a whole class?
7. How will students be equipped to complete the project successfully? What will they have gained from the course up to the point of assigning the project that will aid them? What additional tools/skills/knowledge will students need as the project proceeds?
8. What will be the timeframe for the project? How will students be held accountable to the timeframe? At what points will students receive feedback on their progress?
9. Why should students care about the project? What will you do as an instructor to get student buy-in on the project?
10. How will students reflect throughout the project? What opportunities will you provide for students to pause and consider the work they have done?