SERVICE-LEARNING JOURNAL QUESTIONS

Reflection is one of the most academically rigorous components of a course that contains service-learning opportunities. Students who take the time to reflect on service-learning experiences will get more from those experiences. This is why reflections are a required part of service-learning classes at Pellissippi State. Reflection helps students thoughtfully process their community work. It helps them critically assess and understand what they are seeing and doing.

Service-learning practitioners and researchers have concluded that the most effective service-learning experiences are those that provide structured opportunities for learners to critically reflect upon their service experience.

Below is a graphical representation of the reflection process, also referred to as the Experiential Learning Cycle*.

As you participate in your service-assignment through community work, you should ask yourself these questions: What? So What? Now What? The reflection process begins with a defining and sharing of the "What" of your experience, and follows a continuous cycle towards "So What?" and "Now What?"

I used the following generalized questions to guide which journal questions to ask you. (I just want you to see the rationale behind the official journal questions you need to answer)

- So What? Analyze the experience.
- Now What? Consider the future impact of the experience on you and the community.
QUESTIONS

(Please type answers below these. An electronic file of this handout is available on D2L)

BEFORE YOU DO SERVICE:

1. Visualize yourself working at the service site. What are your initial expectations about what it will be like and what you will learn while working with this Community Partner?

AFTER YOU DO SERVICE:

1. Why does the Community Partner you are working for exist in the first place? Describe what goes on at your service site, what its mission is, and what you perceive as how it helps people in our community.
2. What are the environment and social conditions like at your site? Be specific.
3. Describe your role at the community site.
4. Have your initial expectations about working at the site changed? How? Why?
5. What about your community involvement has been an eye-opening experience?
6. How do you motivate yourself to go to your site when you don't feel like it?
7. What specific skills have you used at your community site? Did you learn a new skill or clarify an interest? Be specific and provide detail.
8. Describe a person you've encountered through your service work who made a strong impression on you, positive or negative.
9. Do you see benefits of doing community work with this particular Community Partner? Why or why not?
10. Has your view of the population for whom you have been working changed? If so how? If not, why?
11. What institutional structures are in place at your Community Partner service site? How do they affect the people you work with?
12. Has your service experience affected your understanding of the world in any way? How or why not?
13. Have your career options been expanded by your service experience? How or why not?

14. Did anything about your community involvement surprise you? If so, what?

15. What did you do that seemed to be effective or ineffective? Provide detail.

16. Has your understanding of problems in our local community changed as a result of your participation working with this Community Partner? Why or why not?

17. Are you inspired to continue your involvement with your Community Partner or the social issue your Community Partner serves? Why or why not?

18. Ask someone who works full time at your Community Partner site for ways how can you and others can educate people or raise awareness about this Community Partner or the social issue(s) it serves? Be specific.

19. What were the most difficult or satisfying parts of your service work? Why?

20. Did you experience any disappointments or successes in your service work with your Community Partner? What did you learn from these?

21. During your service work experience, did you deal with being an "outsider" at your site? If so, how does being an "outsider" differ from being an "insider"?

22. How are your values expressed through your community work with your Community Partner?

23. What sorts of things (if any) made you feel uncomfortable when you are working with your Community Partner? Why?

24. What seem to be the root causes of the societal issue(s) addressed by your Community Partner?

25. Ask someone at your service site what other work is currently happening in our area to address the issue(s) faced by the community served by your Community Partner.

26. How can you apply anything you learned from your service work to other areas of your life?

27. If you could do work with this Community Partner again, what would you do differently?

28. Complete this sentence with a paragraph that includes details: Because of my service-learning, I am....