

The Five Stages of Service Learning

Investigation: Includes both the inventory of student interest, skills, and talents, and the social analysis of the issue being addressed. This analysis requires gathering information about the identified need through action research that includes use of varied approaches: media, interviews of experts, survey of varied populations, and direct observation/personal experiences.

Preparation: Includes the continued acquisition of knowledge that addresses any resultant questions from investigation along with academic content, identification of groups already working towards solutions, organization of a plan with clarification of roles, responsibilities and timelines, and ongoing development of any skills needed to successfully carry the plan to fruition.

Action: Includes the implementation of the plan that usually takes the form of direct service, indirect service, advocacy, or research. Action is always planned with mutual agreement and respect with partners so this builds understanding and perspective of issues and how other people live.

Reflection: Reflection is the connector between each stage of service and also summative. Through reflection students consider their thoughts and feelings (cognition and affect) regarding any overarching essential question or inquiry that is a driving force of the total experience. Reflection informs how the process develops, increases self awareness, assists in developing future plans, and employs varied multiple intelligences

Demonstration: Student demonstration captures or contains the totality of the experience including what has been learned, the process of the learning, and the service or contribution accomplished. Beginning with investigation, students document all parts of the process, resulting in a complete and comprehensive ability to tell the story of what took place during each stage that includes key informative reflection. Students draw upon their skills and talents in the manner of demonstration, often integrating technology.