

Planning Service Learning Projects

Project Assessment Quiz

This quiz is designed to assess the quality and effectiveness of current service-learning projects, however it is also a helpful tool in planning a successful project or event.

- 1. Is your project participant led and supported?**
 - a. Do participants make decisions?
 - b. Do you get feedback from participants?
 - c. Do you know the needs and goals of each participant?
- 2. Does your project have established learning objectives?**
 - a. Do you have a clear idea of what you hope participants will learn?
 - b. Are the learning objectives related to the service the participants will be doing?
 - c. Do participants and coordinators understand the learning objectives and have the opportunity to help shape them?
- 3. Does your project meet real needs in the community?**
 - a. Does it make a difference?
 - b. Do the service beneficiaries see the projects as useful?
 - c. Are service beneficiaries involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation?
- 4. Do you encourage diversity in planning and implementation?**
 - a. Do you use different techniques to reach out to diverse groups of people?
 - b. Do you have activities for building understanding among diverse participants and beneficiaries?
- 5. Is guidance provided for both leaders and participants?**
 - a. Do you have adequate orientation, training and technical support for all coordinators and participants?
- 6. Does your project include structured reflection?**
 - a. Are participants asked to do a specific assignment or activity that is thought provoking and focuses on their learning?
 - b. Do participants have an opportunity throughout the experience to share or record what it means to them?
 - c. Does your process encourage participants to challenge and strengthen their beliefs and attitudes?
- 7. Do you adhere to all safety standards and laws?**
 - a. Are you aware of what these laws and standards are?
 - b. Do you follow them throughout the entire project?
- 8. Does your project include valued recognition and celebration?**
 - a. Do you celebrate the accomplishments of your participants, coordinators and collaborators?
 - b. Do you recognize when goals and learning objectives have been met?
 - c. Do you acknowledge participants for their service?

Resource Mapping

a guide to community needs assessment

Why do a resource map?

- It's a fun and effective way to collect information about your school, neighborhood, and community.
- It's a way to find out what your community really needs and how you can make the biggest difference.
- It's a tool to help you come up with project ideas throughout the year.
- It's a way to get to know your community and discover all the wonderful things already there.
- The community is more likely to support projects they see as addressing real needs and issues.
- You'll get some great ideas for bill writing and articles.

The Steps to Resource Mapping

1. **Brainstorming** – the group should think of all the possible sites that you could look at in a needs assessment. The site could be as large as your entire city or as small as a vacant lot.
2. **Decide on a General Issue Area** – Decide what area you'll be looking at and begin thinking about some issues to focus on.
3. **Digging Deeper** – Think of ways you will collect your information. Some examples are: survey, interviews, field trips, and community forums.
4. **Collect & Sort Data** – Using the tools you've decided on collect all of the information you can about your site. Once it's collected, come together as a group and share it.
5. **Decide on a Project** – Looking at the information you've collected, what problems do you see? Who is affected? What solutions can you think of? What can your group do to help the situation?

Project Ideas

National "Make a Difference Day" is the 4th Saturday in October each year. You may want to keep this in mind when planning events.

Support for people served by shelters

- Help cook and/or serve a meal at a shelter or food shelf.
- Gather clothing from your neighbors and donate it to a shelter.
- Make "I Care" kits with combs, toothbrushes, shampoo, etc., for people in shelters.
- Help with repairs at a shelter.
- Make a care package with mittens, socks, T-shirts, long underwear, etc., for children at shelters.
- Collect grocery coupons to give a food shelf or shelter.
- If your community doesn't have a food bank, work with local leaders to start one.
- Pack and hand out food at a food bank.
- Organize a neighborhood group to plant, tend and harvest a vegetable garden. Donate the produce to a shelter or food bank.
- Organize a canned-goods drive in conjunction with a dance and donate the goods to a food shelf.

Support for seniors and people in nursing homes and hospitals

- Be a "grandfriend" to an elderly person.
- Take a "baby brigade" of parents and babies to visit nursing home residents.
- Work with the humane society and a local nursing home to plan a pet visit to the nursing home to visit with the elderly residents.
- Rake leaves, shovel snow, clean gutters or wash windows for seniors.
- Pick up medicine for a sick person.
- Write your "grandfriend" a letter, or write letters for an elderly person.
- Go for a walk with a senior citizen in your community.
- Hold an afternoon dance for a local nursing home. Teach residents your dances and ask them to teach you theirs.
- Deliver meals to homebound individuals.
- Offer to pick up groceries with/for a sick person.
- Help senior in your neighborhood obtain and install locks or smoke alarms.
- Teach a senior friend or a homebound person how to use a computer or the internet.

Improving neighborhoods and making them safe

- Help neighbors paint and repair their homes or landscape their lawns.
- Clean up a vacant lot.
- Organize a campaign to raise money to purchase and install new playground equipment in a local park or at the YMCA.
- Campaign for additional lighting along poorly lighted streets
- Paint a mural or clean up a local park.
- Participate in your local YMCA's Partners With Youth Campaign.
- Plant flowers in public areas that could use some color.
- Paint a mural over graffiti.
- Organize and invite local police officers to present a drug awareness or bike safety assembly.
- Form volunteer teams for a community safety escort service.

Support for people with special needs

- Volunteer to help at a Special Olympics event.
- Set up a buddy system for kids with special needs at your school or YMCA.
- Raise money for Braille or large-print books for the visually impaired.
- Volunteer at an agency that works with emotionally disturbed children.
- Read books or the newspaper on tape for visually impaired people.
- Bring toys to children in the cancer ward of a hospital.
- Tutor a student who needs help learning English.

Preserving the environment

- Plant a garden or a tree where the whole neighborhood can enjoy it.
- Set up a neighborhood curbside recycling pick-up.
- Organize a carpooling campaign in your neighborhood to cut down on air pollution.
- Sponsor an acre of a rain forest.
- Clean up trash along a river or in a park.
- Create a habitat for wildlife or a garden with native plants.
- Create a campaign to encourage biking and walking.
- Test the quality of the water in your local lakes, river or streams.

Reflection

Reflection is a time for participants to look back on, think critically about and learn from their service experience. Reflection may include acknowledging and/or sharing of reactions, feelings, observations, and ideas about anything regarding the activity. Structured reflection activities provide ways to process, share and explore the service experience.

40 Ways to Reflect

1. Complete guided worksheets on the project.
2. Create a bulletin board display.
3. Create a fundraising campaign to provide financial support that builds on the service.
4. Create a journal.
5. Create a scrapbook.
6. Create a video or slide show.
7. Create a Web site on the topic.
8. Create an individual or group portfolio.
9. Create briefing papers for policy makers.
10. Create collages representing the experience or issue.
11. Create drawings, paintings or sculptures.
12. Develop and present a drama, puppet show, dance or music concert.
13. Do a conference or workshop presentation.
14. Do public speaking about the project.
15. Role-play.
16. Draw editorial cartoons or comic strips.
17. Give oral reports to the class or group.
18. Have a "talk show" about the service project or the social issues involved.
19. Hold class or group discussions.
20. Host discussions with community members or experts.
21. Lead a school assembly.
22. Lead a worship service (for congregation based groups).
23. Participate in a group simulation experience.
24. Plan a training session for other youth.
25. Plan the next activity the group or class will do tighter on the same topic.
26. Prepare booklets on related topics to be used by other teachers.
27. Read and discuss children's books on the service topic or social issue.
28. Read articles or chapters on the social, religious, ethical, historical or political issues at state in the project.
29. Research social issues related to the project.
30. Study sacred writings, literature or historical material related to the project.
31. Teach material to younger children.
32. Testify before a decision-making or policy-setting group.
33. Write a group letter to families suggesting how they can get involved together.

34. Write a letter to a parent or friend about the experience.
35. Write a letter to the editor of a newspaper.
36. Write about a specific topic.
37. Write an essay or report about the needs.
38. Write and illustrate storybooks to read to younger children.
39. Write articles for a local or organizational newsletter or newspaper.
40. Write poetry about the experience.