

*The Best Papers I've Ever Graded:*

*A Comprehensive Service Learning Reflection*

Participants will exchange ideas about ways to elicit the most meaningful reflections from their students' service learning (SL) experiences. Many professors are hesitant to incorporate SL into their developmental course which is already overstuffed with information and assignments. SL is a vehicle that can actually reduce the amount of information the professor "has to cover" in class by providing students with out-of-class experiences that exemplify course concepts. The key to getting the most out of SL is the reflection assignment.

To stimulate conversation among participants, I will share the brief SL reflection assignment I created based on a compilation of the best ideas I found from experts on SL. This assignment produced the strongest set of papers I've graded in over 10 years of teaching Developmental courses. Perhaps the most useful component of this assignment is that after students answer a set of questions about their experience and print their assignment, they are required to take a pen or pencil and hand write the names of developmental concepts or the gist of research findings near their typed text, where appropriate. Other examples of items in the assignment include:

- How did this experience affect you? E.g., how did it cause you to recognize and respect human diversity or understand that developmental explanations may vary across populations and contexts?
- Did you encounter any ethical dilemmas? If so, cite APA or SRCD ethical principle(s) and how you handled the situation.
- What knowledge did you gain that you did not get from reading and classroom experiences?

Although this roundtable will allow for a free-flowing exchange of ideas, the moderator will come prepared with questions to facilitate the conversation, e.g.:

- What innovative ideas have you found work really well for you in terms of SL assignments?
- What should be the required components of a SL reflection?
- Does anyone have any examples of something that went really wrong with a SL experience?
  - Follow-up question: How did you handle it?
- What kinds of SL experiences best match the learning goals and objectives for Developmental courses?
- How many hours of SL are appropriate to require for a Development course?
- Should students set up their own SL experiences or should the experiences be arranged for them?
  - Potential follow-up: What are the pros and cons of doing the SL experience as a class vs. as individuals?
- Would an oral reflection be more or less effective than a written reflection, why or why not?
  - Potential follow-up: What would an oral reflection assignment look like?
- What factors play a role in the length of the SL reflection assignment?
- What aspect(s) of your reflection assignments would you recommend to other professors?
- What is it about that aspect(s) that you think makes it work well for you and your students?
- What are other ways to get students to apply course material to their SL experience?