

Teaching strategy: Understanding four kinds of action for meaningful service

The CAS stages assist CAS students to organize and plan meaningful service experiences. This interactive strategy provides specific examples of service learning experiences organized in the four different ways students take action.

- **Direct service:** Student interaction involves people, the environment or animals.
- **Indirect service:** Although students do not see the recipients of indirect service, they have verified their actions will benefit the community or environment.
- **Advocacy:** Students speak on behalf of a cause or concern to promote action on an issue of public interest.
- **Research:** Students collect information through varied sources, analyse data and report on a topic of importance to influence policy or practice.

Often student action results in a combination of these different ways to do service. When possible, having **direct action** is of great value for student learning, and ideally is part of their CAS experience.

A set of student documents is provided to introduce each type of action. Each includes:

- an example—a thorough service learning example in a student's voice
- design your own—for students to design their own service learning example following these models.

These are best used with students working in pairs or small groups.

For each type of action, be sure to review the list of **ideas** provided to further stimulate possibilities for meaningful CAS service experiences.

Direct service example: In support of people with memory loss

Note: With **direct service**, you see the people who will benefit from your actions or interact with the environment or animals. In all cases, the action is intended to have reciprocal benefits for all involved.

Investigation: After reading articles about challenges facing people who have had strokes, head injury, or dementia, I contacted a local day care center for people experiencing memory loss. I interviewed the education director about what helped people the most; she said exercise and conversations. She agreed I could visit on Saturday mornings on a regular basis to lead sitting and standing exercises and visit.

Preparation: I developed a series of simple exercises, beginning with those someone can do sitting down. I showed them to a relative who is a physical therapist and she helped me make adjustments. Later, after leading the sitting exercises several times, I developed some for standing and again reviewed these with my cousin. I also began adding music since I found everyone liked moving to music. This led me to find songs from their era.

Action: Leading 30 minute exercise routines on Saturday mornings, twice per month was the initial plan, though I went more often. Because these became popular, I would lead two or three sessions a visit, offering one sitting session, one sitting and standing session, and one walking session (added later). Also I would stay and have conversations for 30-45 minutes each visit.

Reflection: I found writing after each session was so important for me to describe what happened, because sometimes I was upset. My grandmother had passed away and she had Alzheimer's and sometimes the residents reminded me of her. Other times I was so excited that I just had to write about a new accomplishment I noticed for one of the participants. In IB Art I found myself drawing some of the faces so I began sketching on occasion to accompany my writing. I found reflection to be an unexpected helpful way to put all the pieces together.

Demonstration: I created a virtual space that had a video of me with some friends doing my exercise routines, written reflections, a thank you letter from the agency, my sketches, and an email my cousin sent me about how I inspired her to donate her time—she came with me on occasion to help me develop more exercises. What was most enjoyable was leading some of the routines on the day we showcased our CAS experiences and also showing photographs which the agency gave me permission to take and use.

Direct Service: Your Turn

Investigation often involves:

- Media—articles, videos, books
- Interviews—questioning experts
- Surveys—finding out from many
- Observation—onsite viewing

Tutoring Refugee Children

Investigation:

After reading an article describing struggles of refugee families, I set up a meeting to interview a refugee worker from a local organization. He invited me to visit and spend an hour at the after school program. I found that children needed books and art experiences and the teachers confirmed this was a real need.

Preparation:

Action:

Reflection:

Demonstration:

Teaching Gardens

Investigation:

A school parent led a workshop for students about community gardens and I joined a group going see several locations where gardens are used to teach local residents how to grow food and plant their own gardens. They explained there is a need for teachers on to promote gardening skills. I enrolled in a course to become a City Garden Leader and teach classes to the public about planting and maintaining their own gardens.

Preparation:

I completed the course that included gardening techniques, composting, and plant selection. We learned about tools and formed teaching teams and practiced leading lessons for other students and family members.

Action:

Reflection:

Demonstration:

Direct service: Design your own

How should you decide what to do? Consider:

- What are my interests?
- What are my talents and skills?
- What are areas in which I want to grow, strengthen or improve?

Name of plan:

Investigation:

Preparation:

Action:

Reflection:

Demonstration:

Ideas for direct service

With people

- Coaching children in sports
- Delivering meals to people living with a medical condition
- Leading resume-writing workshops for people who are unemployed
- Organizing or assisting at a blood drive
- Playing music with elders to have an exchange of skills and learn about each other's music preferences and talents, and then performing as an ensemble for others
- Distributing plants at a farmer's market to promote home-grown container gardens
- Serving food at a soup kitchen

With the environment

- Restoring a stream
- Preparing the soil and beds for an elementary school garden and planting with the children

- Growing seedlings for distribution
- Installing raised-bed gardens for a senior centre
- Establishing a recycling programme at city hall
- Making a storm-water garden

With animals

- Helping at an animal shelter with data entry and dog-walking
- Assisting with a pet adoption outreach programme at community events
- Leading a workshop on pet care
- Setting up a turtle sanctuary in partnership with a community organization

Indirect service example: Providing content for an organization website

Note: With **indirect service**, you do not see the recipients of your action; however, actions are based on verified community needs.

Investigation: I remembered from a school-wide food drive that the receiving organization had a fairly undeveloped website. I had been studying about issues of local and world hunger in an IB subject, and thought to address this topic, and remembered that website. After reviewing the site again, and talking with the director of the organization, they agreed I could make a written proposal of what I could offer. Since I want to study graphic design and technology, this is a great fit.

Preparation: I looked at other websites that seemed to be rich in content and took notes. A few of my friends were helpful in brainstorming with me and helped come up with categories of content. I decided to focus on providing content that would help schools learn about local hunger and be more effective in doing food collections that more effectively meet local needs. The organization let me visit several times as part of my planning so I assisted with food collections, sorting, community networking, and, along the way, interviewed different staff members.

Action: I created a set of materials for elementary children to learn about hunger; this included a short story to read that provided useful information, a puzzle to complete, and a document to download with items the food bank needed; this document could easily be updated. After receiving comments from the organization's education director, I made revisions and prepared a comparable set for secondary students. Then I wrote a short guide to running a food drive based on our school's experience and what I had learned at the organization. All were uploaded to the website.

Reflection: Since this was all about technology I uploaded all of my reflections onto a blog. I recruited several people to read the blog (including the education director from the agency) so I had continual feedback. In this way I could air frustrations and get immediate suggestions when needed, and also received a few accolades when I had successes which kept me motivated.

Demonstration: I made a short video that compiled elements from the entire experience, with photos, interview commentary from people at the food bank, and visuals from the website and my blog.

Indirect service: Design your own

How should you decide what to do? Consider:

- What are my interests?
- What are my talents and skills?
- What are areas in which I want to grow, strengthen or improve?

Name of plan:

Investigation:

Preparation:

Action:

Reflection:

Demonstration:

Ideas for indirect service

With people

- Assembling a photo exhibit about poverty for a gallery
- Preparing meals in a soup kitchen
- Taking part in a walkathon to raise money for humanitarian causes
- Preparing activity kits for children for an emergency shelter
- Writing brochures for organizations
- Assisting with the creation of a museum exhibit
- Making exercise videos to give to homeless shelters
- Creating a newsletter for a retirement community
- Recording audio books for people who are visually impaired

With the environment

- Preparing signage for a local wetland
- Growing seedlings for distribution
- Initiating a school compost to reduce food waste in landfills
- Creating a website with information about flora and fauna for a local park

With animals

- Making zoo toys for animals
- Collecting needed supplies for a wildlife rescue centre
- Baking dog biscuits for an animal shelter
- Making colouring books on local endangered animals for elementary schools and for tourists with protection tips

Advocacy service example: An eat-well food campaign

Note: With **advocacy service**, you give voice to a cause.

Investigation: After talking with a relative recently diagnosed with diabetes, I became curious about how diet and nutrition impact our health. I read a current nonfiction book about eating and nutrition, interviewed several people I know who seem very structured about their eating habits and learned about different approaches to health, and surveyed students in four of my classes to find out what they know or believe to be true about the relationship between food choices and health. As an athlete, this topic is important, and my investigation revealed a need: there is a lack of knowledge among youth about the importance of food choices.

Preparation: I wanted to do a poster campaign in the cafeteria, offer recipes to the school cafeteria based on my research, and cook some recipes (which I have never done before) and bring in food samples if they tasted good enough. Then I discussed with some friends and a few suggestions helped, including having students select which posters were best and then make sets for display around the school. Each of these ideas required approvals so I wrote a proposal that was accepted by my CAS coordinator and school officials. I was allowed to offer two recipes for review and if that went well provide others to the school cafeteria.

Action: The poster campaign was held over a six month period with a new poster added each month. At the end there was a vote on the top two posters and about 75 students voted. The first two recipes were successful, two more were permitted, and my cooking talents improved over time.

Reflection: I wrote my reflections though one of my friends said I should also keep a food diary to show how my eating habits evolved. I did this on and off for the duration of my CAS experiences.

Demonstration: My portfolio included posters, samples of surveys, video interviews with students who tried my recipes and the school dishes I influenced, and letters from local schools who received copies of posters. I also had food samples at a CAS event showcasing our accomplishments.