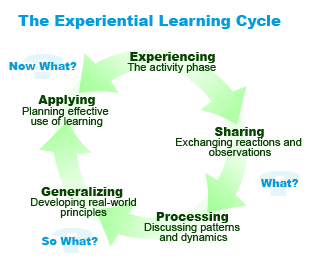
**Reflection   
in service-learning classes**

Reflection is one of the most academically rigorous components of a service-learning course. By taking the time to reflect on your service-learning experience, you will get more from your experience. This is why reflections are a required part of service-learning classes. Reflection helps you thoughtfully process you community work. It helps you critically assess and understand what you are seeing and doing.  
  
Below is a graphical representation of the reflection process, also referred to as the Experiential Learning Cycle\*.



**Continuous reflection:** Reflection should be an ongoing component, happening before, during, and after an experience.  
  
Therefore, as you participate in a service-learning project and do the related 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?"  
  
**–What?** Report the facts and events of an experience, objectively.  
**–So What?** Analyze the experience.  
**–Now What?** Consider the future impact of the experience on you and the community.  
  
**Examples of Reflection Questions (based on the Experiential Learning Cycle):**  
(see more examples [below](http://www.servicelearning.umn.edu/info/reflection.html#Sample))   
  
**What?**   
—What happened?  
—What did you observe?  
—What issue is being addressed or population is being served?  
  
**So What?**  
—Did you learn a new skill or clarify an interest?  
—Did you hear, smell, or feel anything that surprised you?  
—How is your experience different from what you expected?  
—What impacts the way you view the situation/experience? (What lens are you viewing from?)  
—What did you like/dislike about the experience?  
—What did you learn about the people/community?  
—What are some of the pressing needs/issues in the community?  
—How does this project address those needs?  
  
**Now What?**  
—What seem to be the root causes of the issue addressed?  
—What other work is currently happening to address the issue?  
—What learning occurred for you in this experience?  
—How can you apply this learning?  
—What would you like to learn more about, related to this project or issue?  
—What follow-up is needed to address any challenges or difficulties?  
—What information can you share with your peers or the community?  
—If you could do the project again, what would you do differently? 

**Sample Reflection Questions**

* What is your role at the community site?
* What were your initial expectations? Have these expectations changed? How? Why?
* What about your community involvement has been an eye-opening experience?
* How do you motivate yourself to go to your site when you don't feel like it?
* What specific skills have you used at your community site?
* What specific skills have you gain by your involvement at the community site?
* Describe a person you've encountered in the community who made a strong impression on you, positive or negative.
* Do you see benefits of doing community work? Why or why not?
* Has your view of the population with whom you have been working changed? How?
* How has the environment and social conditions affected the people at your site?
* What institutional structures are in place at your site or in the community? How do they affect the people you work with?
* Has the experience affected your worldview? How?
* Have your career options been expanded by your service experience?
* Why does the organization you are working for exist?
* Did anything about your community involvement surprise you? If so, what?
* What did you do that seemed to be effective or ineffective in the community?
* How does your understanding of the community change as a result of your participation in this project?
* How can you continue your involvement with this group or social issue?
* How can you educate others or raise awareness about this group or social issue?
* What are the most difficult or satisfying parts of your work? Why?
* Talk about any disappointments or successes of your project. What did you learn from it?
* During your community work experience, have you dealt with being an "outsider" at your site? How does being an "outsider" differ from being an "insider"?
* How are your values expressed through your community work?
* What sorts of things make you feel uncomfortable when you are working in the community? Why?
* Complete this sentence: Because of my service-learning, I am....

*\*FOOTNOTES*:   
—Kolb, David. Experiential Learning Cycle chart.  
—Eyler, Janet, and D.E. Giles. [*A Practitioners Guide to Reflection in Service-Learning*](http://www.servicelearning.org/library/lib_cat/index.php?library_id=2228). Nashville: Vanderbilt University, 1996.