

Roots & Shoots™ Project Planning and Implementation Guidelines

Knowledge—Surveying Your Community

One of the most important parts of doing a community service learning project is deciding what area of your community to address. Conducting a knowledge-gathering survey of your community will allow you to have a clearer picture of what areas need the service your group can provide. There are other benefits to gathering information on your community, particularly for youth who may feel dissociated from the local area. When a child is out of a familiar situation, s/he needs to be given the opportunity to connect to something else. Learning about parts of the local community that are of interest to a youth help him/her put out a few roots and feel less disconnected. The purpose of a community survey is not only to gain information about the community, but also to forge a connection that helps make the group want to conduct a project to benefit that community. They become a part of something bigger than themselves, adding awareness and connection to their surroundings. Youth have a hard time loving or showing compassion for something, somewhere, or someone that they do not know. In addition, youth develop a corresponding increase in self-esteem stemming from the completion of the surveying activities through the knowledge gained and the increase in their comfort level in the space and community around them.

Conducting a community survey

1. Decide how you will define community. Generally, it is the immediate area in which the group resides (like a town, a city or part of a city, a school, or even a county). Talk with your group about what they would like it to be. Do they want to focus solely on their neighborhood or do they want to address the entire city? Remember that the bigger the community, the more time it will take to do an in-depth survey. Part of this discussion should include how deep the survey should go into the community, particularly if your group is addressing a large city like San Francisco or Boston.
2. Decide upon a reporting and information gathering method. Some charts are available from Roots & Shoots to help the youth gather their information on a single page, but feel free to have them make up their own or help you do that. Is it better for them to fill in a journal with what they are learning or should they be using a “fill-in the spaces” answer sheet? This will vary from group to group, so use your best judgment and ask them for their opinion as to what will work best for them. They may not know, so it might be useful to have a few different options for them to try out and see. This method takes into account the different learning styles that will exist in your group, as well as the different intelligences the youth will have.
3. Utilize the tools available from Roots & Shoots to assist you: Community Survey (online at www.lessonsforhope.org or in the Coordinator’s Manual), Neighbor Interview, Nature Journaling
4. Decide the thoroughness of the survey—the more in depth a survey you do, the more connected to the community your group will be. Be careful not to spend too much time on the survey, as the group may lose enthusiasm for it and not want to continue onto the project.
5. Consider including members of the community to help with the more specialized sections of the survey. A member of the Conservation Commission, a representative from the Town

Board, an employee from the Department of Health, or anyone else along these lines can help shed light on some situations in the area of which the youth may not be aware.

6. Utilize as many avenues as you can to expose the group to the information about their community. Interesting ways to access information about the area while connecting the group more closely to the community in which they live include:
 - a. Attending town meetings
 - b. Using the Internet
 - c. Looking through documents at City Hall or the library
 - d. Interviewing older town residents
 - e. Journaling what you see in the natural areas then looking through field guides to identify species
 - f. Attending lectures at the local college or arts center
7. Interview other children and youth. This technique gives the group a connection to other people their own age in the community and helps them see that their ideas, and thereby they, are not so different and strange—in fact, they are quite similar to the others around them.
8. Focus on individual interests. Youth are more likely to engage in a project when it is of specific interest to them. By dividing up the community survey and giving sections to different groups of youth, you are allowing the group members to pursue their own interests. They can then conduct their investigations and report back to the group on their findings. In this way, the group members are again increasing self-esteem by being “experts” on a topic and learning to share their ideas in a safe environment. They are also practicing listening to others and participating in discussions.
9. Give youth the opportunity to present their findings, either to each other, their peers, the community at large, or even the City Council. This presentation validates their work and again gives them the opportunity to be experts. The presentation can take many forms, from a newspaper article to a display in the library, to a slide show discussion, to a website, to any other medium the group wants to explore. By presenting the information they have gathered, the group is actually conducting a community-based service learning project through educating and raising public awareness.
10. Focus on the positive. While exploring the community, the number of local problems may start to seem overwhelming. Instead, turn the focus to what groups are already out there working in the community and see what they are doing.

As you go through this process, remember information gathering connects your group to their immediate community and will set the tone for the successive projects. After finishing this process, your group will be better able to move into brainstorming the project they will attend to next.

Selecting a Service Project

How do you go about selecting a project that your group can do? The best thing to do is to figure out what projects would fulfill a need in your community. Projects that serve a true purpose are the most valuable to the group participants and to the community. Participants will gain more real-life skills and develop a greater sense of well-being if they know they are doing a project that will truly benefit the community or providing a service that has an authentic basis, rather than a project that has been concocted for them. Remember to keep the age of your group and the length of time you can spend on the project in mind as you facilitate this process.

How do you find out what those needs are? In order to determine the needs in your community, you need to assess the status of the animals, environment, and human community. Conducting a community survey, interviewing residents, and studying different aspects of your area are all good ways of finding out what your community has and needs.

Once you assess the needs of your community, how do you decide what project to do? Gather the group together and have them pool their survey, interview, and area study results. From this information, have the group brainstorm a list of problems they would see in the community. If it helps, break the brainstorm up into the three project categories of Animals, the Environment, and the Human Community. (See the “Brainstorming Ideas” section of this resource for ways to brainstorm in groups.)

Have the group go through the list of ideas generated through the brainstorm and pick out a few they feel are the most important and doable in the length of time they have to do their project. (See the “Brainstorming Ideas” section for ways to do this distillation.) Continue the discussion and distillation until you come up with one project with which all are comfortable. Now that you have a project idea, you can move into the preparation stage of project planning.

The entire process of selecting a project idea can take an hour or a day, depending upon how well your group is working and the number of ideas generated. Allow two one-hour blocks for the first time the group does this process—you can always finish early.

Resources available from Roots & Shoots

1. Community Survey
2. Community Survey for Young Children
3. Nature Journaling guide
4. Community Residents Interview
5. Brainstorm charts for Water/Land/Air, Human, Animal, Plant

Initial Project Brainstorming Ideas

There are many ways to get a group to share their ideas with each other. The following brainstorm techniques will help you create a list of problem areas/project ideas in order to select the project(s) your group will conduct.

1. Full Group Initial Project Brainstorm:
 - a. Gather the group together and explain that you are going to be coming up with a list of project ideas to implement in your community.
 - b. Go over the rules of brainstorming:
 - i. No idea is too big, too small, too silly, or too strange.
 - ii. Make no comments on others’ ideas or your own, just share them. There will be time for opinions later.
 - iii. Everyone deserves a chance to say something. Please pay attention to others’ ideas.
 - c. Guiding questions to ask
 - i. What bothered you as you were learning about our community? What can we do about it?

- ii. What problems do you see in our community that you would like to do something about?
 - iii. What kind of projects do you see other groups/organizations doing that you would like to help with?
 - d. As the group members say their ideas, write them all down on the board or on a sheet of paper big enough for them all to see. Depending upon the size of your group, you may need to have them raise their hands. You can also have one of the group members do this scribing if they would like.
- 2. Small Group Initial Project Brainstorm
 - a. Gather the group together and explain that you are going to be coming up with a list of project ideas to implement in your community.
 - b. Go over the rules of brainstorming:
 - i. No idea is too big, too small, too silly, or too strange.
 - ii. Make no comments on others' ideas or your own, just share them. There will be time for opinions later.
 - iii. Everyone deserves a chance to say something. Please pay attention to others' ideas.
 - c. Divide the group into smaller groups of 4 or less. Give each small group a piece of paper and have them record their ideas.
 - d. Possible guiding questions:
 - i. What are some things our group can do to help the community?
 - ii. If you could do anything to help the local environment/animals/human community, what would it be?
 - e. Give them about 15 minutes to write down all their ideas. Travel around among the groups to see how they are doing and ask a few more guiding questions if it looks like they are getting stuck. Remind them to think about the surveys, studies, and interviews they did.
 - f. Gather all the small groups back together into a big group and have each group read back what they came up with. Write all of the ideas down on a big piece of paper or the board.
- 3. Carousel Brainstorm
 - a. Gather the group together and explain that you are going to be coming up with a list of project ideas to implement in your community.
 - b. Go over the rules of brainstorming:
 - i. No idea is too big, too small, too silly, or too strange.
 - ii. Make no comments on others' ideas or your own, just share them. There will be time for opinions later.
 - iii. Everyone deserves a chance to say something. Please pay attention to others' ideas.
 - c. Put three big pieces of paper around the room. Label each one with a different project area—Animals, Environment, Human Community. Give everyone in the group a marker or other writing utensil. Have them go around the room and write their project ideas on the appropriate sheets of paper. Give them about 20 minutes to do this. Encourage them to go to all of the different areas so that all of their ideas get written down. If someone has already written down their idea, tell them to place a star next to it as a way to say, "I agree."

- d. Gather the group members back together and read the papers out loud so that all have a chance to hear the different ideas. Ask the group for clarification if something listed is a bit unclear.
4. Popcorn Brainstorm
- a. Gather the group together and explain that you are going to be coming up with a list of project ideas to implement in your community.
 - b. Go over the rules of brainstorming:
 - i. No idea is too big, too small, too silly, or too strange.
 - ii. Make no comments on others' ideas or your own, just share them. There will be time for opinions later.
 - iii. Everyone deserves a chance to say something. Please pay attention to others' ideas.
 - c. Give everyone a few pieces of paper and have them write a project idea on each one. Pass around a hat or bowl and have everyone crumple or fold their papers and put them in the bowl. After everyone has put them in, bring the bowl back and read the ideas one at a time. Write them up on the board or a big piece of paper so that everyone can see.

Idea Distillation

Now that you have a list of project ideas, how do you decide which one(s) to do? The following activities will help your group narrow down their ideas to one that is acceptable to everyone. Remember that this process could take 10 minutes or a couple of hours, depending upon how everyone reacts to the ideas. Be patient, yet firmly move things along if they get stalled. Different ages will react differently and consensus can generally be reached with older groups.

- 1. Sticker Decisions
 - a. Gather enough little stickers (circles, stars, whatever) for everyone in the group to have 4 each.
 - b. Spread the papers with the ideas on them around the room and give everyone 3 stickers. Tell them to go around and put a sticker by the ideas they like best. They can choose to put 3 stickers on one idea or 1 sticker on three different ideas, or any variation thereof. As they do this, they need to remember to not comment on anyone else's sticker placement and to think for themselves, not to just agree with whatever their best friend is putting down.
 - c. When everyone has put their stickers on, have them sit down and gather the papers. As a group, pick out the ideas that have the most stickers on them. This generally ends up being about 5 different ideas. Write these ideas down again, and give everyone 1 sticker. Now they have to vote with their sticker for one of the ideas. (You can give them two if you want, it generally doesn't matter). There should be a clear "winner" when everyone has placed their stickers. If there isn't, you may have to do a tie-breaker.
 - d. Use that final idea/problem area as the base for selecting an actual project.
- 2. Full Group Vote
 - a. This works better with a small group that feels comfortable saying what they think in front of each other.
 - b. Post the list of ideas and tell the group members that they have three votes. They can vote up to 3 times, but have to vote at least once.

- c. Read down the list and ask the group to vote for the ideas by raising their hands. Record the number of votes each idea gets. Select the top 3 – 5 vote-getters and repeat the process with only those 3 – 5. This time, give each person only 1 or 2 votes. There should be a clear “winner” once all the votes have been made. If there isn’t, have everyone vote again, but only once this time.
 - d. Use that final idea/problem area as the base for selecting an actual project.
3. Lobby-ing for a Project
- a. If you are looking for a way for your group to more fully explore the problem areas they are concerned about, and you have a little extra time, try this selection method.
 - b. Post the list of ideas/problem areas. Tell each group member to pick one that they would like to consider more fully. If you have more than one person working on an idea, make small groups to help each other with this.
 - c. Have them take some time to think about, and possibly research, this idea further. Tell them that they will have to present the idea to the rest of the group before a vote is taken on what area to address. Remind them that an informed voter makes a better decision.
 - d. Components of their research could be possible project outcomes, reasons why this problem area is so important to address, etc. You can make it an in-depth research project or a short 10 minute group discussion on each idea.
 - e. Have each group present their idea/problem area to the group taking as much time as you think necessary. Each group needs to listen carefully to each other so that a good vote can be taken.
 - f. Once everyone has presented, make a list of the ideas presented. Move into a vote (similar to the ones listed above) on only those ideas. This should leave you with one problem area on which to conduct a final project.

Coming up with a specific final project idea

Often a group will come up with an idea, but it is not a specific idea that is easily planned. An example is “Conserve energy in the school.” This project idea is a good one, but has no real action-item(s) associated with it. “Raise awareness in the school about energy conservation” is a much more specific statement. It shows that the group will be focusing on raising awareness so that the members of the school community will conserve energy. It is a much easier project idea to which you can assign outcomes, roles, and actions. Once you have a final, single project you can move into the planning stages. Remember that a single project can incorporate a variety of ideas and may have a few parts that will address some of the other ideas or problems raised earlier in the process.

Project Planning Guidelines—Preparation

Preparation is one of the most critical stages of project planning. Without adequate preparation, your project can get stalled and run into mishaps that may easily have been avoided with some forethought and planning. Solid preparation by the group members gives them ownership of the project and helps them be responsible for the overall outcome.

What are the goals of the preparation stage of project planning?

1. A clear view of what is to be done on the project
2. A timeline of what will be done and when it will be done
3. An understanding of logistics and liability for the project

4. An understanding of skills the group members need for the project
5. A clear list of responsibilities of each group member
6. A list of desired project outcomes
7. Evaluation tools for the project that reflect the desired project outcomes
8. Plans for celebration

Learning Objectives of the preparation stage¹

1. Students will use agreed-upon rules for informal and formal discussions in small and large groups.
2. Students will pose questions, listen to the ideas of others, and contribute their own information or ideas in group discussions or interviews in order to acquire new knowledge.

A Clear View

1. What do you want your finished project to look like?
2. What steps do you need to take to make the project happen?
3. Will you need to make committees? How?

Timeline

1. When does the project need to be finished?
2. When are you going to start the project?
3. When does each step need to be done?
4. Do the steps need to be done in order or can some be done simultaneously?

Logistics and Liability

1. Do you need permission slips?
2. Do you need transportation to the project site?
3. Do you need food/water for the project day?
4. Is there any special training the group members need before conducting the project? i.e. cultural/socioeconomic sensitivity discussions, specific rules of the project site,
5. Do you need money for the project? How much? Where will it come from?
6. Can you get any of your equipment and supplies donated? From whom? How?
7. What materials, tools, equipment, etc. do you need?

Necessary Skills

1. Will the group members need to learn how to use any tools or other special equipment?
2. Do they need to learn how to write letters? Make PowerPoint presentations? Use metric measurements?
3. Do they need to practice public speaking?
4. Does the group need to work on discussion skills? Team-building to increase their collaborative ability?

Project Outcomes

1. What will the final project look like?
2. When will the project finish?

¹ Based upon the Massachusetts State Curriculum Frameworks

3. How many results do you expect? i.e. how many copies of a brochure? How many trips to test water quality? How many bags of trash will you collect? How many people will attend the event? How much money are you going to collect? Etc.
4. How will you celebrate what you've done?

Evaluation Tools

1. How are you going to figure out you did what you set out to do?
2. Are you going to use journals throughout the event?
3. How are you going to record your findings and track your progress throughout the project?
4. Who is going to take pictures throughout the process?
5. How are you going to document the project throughout the process and at the end?

Plans for Celebration

1. How are you going to celebrate the completion of the project?
2. Who are you going to invite?

Activities to increase effectiveness of the preparation stage

1. Icebreakers: There are a number of icebreakers out there to help your group get to know one another better so their project is more effective. Some resources include:
 - a. Any Project Adventure book, i.e. Quicksilver, Cows Tails and Cobras, Silver Bullets, etc. www.pa.org
 - b. Roots & Shoots offices and regional coordinators
2. Communication activities: It is always a good idea to conduct some activities specific to increasing communication techniques among group members. Specific ideas can be found through Project Adventure, the YMCA, Boys & Girls Clubs, in addition to your local Roots & Shoots office.
3. Brainstorming techniques: See the ones outlined in the Coordinator's Manual and the "Selecting a Service Project" section.

Additional Resources Available from Roots & Shoots

1. Coordinator's Manual
2. Early Childhood Handbook

Project Planning Guidelines—Collaboration

Collaboration is an essential part of good service learning projects. Adding other organizations or people with similar interests can round out the experience for the group members. Collaboration also allows for specific organizational strengths to benefit the group and the project itself. Examples of collaboration range from working with another group of youth to including the assistance of a parks department to bringing in adults who have special skills such as scientists and artists.

What are the goals of collaboration while project planning?

1. Assistance in conducting the project
2. Additional bodies to help implement the project
3. Students interact with other adults and community members, learning more about what people do for careers and who is available to help them.

Possible Learning Objectives of the Collaboration stage²

1. Students will use knowledge of standard English conventions their writing, revising, and editing.
2. Students will make oral presentations that demonstrate appropriate consideration of audience, purpose, and the information to be conveyed.

Assistance

1. Who can help you learn the information you need to know to do the project?
2. What community organizations might have experts who are willing to talk with your group or even help in the planning?

Other Groups

1. Are there any other Roots & Shoots groups in your area that might be able to help?
2. Can you partner with another class or youth group to help you do the work?
3. Are there groups of adults in your community that might be available to help, thereby providing a service for them as well? i.e. senior citizens groups, PTA, master gardeners, botanical societies, astronomers club, etc.

Resources Available from Roots & Shoots

1. Contact information for other groups in your area.
2. Possible partner organizations and other collaborators in your area.

Activities to increase effectiveness of collaboration

1. Stand-Up: (N.B. This activity involves the youth getting rather close to each other.) Pair off the youth. Have them sit down back-to-back with their partner. Ask them to link elbows so their linked elbows are about even with their backs and their forearms are at their sides, hands facing to the front. Working together, they are to stand up without breaking the link of their elbows. Generally this is accomplished by pushing against each other; leave the youth to figure that out on their own.
2. Web: (For this activity you will need a ball of twine, yarn, etc. and a set of cards with the teamwork words written on them.) Gather the group into a circle. Explain that the group is going to act out how every member of a group and every process of working together are important. Hand out a teamwork card to each person and go around the circle so each can say what card they have. Start the ball of yarn with you, the Facilitator, and pass it across the circle to someone making sure to hold onto the end. The recipient will then pass it across to someone else, holding onto a section of the yarn. The ball continues around the circle in this manner until everyone has had it. The last person returns it to you. You hold onto a section and set the remainder on the floor next to you. Ask the group what they see in front of them (a web of teamwork). Present a scenario where someone tells a white lie that upsets another member of the group. Ask the person holding the 'Honesty' card to drop their section of the yarn. Explain that because honesty is being lost, trust will also be affected so ask the person holding 'Trust' to drop their yarn. Ask the group what will be affected next. Ask that person to drop their yarn. Continue for a few more (about $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ the group) until the web is falling apart and onto the floor. Ask the group why they think this happened to the yarn web and extrapolate into what happens to their team when not everyone takes

² Based upon the Massachusetts State Frameworks for curriculum instruction.

responsibility for his or her role. Merge into a discussion of group roles and responsibilities if you think it is appropriate for your group at that time.

- a. Teamwork Cards—Trust, Honesty, Respect, Responsibility, Caring, Cooperation, Collaboration, Facilitation, Friendliness, Compassion, Knowledge, Sharing, Helpfulness, Leadership, Communication, Fun, Sensitivity, Openness, Experience, Practice, Reflection, and any other ideas you want to include.

Project Planning Guidelines—Service

Service is the backbone of a service learning project. To do service is to give assistance to benefit someone or something else. When performing service, it is important to keep in mind the service recipients. To leave them out of the equation when planning is to miss a valuable connection and even to stall the project unnecessarily. Group members should get a chance to meet the people they are serving, if possible. Service recipients should have some say in what the service is, and even be given the opportunity to assist with the project. If you are doing service for animals or the environment, keep in mind the organization that might be the recipient, like the parks department that runs the park you are cleaning or the conservation organization that is going to be getting the money you raise.

Goals of the Service Stage

1. The service is authentic and serves a real need in the community
2. Service recipients have some say in what the service entails
3. Service recipients have the opportunity to join in the project
4. Selecting service recipients that will truly benefit.

Possible Learning Objectives of the Service Stage³

1. Students gain knowledge and understanding of other cultures.
2. Students participate in communities at home and around the world in other languages.
3. Students will gain knowledge of the interdependence between the environment and physical health, and will acquire skills to care for the environment.
4. Students will learn how their actions affect others, will understand the power that positive character traits can have in violence prevention, and will identify constructive alternatives to violence.
5. The evolution of the concepts of personal freedom, individual responsibility, and respect for human dignity.
6. The influence of economic, political, religious, and cultural ideas as human societies move beyond regional, national, or geographic boundaries.
7. The development of scientific reasoning, technology, and formal education over time and their effects on people's health, standards of living, economic growth, government, religious beliefs, communal life, and the environment.

Resources Available from Roots & Shoots

1. Connections to other groups doing similar service projects
2. Connections to organizations in your area that need service

³ Based upon the Massachusetts State Frameworks for curriculum instruction

Activities to increase effectiveness of Service

1. What would I do?: Pose a question to the group. Have them write an essay, a play, or draw a picture/comic strip of their answer(s). Questions should be designed to get them to think like the group for whom they are doing the service: “What would you do and how would you feel if you didn’t have a home or enough food?”; “What would you do if you were trying to save tigers from extinction?” Be sensitive about the youth in your group, particularly if they are from the same group for whom you will be providing services. Give everyone an opportunity to share their resulting answers, with the idea that not everyone may wish to do so.

Project Planning Guidelines—Curriculum Integration

Integrating your service project into current curriculum guidelines and state frameworks will help make the project progress in a number of ways. Proving association to the required classroom instruction will help administrators and parents buy into the idea of the project. Students will see that what they learn in school truly is applicable to the real world. Being able to fit a project into school time makes it easier to find time to work on the project, and the visible benefits will help other educators come on board and assist with the project planning.

Goals of the Curriculum Integration stage

1. Participants will see the real-world application of skills learned in the classroom.
2. Students will identify the lessons they need to learn before, during, and after the project to make it move smoothly.

Learning Objectives of the Curriculum Integration stage

These will vary depending upon the project chosen. The questions in each category below are designed to help you develop connections and correlations to your local standards and frameworks.

1. Mathematics
 - a. Does the project involve any kind of measurement?
 - b. Will the group have to use basic skills such as multiplication, division, decimals, fraction conversion, etc.?
 - c. Will geometry play a role? Do they have to figure out perimeter, area, circumference, etc.?
 - d. Can they graph their results?
 - e. Is there a probable outcome where they can work out the probability of different combinations?
 - f. Is there a pattern or relationship between what they do and what the outcome is?
2. Science
 - a. Will they be looking at soil types, bedrock, landforms, etc.?
 - b. Is weather and its impact on the earth a factor in their project, i.e. erosion, drought (water bans)?
 - c. Is there a connection to energy sources—solar, wind, water—or to energy consumption?
 - d. What about chemical processes or reactions?
 - e. Does the project involve any mapping or use of maps?
 - f. Will the group need to know about specific ecosystems, animals, or plants? What about how animals and plants interact with their habitats?
 - g. Would they be able to connect human actions to environmental issues?

3. Technology/Engineering
 - a. Are they going to have to build anything? Design anything?
 - b. Do they need to learn specific technologies to conduct or present the results of their project?
 - c. Are forms of transportation involved in the project?
4. English Language Arts
 - a. Are they going to be discussing the project with each other or someone else? Conducting interviews? Engaging in question-answer with each other?
 - b. Will they be presenting to anyone?
 - c. Is there any new vocabulary the group will need to learn?
 - d. Are they going to be writing letters or news articles?
 - e. Will they need to research any topics? Select good sources?
 - f. Are there any books (fiction or non-fiction) that go along with the project topic that they can read for additional information and connections?
 - g. Is there a way to dramatize the project? Share it through poetry and other writings?
5. Foreign Language
 - a. Do they need to learn about another country or culture?
 - b. Are they going to be working with people who are from other countries or who speak other languages?
6. History/Social Studies
 - a. Can they research the history of a place that could be affected by the project?
 - b. Are there any connections to actions done by previous civilizations? What about other groups in their neighborhood or around the world?
 - c. How does what they are doing fit into the scope of today's government?
 - d. Is there a local museum that may have artifacts that connect to their project?
 - e. Can they get pen pals from other regions doing similar projects thereby learning about other cultures?
7. Health/Physical Education
 - a. Are the group members going to be outside moving around or going on walks in the neighborhood?
 - b. Will they be learning about how to work with a variety of other people, gaining responsibility, and learning about healthy relationships with other people?
 - c. Will they be learning about how to care for their environment and the people around them?

Resources Available from Roots & Shoots

1. Roots & Shoots correlations to State Curriculum Frameworks
2. Lesson plans
3. Primate and other animal observation activities
4. Roots & Shoots for Young Children activity packets
5. Lessons for Hope™
6. TapRoots™

Activities to increase effectiveness of curriculum integration

1. Connect the Dots: Do this activity after your group has decided exactly what their project will be or use it during the project idea creation to help the group decide what points their project will address. Giving them the opportunity to look at the standards will help them see what their classroom learning is based upon. Create small sheets of paper or cards that have

all of the different curriculum standards you need to address this year in the classroom. Feel free to narrow it down if the entire amount is too large for the group to handle. Tell your students that they will be deciding what they will learn from this project. Explain that the cards contain all of the items the school wants them to learn throughout the year. Split your students into pairs or small groups and give each group a few cards (not so many that they are intimidated, but enough so they can have a discussion). Ask them to connect the dots of the project and the standards. On the board or a big sheet of paper, put the project idea in the middle and have groups place the cards they think are relevant on the paper near the project idea. Connect the cards to the idea with lines representing “Definitely”, “Probably”, and “Stretching”. Ask each group to defend their ideas. Ask them for examples of how this project will fulfill the standards. Revisit your chart throughout the project time to see how well the group thinks they are addressing that standard.

Project Planning Guidelines—Reflection

Reflection is a valuable part of service learning projects. Allowing group members to reflect on their experiences and their own abilities as expressed throughout the project period helps them process the information and make a place for it in their view of the world and of themselves. Quantitative and qualitative evaluation are also important parts of reflection as they allow the group to see what changes their service made in the community and in themselves.

Goals of Reflection

1. Participants take time to analyze their own responses to the service they are performing.
2. Evaluation of the project and the steps it took to get there.
3. Evaluation of the group members’ participation level, change in skill sets, and change in knowledge.

Possible Learning Objectives of the Reflection Stage⁴

1. Students will develop and use appropriate rhetorical, logical, and stylistic criteria for assessing final versions of their compositions or research projects before presenting them to varied audiences.
2. Students will write for different audiences and purposes.
3. Students will use agreed-upon rules for informal and formal discussions in small and large groups.
4. Students will pose questions, listen to the ideas of others, and contribute their own information or ideas in group discussions or interviews in order to acquire new knowledge.
5. Students will gather information from a variety of sources, analyze and evaluate the quality of the information they obtain, and use it to answer their own questions.
6. The evolution of the concepts of personal freedom, individual responsibility, and respect for human dignity.
7. Skills of Inquiry

Evaluation

1. How will you know you did what you set out to do?
2. What are your measurable outcomes? How are you going to measure them?

⁴ Based upon the Massachusetts State Frameworks for curriculum instruction

3. How are you going to collect anecdotal information throughout the process? i.e. journals, video cameras, tape recorders, etc.
4. What skills will group members learn throughout the process? How will you know they have acquired them?

Reflection

1. Are group members going to keep journals? How often will they make entries?
2. Are you going to provide questions for them to answer or are they going to write free-form?
3. Will they share their reflections or keep them to themselves?
4. Are you going to do large group, small group, or individual reflection? What about all three?
5. Are you going to have reflection methods other than writing? How about drawing pictures, making music, composing poems or songs, telling stories?

Questions to ask

1. What worked? What didn't?
2. What would you do differently if you were to do this project again?
3. How would you explain the project to someone else?
4. Are there project extensions that could be done at a later date?
5. Was the project effective? Did it serve an authentic need? Why or why not?
6. What did you and the group members learn about yourselves throughout the process?
7. What did you learn about the community you were serving?
8. Do you feel any differently about your community now? What about the community you served (if different or if service was for people)?
9. What was the easiest part of the project? What was the most challenging? Why?
10. What part did you like best? What did you like least? Why?

Resources from Roots & Shoots

1. Tree activity
2. Activity Report
3. Portfolio Guidelines
4. Nature Journaling
5. Lessons for Hope™

Activities to increase the effectiveness of reflection

1. Agree/Disagree: This activity will help your group think about their opinions and express them non-verbally. Designate one end of the room as "Agree" and the other "Disagree". Explain to the group that the room is a spectrum of agreement level from "Agree" to "Disagree". When you give them a statement, they need to decide what they think about that statement, and then place their bodies along the spectrum. The line down the middle (tape, a rope, etc.) represents "Don't Know". (You may want to remove the "Don't Know" option after a while if they become too enamored of using it.) Make a list of statements beforehand that represent the full spectrum of their project. Some ideas include: "The shelter we raised money for was doing an excellent job serving the public", "Everyone in my small group worked their hardest on our tasks", or "I feel that this project really helped out the community." Make the statements as vague or specific as you would like. Start more general and get more personally specific as the students get comfortable with the activity. Occasionally give students an opportunity to raise their hands and say why they placed themselves at that part of the spectrum for that statement.

2. **Create a Rubric:** Before the project gets underway, sit down with the group and come up with some ideas of what their final desired outcomes will look like. Make a list of ways they will know that they achieved that outcome. Place these ideas and lists into a rubric and refer to it throughout the project period and at the end of the project time. Have each group member circle where they think the group landed on the rubric at the end. You may also want to have them write a paragraph or so as to why they placed the group in that spot.
3. **Partner Interview:** Come up with a list of questions that the group members can ask each other about the project. Pair them up periodically throughout the process (with different people each time) and ask them to conduct the interviews. Ask each group to report out some of the answers they received. Questions to include could be: “What do you think has been the most successful part of the project so far?”, “What has been your favorite task so far?”, or “What could we have done better in our group last week?”
4. **Rumination:** This comes from a group of students who were tired of the word “reflection”. They wanted a more fun way to get people to talk about the project. Make a poster or big sheet of paper with the outline of a cow or goat. Inside the animal’s body, place a series of 4 stomachs. Label each stomach with a different part of the group project process (How well were we prepared?, How did we work together?, How was the project result?, etc.) and have the group “ruminate” on the answers. Write their answers (or designate someone else) within the appropriate stomachs. (You can find a basic cow stomach outline at <http://www2.kenyon.edu/Projects/Farmschool/food/milkbio.htm>)

Project Planning Guidelines—Crowd Control

Without careful, thoughtful crowd control, a project can go very wrong and may end up with participants getting hurt. By answering a few questions in advance, and by setting clear guidelines, the group members and other participants will enjoy the project and so will you.

Questions to ask

1. Do you have enough adults to help? A ratio of 1 adult for 10 youth is acceptable for ages 7 and up, but the more adults the better. For young children, you should have at least one adult for every 5 children.
2. What are you going to do with a child that just can’t behave on the project site?
3. Does everyone have a job that they understand? Keeping everyone busy and involved will keep problems to a minimum.
4. Is everyone working in a group who wants to be? Sometimes having other group members around will keep participants on task.
5. Did you set very clear site and boundary guidelines? Does everyone know the rules of the space so no one gets hurt or lost?
6. Have you been freed up to wander around among the group members to see how things are progressing and to facilitate any issues that may arise?
7. Did your group come up with a group and individual behavior contract beforehand so everyone knows the behavior expectations?
8. Did you allow enough time for the project without allowing too much so participants get bored?
9. Did you fully brief your volunteer leaders/helpers so they know what their responsibilities are? Did they meet the children in advance?
10. Are your group members wearing nametags so other leaders know who they are?

11. Does everyone know where to meet at the end of the project?
12. Does everyone have a buddy to look out for and to stay with? Did you organize some way of counting off to make sure everyone is with you?

Resources Available from Roots & Shoots

1. Connections to possible volunteers or older students in your area to help you with your project
2. Connections to group leaders who have done projects with youth before and can add insight and ideas.

Activities to increase the effectiveness of crowd control

1. Behavior Contracts: When taking a group or individual out into an unfamiliar setting, it may help to have a behavior contract in place. The depth of the contract will vary from person to person and group to group, but a few essential elements need to be included: the parties of the contract (you and who else?), the behavior expectations, and the repercussions if the behavior expectations are not followed. Remember to clearly express the behavior goals and keep them simple. Also keep them low in number so the task doesn't seem overwhelming. "Students will stay within sight distance of an adult chaperone" or "Students will only leave the group with a buddy and with permission from a teacher" are basic behavior expectations. "Any student who does not stay with his/her buddy and the group will not go on the next field trip" is a standard repercussion. Often it is good to share the behavior contract with parents before the trip (and have them sign it!) so that there is no misunderstanding about repercussions after the fact.
2. Kaper Chart: A Kaper Chart is a way to make sure that everyone sees his/her jobs and duties for the project. Take a large piece of paper or poster board and write everyone's name or group name down the side. Make the rest of the paper into a table and put the duties across the top. Where a group's responsibility and duty intersect, put an X or some other mark to indicate that job belongs to that group. When the job has been completed, you can cover the X with a star sticker or some other indicator. It may help to include dates in the intersection so group members know what is due when and can refer back to the chart if they get confused. Place the chart in a visible area so all group members can refer to it.
3. Job Descriptions—youth and leaders: As a group, work out what job is going to be done by whom and write out the job descriptions. Give everyone on that job team a copy to refer back to. You can also make up general job descriptions so that the facilitators know what the group members expect and vice versa. This is particularly helpful when you are utilizing adult chaperones that are not generally part of the group process with you, like when you are on a field trip.

Project Guidelines – Celebration

Celebrating the end of a project is an essential part of a project – just as important as doing the project itself. The group members need to feel like they made a difference and be recognized for playing their part in the community. This is also a great closure to the project. After celebrating, the participants will be ready to start a new project and you may just have additional hands to help you because of all the attention.

Goals for the Celebration stage

1. Accomplishment - the project is finished! What was the final outcome?
2. To publicize - other people will be inspired to help our world, people will want to be a part of your next project.
3. For a job well done - you helped animals, the environment, and/or your human community.
4. Acknowledgement of people who helped by verbal, written, or visual praise.

Possible Learning Objectives for Celebration⁵

1. Students will make oral presentations that demonstrate appropriate consideration of audience, purpose, and the information to be conveyed.
2. Students will design and create coherent media productions (audio, video, television, multimedia, Internet, emerging technologies) with a clear controlling idea, adequate detail and appropriate consideration of audience, purpose, and medium.
3. Students will organize ideas in writing in a way that makes sense for their purpose.
4. Students will write for different audiences and purposes.
5. The evolution of the concepts of personal freedom, individual responsibility, and respect for human dignity.

How can you celebrate?

1. Present the project to the community, media, recipients, other students, parents, other R&S groups, etc.
2. Create a display for gatherings, submit article for Roots & Shoots newsletter/website, get local news media to do a story on the project.
3. Gather for pizza, ice cream, games, etc. anything to acknowledge the work that has been done before moving on.
4. Certificates of recognition, a ceremony telling the community about what the individuals did, and a plaque or trophy all can help to celebrate the people who helped make a difference.

Resources Available from Roots & Shoots

1. Help finding media resources in your area.
2. Help writing press releases and media advisories.
3. Group profile in newsletters and on the Roots & Shoots website

⁵ Based on the Massachusetts State Frameworks for curriculum integration