

Reflection and the Role of the Agency

- 1) Think about your agency's mission statement. How can you use it as a teaching tool for the students? How can it enhance their experience at your agency?
- 2) Learning Objectives - work with students to set objectives related to their learning. Have them put several objectives in writing and help them develop a plan to meet these objectives (Ask them what they want to learn...about the agency, about the clients, about the profession, about the work you do, about connections with their MDC course, etc.,.)
- 3) Gather articles about your agency/your clients/the societal problem you address. Give the students one of these articles and ask them to read it and discuss it with you the following week.
- 4) Exit Interviews - design an exit interview questionnaire and administer it to students before they leave your agency to elicit their feedback. (What did you like best about your experience here? What recommendations do you have for us? How can we improve our program? Are you willing to continue to serve with us in the future? What was the most important thing you learned? Etc...)
- 5) "Mini-research project" - Ask students to find and read a short article related to their service project (Internet, magazine, etc.). Ask them to bring it in and then discuss it with you.
- 6) Weekly or bi-weekly "processing" meetings - meet with your students regularly to process their service experience with them. E.g., "What have you learned? What has surprised you? What can we do to reduce "homelessness/environmental contamination/fraud against the elderly (your issue)" in our society? As you move on with your life, how can you use the information you are learning here?"
- 7) Weekly/Bi-Weekly Writing Assignments - every week or two weeks give the students a question to answer. Ask them to write a one-page response and turn it in. E.g. "What can we do to improve society to the point that the work our agency does is no longer necessary? How can we get more people involved as volunteers with our agency? What are the most important things you are learning from this experience? What were your expectations before starting with us...how have these changed as a result of your experience?"
- 8) Critical Thinking Questions - give students a list of questions that challenge them to explore and think critically about your agency and the issues it addresses. Ask them to find answers to these questions during the course of their service and then process what they discover with them periodically. (Why does this problem exist [homelessness, children who can't read, etc..] ... interview at least two staff members to get their opinions? How can society reduce the incidence of this problem? Interview a staff member and ask them why they work in this field. Make a list of all the different types of jobs that exist at this agency and the skills and education required. Etc...).

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