

BUILDING CITIZENS

A Critical Reflection
& Discussion Guide
For Community Service Participants



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Walt Whitman Center For The Culture And Politics Of Democracy



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A Critical Reflection and Discussion
Guide For Community Service Participants



WRITTEN AND EDITED BY MARGO SHEA AND KEVIN MATTSON

DESIGNED BY MARGO SHEA
COVER DESIGN BY JOSÉ HERNANDEZ

NSLC
c/o ETR Associates
4 Carbonero Way
Scotts Valley, CA 95066

#3614

A Project of:
The Walt Whitman Center for the Culture and Politics of Democracy
Rutgers University
89 George Street
New Brunswick, New Jersey 08901-1411
phone: (732) 932-6861
fax: (732) 932-1922

thank you

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thank you

PREFACE

“Building Citizens” is a collaboration of the Walt Whitman Center for the Culture and Politics of Democracy and the Walter and Elise Haas Fund. This project is rooted in our belief at the Whitman Center that democracy is as much a way of life as a form of government, and that it must be served jointly by thought and action, by deliberation and commitment. “Building Citizens” was written to help community service programs to incorporate a deliberative, civic dimension into their programs.

Education-centered service has come to mean service that is directly linked to schools, colleges and universities. However, reflective service — service that combines community involvement and structured, critical reflection — can and should be the rule rather than the exception in all service programs. But making it work is not always easy. Even when groups want to incorporate reflective, critical and scholarly elements into their agendas, they are hard pressed to do so. Too often, we see instead front-loaded training sessions and episodic reflection which offer little opportunity for critical self-examination or group deliberation.

“Building Citizens” will guide community service programs and participants in reflection that makes explicit connections between service and critical, enlivened citizenship. This practical guide will, we hope, allow any group to begin the critical process. Used well, it can expand the horizons of a group’s thinking as well as the boundaries of their service experiences for the immediate benefit of our communities and the sustained vigor of our democracy.

Benjamin R. Barber
Director
Walt Whitman Center
January 1998

CREDITS

This guide contains few, if any, original ideas. Our suggestions for building a critical, reflective group process for community service participants draw heavily from the ideas of experiential educators, political theorists and other scholars, service program directors, activists and others.

In particular, we have drawn heavily from the following reference manuals, books and educational organizations:

MANUALS

Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets, John Kretzmann and John McKnight, 1993, Evanston Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research
Neighborhood Innovations Network
Northwestern University
2040 Sheridan Road, Evanston, IL 60208

By the People: An AmeriCorps Citizenship and Service Guide; Sponsored by the Minnesota Commission on National and Community Service and The Center for Democracy and Public Life at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, 1995

Humphrey Institute

University of Minnesota

301 - 19th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN, 55455

(612) 625-9505

A Practitioner's Guide to Reflection - Student Voices and Reflections, Janet Eyles, Dwight Giles, Jr. and Angela Schmiede, 1996, Vanderbilt University

Reinventing Citizenship: The Practice of Public Work

Staff and Partners of the Center for Democracy and Public Life at the Humphrey Institute for Public Affairs, 1995, Minneapolis

University of Minnesota

(same as above)

BOOKS

Frank Adams *Unearthing the Seeds of Fire: The Idea of Highlander (with Myles Horton)*, 1975, Winston-Salem, John Blair, Publisher

John Dewey *Democracy and Education* 1916, New York, Macmillan

Peter Jarvis *Adult and Continuing Education: Theory and Practice* 1995, London and New York, Routledge (first edition published in 1983)

Janice Kendall and Associates *Combining Service and Learning: A Resource Book for Community and Public Service / A Publication of the National Society for Internships and Experiential Education (now National Society of Experiential Educators)* 1990, Raleigh NSEE
3509 Haworth Drive, Suite 207
Raleigh, NC 27609

Morris Keeton and Pamela Tate, editors *Learning By Experience; What, Why and How, New Directions in Experiential Learning, #1, 1978* 1978, San Francisco, Josey-Bass

Patricia and Richard Schmuck *Group Processes in the Classroom* 1971, 1975, 1979, Dubuque, William C. Brown and Company

David Jaques *Learning in Groups* 1984 Kent, England, Croom Helm Ltd.

George Lakey *Strategy for a Living Revolution* 1973, New York, Grossman Publishers,

Peter Raggatt and Richard Edwards and Nick Small *The Learning Society: Challenges and Trends* 1996, London and New York, Routledge (in cooperation with the Open University)

ORGANIZATIONS

American Field Service

Highlander Research and Education Center

The Maine Campus Compact

The Center for Democracy and Public Life at the Humphrey Institute for Public Affairs

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION: GENERAL ORIENTATION	1
Why This Guide?	2
Before Getting Started	8
Sample "Courses of Study"	11
PART ONE: COMMON THINKING: FROM ME TO WE	18
From Me to We in a Democracy	19
Suggestions for Facilitation: Part One	23
Starting With Ourselves: Individual Reflection Exercises	24
Learning to Listen: Exercises to Improve Listening Skills	31
Why Talk is Important: Communication Exercises	38
Problem Solving Exercises	51
Other Exercises: Intros and Icebreakers	57
PART TWO: CRITICAL THINKING: FROM NARRATIVE TO ANALYSIS	67
What Does It Mean to Move from Narrative to Analysis?	69
Facilitation Guide	75
General Responsibilities of the Facilitator	77
Verbal Tools for Effective Discussions	82
The Flipside: Verbal Tendencies that Block Good Discussions	85
How to Solve Common Problems in Group Discussions	87
Setting Guidelines for Group Discussions	89
Notes on Experiential Learning and Community Service	95
Learning Through Community Service	97
Traditions of Informal Community Education	98
Relating Experiential and Democratic Learning to Community Service	100
Dewey's Theories on Democracy and Experiential Learning	102
The Learning Cycle: How Experience Teaches Us	104
Different Kinds of Intelligence	105
Service-Learning	110
Incorporating Service-Learning Concepts into Your Program	111

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Learning Exercises	113
Critical Incidents	126
Different Expectations	130
First Day at Residence for People with HIV/AIDS	132
Keeping Things Under Control	134
Discomfort at the Service Site	136
Accountability: Where is Your Supervisor	138
Accountability's Flip Side: Where are the Other Volunteers?	140
Unexpected Resources	142
Who's In Charge?	144
How Do People See You at the Service Site?	146
More Than a Museum Piece	150
Practicing What You Preach	152
Different Notions of Public Safety	154
Creating Your Own Critical Incidents	
Community Mapping	157
Community Asset Mapping	161
Practicing Mapping	165
Practicing Community Asset Mapping	168
Different Models of Service To Think About	169
Religion and the Motivation to Serve	171
Charity/Philanthropy	173
Professional Social Work	174
Democratic Community Organizing	175
Service as Democratic Citizenship	176
Group Discussion on Motivations	177
Examining Conflicts Between Motivations	178
Is Your Service Democratic? Take the Test and See	180
PART THREE: COMPLEX THINKING SERVICE IN A BROADER CONTEXT	183
Service in a Broader Context	184
Suggestions for Facilitation: Part Three	187

TABLE OF CONTENTS

It Got Them Thinking: Reflections By Young People on Service	189
Connecting	191
Aide for AIDS	193
Toward a New Environmentalism	195
Living in the Spirit of SHAC	197
King of the Hill	199
Starting a Community Service Organization	204
City Year	207
Writing Exercise: Reflecting on Service	211
Personal Voyages	216
Jane Addams	217
Jimmy Carter	223
Mary Lou Wolff	228
C.P. Ellis	232
Kean, et al	237
Myles Horton	240
Service is Contested	247
<i>Service is a Learning Opportunity</i>	
Community Service Work - Robert Coles	249
<i>Service is Moral /Service is Immoral</i>	
To Hell With Good Intentions - Ivan Illich	251
The Moral Equivalent of War - William James	256
<i>Service is Altruism/Altruism is Slavery</i>	
On Being a Good Neighbor - Martin Luther King, Jr.	260
Excerpt from the Fountainhead - Ayn Rand	265
<i>Service Creates Democratic Communities/Service Destroys Community</i>	
Civic Cooperation - Jane Addams	270
The Enemy of Community - James McKnight	274
<i>Service is Charity/Service is a Profession</i>	
Charity - Maya Angelou	276
Why Do We Remain Silent - Corrine McKinney	278
<i>Service is Therapeutic/Empowering or Destructive?</i>	
From Statistics to Soup Kitchens - Victoria Jueds	281
Community Service and Civic Education - Harry Boyte	284
Danny - Trabian Shorters	287

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Service is Citizenship/Citizenship Won't Be Taught Through Service</i>	
Mandate for Liberty: Benjamin Barber	290
Public Service or Else - Scott Bullock	292
Service and the Nation: The Politics of National and Community Service	295
<i>How We Define Service and How Service Defines Us as a Nation</i>	
The How and Why of Volunteering - Benjamin Barber	298
Why Service Matters - Colin Powell	300
Two Cheers for Charity - Mario Cuomo	302
<i>How Shall We Respond to National Service?</i>	
National Debt, National Service - William F. Buckley	304
Politics and National Service - A Virus Attacks the Volunteer Sector - B. Chapman	306
The Implications of National Service on Youth and Communities - Claudia Horwitz	310
<i>AmeriCorps - How it Fits into the Debate</i>	
Don't Call Them Volunteers - John Walters	314
A New Bargain for National Service - Sam Nunn	316

CONCLUSION: BEING AN ACTIVE CITIZEN