

# Is Your Service Democratic?

*Take the Test*

Invite students engaged in different types of service to this dialogue and start by asking each of them to take this little test. Following the test, discuss each item and how the characteristic is important to the promotion of democracy.

## **The Test**

YES	NO	QUESTION
		Does your service enhance public space and public institutions?
		Can you articulate the public significance of your service project?
		Does your service get others involved in community and public life?
		Does your service build on the capacities and strengths of members of the community where you are involved?
		Does your service help to build relationships between people in the community where you are involved?
		Does your service address the underlying causes to the problems you confront?
		Is your service visible?
		Does your service enable you and others to develop civic skills and talents?
		Do you have the opportunity to see your service through to a successful conclusion?
		Do all the people involved in the service project (service participants, community leaders, those served, others) decide together what is to be accomplished? Do they all engage in planning and designing the project?
		Are ongoing decisions made collectively? Are all the people involved in the service project accountable for the success or failure of the endeavor?
		Are all the people involved in the evaluation process and given an opportunity to raise questions about the process?

## **Score**

8 or More Yes Responses	Your service project reflects the values and attributes of a thriving democracy.
4 to 7 Yes Responses	Good work but more good be done to nurture democratic practices in your service work.
Less than 3 Yes Responses	Sometimes service benefits the one providing the service at the expense of others. Think carefully about how your work could be more democratic.

Adapted from Building Citizens: A Critical Reflection and Discussion Guide published by the Walt Whitman Center for the Culture and Politics of Democracy