Progress Monitoring: Negotiating Project Plans with Students

Before beginning a service-learning project, make sure that the project connects with the learning goals that students need to meet. Work with individual students or small groups to refine the service-learning project idea that students have developed from the need they identified.

The following questions will guide students in thinking more deeply about service-learning and connecting their service to academics. While students should try to answer these questions before conferencing with you on them, many students will need to talk through the questions with their classmates and with you before they can adequately answer them.

The conference will help you negotiate how the project plan will address needs in the community while meeting learning goals and academic benchmarks that you’ve identified. It also provides an opportunity for you and your students to think about other learning goals that their project might achieve.

Keep in mind, however, that you may need to adjust these plans as the project planning gets further developed. Community partners and service recipients may offer input on the project design that will affect your assessment plans.

What need did you decide to address?

How did you identify that issue?
What is the project you’ve selected to address that need?

What research have you done to refine that idea? What research do you still need to do?

What additional skills may you need to develop?

How feasible is your identified project? What are some potential barriers you might face? Who can help you overcome those barriers?
Here are some of the things you need to learn through accomplishing this project:

Explain how these learning goals connect to your project.

What are some ways you can measure the success of your project?

How will you show what you’ve learned?