



## Formative Assessment: Overview & Driving Questions

### Driving Question

How will you ensure that students are meeting the identified goals and outcomes during your service-learning project?

### Description

Formative assessments are typically informal assessments that monitor and support student-learning throughout the entire learning process. Formative assessments should provide feedback on the current level of student-learning, demonstrating the gap between what students know and what they need to know.

Formative assessments should be done in conjunction with students so that they have ownership over their learning and understand the progress that they are making. Including youth in the decision making process is vital to youth ownership in service-learning.

### Questions for Unit Planning Organizer

- How often will you use formative assessments?
- How often will you check for understanding?
- How will assessment information guide and adapt the learning process?
- How will students know that they are moving towards mastery of learning targets?
- What evidence will be provided of student progress?

## Ideas for Formative Assessment

- **Goal-Setting:** In service-learning, goal-setting is often best expressed as an action plan that students and teachers can monitor. Be sure students break down the preparatory steps into manageable tasks. Students and teachers can monitor these goals to ensure that they are on track to meet their end goal.
- **Exit Slips:** Have students write “exit slips” that target the big idea of the lesson and challenge them to answer strategic questions. Ask students to write just a sentence or two, then sort the slips into three stacks: **1. They get it, 2; They kind of get it; 3. They don’t get it.** Use the stacks to determine how to build the next lesson and/or how to break students into groups.

- **Working portfolios:** Working Portfolios (as opposed to final portfolios that are used to summatively evaluate students) focus on collecting work that showcases a student's growth over time and within the project. It highlights production over each phase of the process. These portfolios allow students and teachers to monitor progress throughout the project. Working portfolios may include drafts of their final projects, research, interviews, etc.
- **Learning Logs:** Learning logs are similar to working portfolios in that they focus on the production of materials *during* the service-learning project. However, they are more brief and informal than working portfolios, and are most often summaries produced after having taken part in a learning or service experience of some sort.
- **Questioning:** Questioning can occur either on-the-fly (informally) or in a more calculated manner (formally). Both iterations can be used to gain insight into student understanding and reasoning. These lines of questioning usually pave the way for students to delve deeper into topics and explore the root causes of issues, creating opportunities for higher-thinking and the development of more rich cognitive abilities.
- **Graphic Organizers:** The main draw of graphic organizers are that they present information and relationships in visually-interesting ways, and they very clearly draw out the hierarchical relationships between issues and sub-issues (and vice versa).