



Strategies for Embedding Soft Skills

Embedding soft skills or 21st Century skills in your service-learning activities or projects requires intentional planning. Here are some strategies and ways to implement them to support youth in developing the skills needed in the workforce and to engage effectively in service-learning projects.

Strategy	Description	Implementation
Experiential Learning	Experiential Learning involves hands-on activities where youth learn by doing. This approach allows youth to actively engage in tasks and roles that mirror real-world experiences.	<i>To prepare</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have a list of roles youth can use to rotate responsibilities and gain a variety of experiences and skills• For older or more experienced youth in the field, have them generate a list of tasks the group will need to accomplish their responsibilities successfully. This helps them take ownership and enhances problem-solving skills <i>During implementation</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support youth with project management skills such as planning, organizing, and executing tasks. This can include setting timelines, support youth in delegating tasks and provide guidance around monitoring progress.
Structured Reflection Practices	Structured reflection practices help youth critically reflect on their experiences, connect them to their personal development goals, and identify areas for growth. This practice ensures learning is intentional and deep.	<i>To prepare</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide youth with a set of questions to guide reflection. This may include prompts about what they learned, challenges faced, and how they applied soft skills in their tasks. <i>During implementation</i>



Strategies for Embedding Soft Skills

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold weekly reflection sessions where youth discuss their experiences, share insights, and provide feedback to each other. Encourage critical thinking and personal growth. These sessions should mirror structured reflection practices you are already implementing in your program to enforce the stipend policy. • Help youth set and review personal development goals regularly. Reflect on how their service-learning experiences are helping them progress toward these goals.
Peer Collaboration and Feedback	Peer Collaboration and Feedback encourages youth in participating in collective problem-solving while providing opportunities for constructive feedback.	<p><i>To prepare</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a positive learning environment by having youth engage in meaningful team building activities that help youth to identify their own strengths • Have youth brainstorm and agree on a social contract (rules) to follow during peer and collaboration feedback sessions <p><i>During Implementation</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign projects that require collaboration among youth from different projects. Ensure that that each youth has a specific role during the collaboration and feedback



Strategies for Embedding Soft Skills

		<p>session to encourage interdependence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incorporate regular feedback sessions where youth provide constructive feedback. Prior to implementing feedback sessions model how to give and receive feedback effectively.
--	--	---