

Set specific purpose and agreed upon mission, values, goals, deliverables and accountability

The first step toward agreement in these areas is to discover the questions that the community partner and instructor have each other. Instructors may have questions about the mission and strategies of the organization, and the community partner may have questions regarding the course goals, syllabus and student skills. Once perspectives and agendas are better understood, a negotiation and prioritization process should be used to distill the areas of mutual agreement that can be used to piece together the beginnings of a working relationship.

Assessment and evaluation

Assessment can be productive, even at the beginning of partnerships. Establishing a history of assessment will also pave the way for rigorous and meaningful evaluation as the partnership evolves. Gathering feedback is an effective way to show respect for partners, but incorporating that feedback into evaluation outputs and program design reflects a true appreciation of each partner's perspective.

Balance power and share resources

Many institutions assume that community partners hold limited power and that it's necessary for the institution to "build them up." However, this is rarely the case. Power dynamics must be carefully assessed and then, if necessary, methods of power redistribution should be considered. Once a more equitable balance of power is in place, resources can be more effectively shared. Partners should also be creative as to how resources are defined. Resources are not just financial, but can also include people, supplies, space or knowledge.

Clear, open and accessible communication

The key to any successful partnership is open communication. Email and regular in-person meetings strengthen working relationships. In addition, visiting partners on-site and in community, as well as inviting partners to class, helps everyone to better understand the work of the organization and the course.

Agree upon roles, norms and procedures

Many partnerships begin with discussing roles and procedures. However, if values and goals are not aligned, and if mutual trust and effective communication (addition,)T rigorous)orous

If you do not already have a partner in mind, work with APPLES to find organizations that have expressed needs that could be met through service-learning or have missions that complement your course's subject matter.

Once initial contact is made, APPLES recommends that instructors:

Meet partners face-to-face, preferably in the community.

