Design a Project
(Allow 20 minutes to prepare.)

Discuss the following dimensions of the project, noting descriptive phrases on newsprint.

- **Product**: What will you have when the project is finished?
- **Steps**: What must be done? In what order? By what time?
- **Criteria**: What makes a good product?
- **Learning objectives**: What will the intern get out of it?
- **Resources**: What human and other resources are available?

- Discuss how the mentor interacts with the youth on the project.
- Set out the purposes and boundaries of the project and explain what a good product is.
- Get the youth started with essential information and advice.
- Engage the youth in problem solving as problems arise.
- Assess the product and the steps that led up to it with the youth.

Visit Project Stations and Vote
(Allow 10 minutes to visit project stations: read project descriptions displayed on newsprint, ask participants for more information, and use stickers to vote.)

- The project I would like to do the most!
- What a creative way to meet your learning objectives!

Water Conservation Brochures and Posters

Description of a Project
In some professions, such as engineering, most work is organized in projects. In other fields, projects may be less common, but most people have projects to do some of the time.

Projects give interns a chance to plan, carry out, and assess a set of activities that makes use of skills and knowledge they have acquired at work and in school. Ideally they learn not only how to do the project itself but how to handle other projects in the future: planning, gathering information, following through, problem solving, and teamwork.

Mentors have told us that one of the most important challenges they face is having too little time to spend with their interns. Although projects still require mentoring, they engage the intern in productive learning activities without constant supervision.

Project Features
- Nonroutine; different from the regular work that people do every day.
- Has a beginning, middle, and end; doesn’t continue indefinitely.
- Includes a sequence of steps, often involving gathering information and interacting with different people.
- Has a product.
A youth describes her role in creating brochures and posters on water conservation for a city water department.

1. We sell $10 toilets [that conserve water]. My mentor takes time to tell us, “This price quote is for this program,” or to give me an account number. When you have a problem you could go and ask her about it. She’ll explain it in detail. She’ll demonstrate it for us. Then she’ll ask us to do it once so that she can be sure that we know it. We usually file the order forms when they purchase toilets. I’m not sure if there’s anyone who likes filing. I asked her one time, “Why do we have to file?” She went into details that we need proof that this person purchased four or five toilets or so that when the computer breaks we have the original.

2. Sometimes she’d ask for advice, like when we’re doing a poster or brochure. I’m actually surprised how much respect I got. When someone is respecting you and appreciating what you do, you feel a lot better about yourself. Besides that, you have more energy to do what you’re supposed to do. She really knows that you are responsible for this stuff and she knows that when she gives you a task that you will be able to do it and finish it.

3. We have brochures on how to conserve water. She would ask interns or students to actually do those brochures. She wouldn’t teach you, she would let you do it on your own to see what you know or to learn it by yourself. If you have problems, you’d go to her and ask her.

4. We needed to find some illustrations from a book that are also on CDs to put on the poster and brochures. She’ll ask, “What do you think should be on it? Here’s a book. Look through it. Just write down which page number you like.” When you’re finished looking through it you tell her, “You should put this or this on the brochure.” She’ll take it, she’ll think about the advice, and then see if it’s appropriate and she’ll put it on the brochures.

5. Sometimes she’ll say, “Maybe we could find something else creative, because we have toilets on it already. See if you can think about other illustrations in this book related to conserving water and toilet sales.” Then we’ll look through it again. Maybe we could put dollar bills on the brochures or sink faucets because we also do those jobs to conserve water. If she thinks it’s great, she’ll start doing it or we’ll start putting it on the brochures. She would ask us what is water in Chinese. How do you write it in character, and we put Mandarin on it. Then she’ll ask, “What color should we use on the background: blue, white, or other colors?”

6. [My mentor] told us that 70 percent of the earth is water. But actually there’s like maybe 10 or 1 percent of the 70 percent that we actually could drink. So we have to conserve it because if we don’t conserve it the water would be gone sooner or later.

What Do You Think?
(Discuss for 5 minutes.)

- What do you think the intern would learn from this project?
- What did the mentor do to try to guarantee the intern’s success?

Brainstorm Projects
(Allow 5 minutes.)

- What kinds of projects could youth do in your workplace?
- Choose a project from the brainstorm list that you would like to develop further with a group.