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Project Planning Phase

Project Planning Template (Product Backlog, Sprint Planning, Stories, Story Points)

Education organizations use ServiceNow's built-in **Agile Development** and **Strategic Portfolio Management (SPM)** applications to manage projects using standard Agile/Scrum processes and tools. These applications provide the necessary digital tools and structured workflows, which replace manual processes like spreadsheets, to handle product backlogs, sprint planning, stories, and story points.

Key ServiceNow Agile Components

ServiceNow does not offer a single "education-specific" template but provides a flexible, customizable platform that education organizations can configure to their specific needs. The core components used are:

1. Product Backlog

- **Management:** Product owners (e.g., department leads, IT managers) define, manage, and prioritize a dynamic list of features, enhancements, bug fixes, and non-functional requirements within ServiceNow.
- **Hierarchy:** Large initiatives (like implementing a new student information system module) are structured as **Epics**, which are then broken down into smaller, actionable **Stories**.
- **Prioritization:** Items in the backlog are prioritized based on business value and strategic alignment using tools within the SPM suite.

2. Sprint Planning

- **Process:** During sprint planning meetings, teams use the ServiceNow platform to select high-priority stories from the product backlog to be completed within a specific time-boxed iteration (sprint), typically 2-4 weeks.
- **Capacity Planning:** The platform helps teams estimate hours or use story points to determine their capacity and ensure team members are not overbooked during a sprint.
- **Tools:** ServiceNow offers a visual Scrum board and planning board to facilitate this process, allowing teams to manage dependencies and track progress in real-time.

3. Stories

- **Creation:** Stories can be created directly in the ServiceNow Agile Development application under an epic, release, or sprint.
- **Format:** Stories represent the smallest unit of work and are written from the perspective of the end-user (e.g., "As a student, I want to view my grades online so I can track my academic progress").
- **Details:** Each story includes a clear description, acceptance criteria, and is linked to relevant epics and sprints within the system.

4. Story Points

- **Estimation:** Teams assign story points to each story to estimate the level of effort, complexity, and uncertainty involved, typically using a relative estimation scale like the Fibonacci sequence.

- **Purpose:** Story points are primarily used to calculate the team's velocity (how much work a team can handle over multiple sprints) rather than estimating exact hours. This data is tracked and visualized using Agile dashboards and reports within service now