PRACTICAL ADVICE GUIDES

Smart Strategies to employ, educate and support youth in employability development programs

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

FOREWORD

About the Practical Advice Guide

This Practical Advice Guide is one in a series of program and policy briefs published in 2013-2014 as part of our Center's 30th Anniversary. Under the banner of "Enough is Known for Action: Ready to Employ, Educate, and Support Youth," we present lessons from recent research and experience—most particularly, the Walmart summer youth employability initiatives—that can inform practice and policy today. The recent passage of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, the dedication of the Federal Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs, support from the White House Domestic Policy Council, a growing urgency among the business community to hire a prepared workforce, a sharp focus on impact investing and other innovation in philanthropy, advances in education reform and youth development practice, and emerging results-oriented partnerships across the country—all have created a perfect storm of opportunity for achieving unprecedented social, economic, and environmental outcomes for youth and communities. At the Center for Youth and Communities, we believe strongly that "Enough is Known for Action," and that this particular time in history calls out for leadership, innovation and excellence in all we do. The practical advice offered in this program brief is intended to address central, frequently asked questions from youth practitioners, program managers and worksite supervisors in business and public sector work places:

How do we make young peoples' work experience meaningful? What are critical design elements to consider, especially for young people whose supports and opportunities have been few?

Part of the answer is found here in six timeless, age and stage appropriate "smart strategies:"
1. Project-Based Work & Learning on the Job
2. Reflection on Employability Development
3. Youth Motivation
4. Developing Teamwork Skills
5. Developing Youth Presentation Portfolios
6. Case Management

We want to underscore the value of meaningful work experiences as the primary vehicle for preparing young people for success in the labor market. Indeed, we believe that youth development programs and educational training events without real work experience is a recipe for failure, and so is work experience isolated from education and youth development principles. Our most recent experience with summer youth employability initiatives supported by the Walmart Foundation reinforces this thinking. Finally, may the words of youth keep you moving forward with a youth-centered design capable of meeting the skill demands of today's labor market. One skeptical youth starting out in a quick fix "job training program" put it this way: "I don't care what you know 'til I know that you care." The Practical Advice Guides can help you find ways to do that. Another who had a successful, life-changing summer work experience declared, "These people found my inner genius." May it be so as we work the magic of integrating and combining employment, education, and support for our young people.

Summary of the Summer Youth Employability Initiatives

The Walmart Foundation invested $13.5 million in 10 cities over three summers from 2011–2013 to employ, educate, and support more than 8,500 young people. Brandeis' Center for Youth and Communities assessed and documented the first round of grantees in 5 cities in 2011, and from 2012-2014 served as the National Program Office (NPO) for initiatives in several cities. In addition to designing the RFP, logic model, and theory of change, and selecting and funding grantee partners, the NPO at Brandeis monitored quality and executionary management; assessed outcomes and lessons learned through site visits, surveys, focus groups, and local data analysis; and created a grantee learning community with both online and in person learning exchanges.

In addition, Walmart funded Brandeis through Fall 2014 for activities that contribute to the broader field of youth workforce development by building on lessons learned. This is one of a very few knowledge development and dissemination efforts in 20 years in this critical area. Activities include:

- Employer roundtables to collect demand side intelligence about what they seek in entry level employees, and to promote results-oriented partnerships with nonprofits and government workforce entities.

- Management and leadership academies—regional capacity building opportunities for strategic leadership teams preparing to launch or improve results-oriented partnerships to employ, educate, and support youth.

- Case studies of organizations in cities and rural areas where there is a commitment to quality youth employability programs, and promising practices and leadership in place.

- A national learning exchange in Washington, DC in November 2014 with three goals:

  - Ignite action and urgency about the crisis in youth unemployment and the value of linking real work for pay with education and support services

  - Inspire and inform interagency and cross-sector partnerships to employ, educate, and support youth across the nation

  - Share lessons from experience and research for "proving the possible"—from the Brandeis Practitioner Network

Why is it Important to Employ, Educate, and Support Youth?
In 2011, U.S. youth employment rates for 16-24 year olds dropped to lows not seen in more than 50 years. Only about half of these young people held jobs. The numbers have not improved since.

Yet, though unemployment is high, jobs go unfilled. Employers cannot find enough workers with demonstrated work competencies (including academic,

critical thinking, and interpersonal skills) to meet job demands.[1] In the U.S., declining government support for youth jobs and work readiness training has led to a broken pipeline of workers prepared to get and keep jobs.

Summer and year-round work-based learning programs (with real work for pay) can help vulnerable youth bridge the gap between preparation and employer demand, improve educational outcomes, contribute to communities and family budgets, connect with positive role models, and build work-based competencies. These programs can change participants' lives and lessen the mismatch between supply and demand in the workforce.

Continued leadership and support can help cities build on what is known about creating youth work opportunities and work readiness. We need to encourage more communities to employ youth and prepare them for the workforce. We need to strengthen connections to year-round work and learning, and advance the national dialogue on youth employability. We need to do more than run after-school programs and youth development workshops: as we noted earlier, youth development and education without real work experience is a recipe for failure, and so is work experience isolated from education and youth development practice.

The costs of doing nothing are severe. Without assistance, youth face lifetime employment struggles, poverty, dependence on public welfare programs, disengagement from society, encounters with the law, prison, and poor health. With inaction, society faces a generation of young adults who have never held a job, increased unemployment and welfare payments, lost wages and tax revenues, the high costs of incarceration, violence, and a massive shortage of entry-level and middle-skills workers.

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[1] A recent nine-country study shows that this mismatch is not restricted to the U.S. (McKinsey Center for Government, 2013: Education to Employment: Designing a System that Works).

What Have We Learned about Employing, Educating, and Supporting Youth?

Although a paid job is often called "the most effective social service program," and young people want meaningful jobs,[2] vulnerable youth also need assistance to become employable. Lessons learned from 2011-2013 include:

• Work must be meaningful (not busy work).
• Youth must have opportunities to improve their work readiness through learning, reflection with competent, caring adults, and competency-based assessments to track progress toward employability.
• Youth must be properly oriented and well supervised on the job.
• Youth must have access to needed supports, such as food, child care, and transportation.
• Youth must be prepared to articulate and demonstrate their readiness to employers.

Evidence from the Brandeis surveys of youth participants confirms the return on investment for summer jobs programs:

• Virtually all 2012-2013 participants reported that they gained maturity and job-related skills and are now more employable.
• More than half who had not planned to finish school or go on for more training or schooling changed their minds after the summer program.
• One third to one half earned work-readiness certificates, professional certifications, and/or academic credit during the summer.
• At least 20% went from a subsidized summer job to a long-term unsubsidized job.

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[2] Waiting lists for summer jobs programs are 10 times larger than the available slots.

In addition, major studies in two cities that were part of the 2011-2013 initiatives showed that summer jobs programs reduced violence (Chicago) and increased academic success (New York). All of the other participating cities had evidence of these outcomes as well, but not through formal studies.

For the Walmart cities, partnerships equal success. They created or strengthened partnerships and leveraged more than $10 million worth of financial, political, and other support from local government, businesses, foundations, nonprofit service organizations, and educational systems or institutions. (This leveraging contributed to work readiness opportunities, services for participants,[3] and job creation.) Many partners developed a greater appreciation for the necessity of real work for pay as part of a work readiness strategy. These partnerships, a key part of the momentum created since 2011, continue to add momentum through the Walmart-Brandeis Academy. As just one example, in a recent Academy, employers with experience hiring youth volunteered to mentor employers without such experience and made commitments to leverage new job slots among vendors and affiliates. The enthusiasm is infectious; the opportunities afforded by the 2011-2013 summer programs plus the current round of the Walmart-Brandeis Academy make it even more so.

Partnerships also equal success nationally: collaboration between Brandeis and grantees on the one hand, and other national initiatives and national organizations on the other, has broadened the circle of attention to youth employment opportunities and raised the initiative's visibility further. For example, Brandeis' knowledge development and dissemination efforts have brought the Walmart investment to

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[3] These partnerships were important for all youth, but even more so for the most vulnerable, such as foster care youth, youth with a history of homelessness, court-involved youth, and youth with disabilities.

the attention of Washington, D.C. leaders, including the White House Domestic Policy Council, U.S. Dept. of Labor (DOL), U.S. Dept. of Education (DOE), U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services (HHS) inter-agency workgroups, as well as the Aspen Institute, the Opportunity Youth Forum, CLASP, foundations, and private sector investors such as J.P. Morgan Chase and Wells Fargo—again leveraging the investment.

Next Steps

Despite the Foundation's efforts, only a few communities have high-quality, competency-based summer youth employability programs. If more join the movement to "employ, educate, and support," national momentum will continue and increase. Moreover, summers are not long enough for all vulnerable participants to become employable. Year-round programming incorporating the practical advice and meaningful work experience presented here provides more opportunities for in-depth learning and skill building, more consistency for youth whose lives are often unpredictable, and a "hook" to keep young people in (or get them back into) school.[4] And the passage of WIOA in July 2014 provides the perfect opportunity to build on the lessons and make use of the Summer Youth Employability logic model and theory of change by adapting them for year round work, learning and support.

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[4] For example, Hartford, CT is increasingly linking summer jobs and schools, providing opportunities for youth to connect employability competencies to the Common Core and earn academic credit for work experience to ease the transition to post-secondary training.

ENOUGH IS KNOWN FOR ACTION

Ready to Employ, Educate and Support Youth: SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYABILITY LOGIC MODEL AND THEORY OF CHANGE

FOR WHOM	ASSUMPTIONS *Moving From…*	STRATEGIES *Through…*	OUTCOMES *Through…*	IMPACT *To*
Our nation's vulnerable youth at risk of long-term unemployment, including those aged 16-22 both in and out of school, in foster care, with disabilities, trauma histories, formerly incarcerated, and in violent, risky and high poverty environments	▪ Summers matter: summer jobs can be a critical facilitator of positive youth development and preparation for adulthood, e.g., can improve educational outcomes, minimize learning loss, contribute to the family budget; connect with positive role models and get on a productive track while building work-based competency; and contribute to local economies through real work for pay. ▪ In 2011, youth employment for 16-19 and 20-24 year olds dropped to lows not seen in more than 50 years. Only half held jobs in 2011. ▪ Unemployment is high yet jobs are going unfilled. Employers cannot find enough workers with demonstrated job competencies, including basic skills, to meet job demands. ▪ Youth want to work in meaningful jobs and contribute to family budgets but many lack the support and opportunities to assess, reflect on, document, and articulate their skill attainment to employers. ▪ Well-designed work-based learning can help close the "opportunity gap" between youth preparation and employer demand and provide outcomes that both youth and employers understand and value. ▪ A systems approach to youth employability development is necessary and requires all sectors to participate and align efforts. Leadership is essential.	▪ **GRANTS TO 7 COMMUNITIES** to employ, educate, and support youth including meaningful work for pay for up to 120 hours at varied worksites; youth are valued by employers and the communities. ▪ **DESIGN & STRUCTURE** – Work-Based Learning & Real Work Experience that integrates education on the job. 100% work, 100% education. Based on individual Employability Development Plans; single up-front assessment process to address quantifiable short- and long-term objectives for development of competencies that increase employability; mix of supports and opportunities required to achieve objectives; ongoing process to reflect on, assess and document level of progress of each youth. – Partnerships for Supports and Opportunities. Activate connections with USDA Summer Food Service Program, transportation providers, child care access, social-emotional and trauma-informed care, financial literacy programs, etc., as needed by youth employees to achieve success. – Partnerships for Education Credits. Explore and activate to the extent possible the award of academic credit for competency-based work experience with community colleges and/or secondary schools. – Partnerships for Sustainability. Engage the employer community in results-oriented partnerships to validate and accept youth employability credentials; seek support from mayors and governors and others in the public policy sector to commit to creating and sustaining a community-wide and national dialogue on the value and importance of youth employability development. – Evaluation and Monitoring. Participate in Brandeis-led data collection and analysis and use evaluation information for local decision making, continuous improvement of the program, and system build out.	▪ Successfully implemented grant program recognized in the community through shared best practice. ▪ Individual portfolios with documented employability competency attainment levels: – Basic skills—read, write, compute, listen, speak well; Thinking skills—critical and creative thinking, decision making, reasoning; Work Maturity skills—appropriate workplace behavior, e.g., working in teams, serving customers, negotiating, working with diverse people; Pre-employment skills—techniques for finding a suitable job, applications, interviews, how to communicate to employers; and Occupational skills—specific skills needed for a particular sector (e.g., technology, health, human services, banking, retail, construction) and selecting and applying technology, accessing and evaluating data, organizing files, computer literacy. ▪ Effective & efficient support services delivered as needed per Employability Development Plans. ▪ Award of academic credits from community college or secondary school. ▪ Evidence of sustainability through working partnerships ▪ Local evaluation and learning team established, and evaluation results are used for continuous improvement.	**Enhanced capability of low-skill youth who document their skills and competencies and know how to communicate them to employers** **Working results-oriented partnerships and systems approach for youth employability development engaging and aligning all sectors**

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For Youth Practitioners, Managers and Worksite Supervisors

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PRACTICAL ADVICE GUIDE:

Project-Based Work & Learning on the Job

From Projects to Project-Based Work & Learning: Making Summer Jobs Learning Rich

Overview

The labor market has shifted toward organizing work around projects conceived and implemented by employee teams. Because of the real-world experiences they offer, summer youth employment programs are especially well suited to prepare young people for this project-based workplace.

Worksite supervisors are positioned to play key roles in effective project-based work and learning—acting as facilitators or coaches and guiding youth through the process of constructing their own knowledge, and determining how to achieve project outcomes within given parameters.

This Practical Advice Guide is meant for youth practitioners, employers, and worksite supervisors considering how to make young people's summer work learning rich and relevant to labor market demands through having youth tackle finite projects that produce tangible products during the summer.[5]

Included:

- What is Project-Based Work & Learning?
- Planning Learning-Rich Projects
- A Supervisor's Role in Engaging Youth in Meaningful, Learning-Rich Work
- Exhibit A: Essential Principles and Practices of Work-Based Learning

[5] The content has been updated from *A Facilitator's Guide to Project Based Learning and Summer Transitions: Lessons from a National Demonstration*, Brandeis Center for Youth and Communities, 2001.

- Exhibit B: SCANS Skills and Competencies
- Exhibit C: 21st Century Skills
- Exhibit D: Comparison of 21st Century Skills and Employer Priorities
- Exhibit E: Examples of Learning-Rich Projects

What is Project-Based Work & Learning?

Effective project-based work and learning revolves around youth-driven processes and activities, with worksite supervisors, youth participants, and others working together to define and complete a learning-rich project. A learning-rich project:

- Results in tangible product(s), outcome(s), or results.
- Takes place within clear operating parameters.
- Is driven by clearly articulated learning objectives which correlate with on-the-job tasks.
- Must be completed within a set delivery schedule.
- Involves multiple, sometimes complex, steps to complete.

Worksite supervisors must be clear about the skills and knowledge they want youth to learn, and tie work tasks directly to those goals. Youth use, reflect on, and develop the following:

- Transferable skills and competencies.
- Basic and subject-specific academic skills.
- Technical and occupational skills.
- Employability skills.
- Life skills.
- Citizenship and community service skills.

An effective project-based work and learning experience is characterized by "teachable moments." Ideally, worksite supervisors provide a safe environment for trial and error; encourage young people to take risks, develop confidence, and build skills; and convey the notion that challenges are valuable experiences to be capitalized upon by discussing what can be learned from them.

What we call project-based work and learning is also known by other names, such as work-based learning or service-learning.

Exhibit A ("Essential Principles and Practices of Work Based Learning," an excerpt from *A Work-Based Learning Toolkit*) provides additional information about project-based work and learning concepts.

Planning Learning-Rich Projects

It's useful to think about two planning stages for project-based work and learning:

- Advance Planning: Worksite supervisors develop plans prior to the youths' arrival.
- Initial Work Planning to Engage Youth: Youth develop an active work plan during the initial phases of their project.

The following suggestions, while not exhaustive, are based on effective practices from a variety of summer jobs programs carrying out successful project-based work and learning experiences.

Advance Planning
Certain considerations are important before youth participants begin the project:

- **Determine whether the allotted time and the skills of available youth are adequate to complete the project.** Consider the timeframe during which participants can work on the project, as well as their skills and abilities. Include reflection time as part of project work (reflection is one of the most crucial project-based work and learning activities—see *Guide on Reflection.*) Subtract time that will not be available for project work (e.g., orientations, assessment, field trips, transportation, and closing ceremonies).

- **Make sure that the project is interesting and learning rich.** Plan ahead for ways to actively engage the participants in planning, problem-solving, implementing, and evaluating, and to complement the necessary mundane tasks with interesting and challenging ones.
- **Determine the resources needed.** Anticipate needed materials, equipment, funding, personnel, tools, and skills. Decide which should be addressed prior to the youths' arrival and which should be part of the youths' responsibilities.
- **Determine whether regulations or laws affect the project, and decide how to handle those issues.** Research regulatory/legal issues. Among the most common challenges are child labor laws, union collective bargaining agreements and work rules, building codes, and school regulations.
- **Schedule an end-of-summer event.** Put this on the schedule as early as possible to give young people the opportunity to present their work, learning, and accomplishments to others and celebrate the summer's work. See *Guide on Portfolios.*

Initial Work Planning to Engage Youth

The optimal way for youth to "own" a project is for them to collectively choose it. The more ownership youth have over the project design, the more commitment they will have to project activities and outcomes. Supervisors can maximize youth choice on Day One:

- Brainstorm potential projects that fit within the employer's or program's parameters.
- Research the logistics of the projects.
- Decide which projects are achievable within the available time and offer options for youth to choose from.

If adults must choose projects, they can stimulate a sense of ownership by enabling youth to have significant responsibility for planning, management, tasks, and evaluation. Youth can undertake and "own" a number of tasks. Some ideas:

Design and plan the project
- Describe what the final product will look like.
- Develop quality and outcome standards and parameters to work within.
- Define learning goals (e.g., academic knowledge, SCANS/21st Century skills,[6] occupational or employability skills, life skills) and how to assess whether these goals are met.[7]
- Identify, analyze, and organize all tasks needed to complete the project.
- Define portfolio contents that may be generated.
- Define questions to be answered throughout the project.
- Identify internal and external personnel needed to complete the project.
- Identify tools, materials, equipment, supplies, and funding needed.

Develop operating procedures
- Develop ground rules for group, team, and individual behavior and actions.
- Develop communication, problem-solving, and decision-making processes.[8]
- Describe roles and responsibilities of staff, participants, partners, and teams.
- Develop project, team, and individual work plans, work distribution, and schedules.

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[6] See Exhibits, B, C, and D.

[7] In most cases, youth should be allowed to carry out their decisions, even if their supervisor would have decided otherwise. Mistakes and confusion are part of learning and part of any job. However, a supervisor who believes that a decision will result in damage or in unacceptable time or financial losses can intervene by asking guiding questions that might help youth reconsider, or encouraging youth to practice negotiation skills by arguing their positions.

[8] Begin implementation only after defining parameters and learning goals.

Carry out work plans and engage in ongoing assessment/reflection

- Collect needed information on any aspect of the project and present it to the group.
- Revise questions, plans, and learning goals based on experience, information, and feedback.
- Produce and deliver the final product or service.
- Collect portfolio evidence of accomplishments.
- Make decisions and revise plans based on information and feedback.
- Reflect on and document learning and outcomes through portfolios.
- Design a celebration to showcase the accomplishments of all participants.

In addition, it is important to decide early on how important project completion is. A project that is not completed successfully and/or on schedule can offer lessons as well as reflect the imperfect nature of real work. Supervisors and youth might consider the following questions:

- What are the consequences to others of not completing the project?
- Should we emphasize learning at the possible expense of project completion? Should we emphasize completion at the possible expense of learning?
- How could we turn an incomplete or "failed" project into a positive learning experience?

No formulas guide who controls which aspects of the project and who takes on which roles and responsibilities. However, clearly establishing the roles and responsibilities of all team members (supervisors, staff, and youth) from the beginning helps a project run smoothly and to everyone's benefit. It is also useful to keep in mind, as stated earlier, that the stronger the youths' control of the project, the stronger their commitment, retention, and pride of accomplishment.

Exhibit E offers examples of learning-rich projects in summer youth employment programs.

A Supervisor's Role in Engaging Youth in Meaningful, Learning-Rich Work

The effectiveness of project-based work and learning relies upon supervisors' rethinking their roles and their views of young people's capacities, so that they can transition from a traditional hierarchical role to a facilitator/coach role. For project-based work and learning to be successful, adults need to avoid an adult-centered style where they make all or most key decisions and tell youth what to do and how to do it. Instead, adults should employ a student-centered style based on a view of youth as resources—with the assumption that youth have many assets to contribute to high-quality project completion and learning. In this view, youth are engaged in every stage of the project and exercise considerable control and ownership over the project and their learning.

The following chart displays some of the differences between these roles. Supervisors may take on a more traditional role to provide needed structure at a project's outset; however, the goal is to shift responsibility to the youth.

Traditional Hierarchical Role vs. Facilitator or Coach Role

	Traditional Hierarchical Adult Supervisor as Authority Figure	Project-Based Adult Supervisor as Facilitator or Coach
ASSUMES	Authority	Many diverse perspectives
KNOWS	What to do	How to do it (using participatory methods)
SEEKS	The right decisions	A youth-driven and youth-implemented decision
RELIES UPON	Individual ability	Group ability

Supervisors interested in facilitating better youth work and learning can use the following chart to help them analyze their styles and consider ways to move from the left side of the matrix, where they act as "bosses," to the right, where they act as facilitators, coaches, and resources. The youth-centered column can be viewed separately as a set of project-based work and learning guidelines.

ADULT-CENTERED	THE MIDDLE GROUND	YOUTH-CENTERED
Adults choose a project that meets requirements, then tell youth what to do.	Adults decide on a project that meets requirements, then allow youth to handle some details.	Adults give parameters, then encourage youth to develop a project.
Adults assume responsibility for the project, its products, and youth learning.	Adults hold youth accountable for adult-assigned tasks and products.	Youth and adults mutually define standards, responsibility, and accountability.
Adults assume control and make decisions about what ought to be done.	Adults assume control but allow youth to make some decisions, subject to adult approval.	Youth play a significant role in deciding what needs to be done, and when and how it will be done.
Adults regularly schedule young people's tasks and assign youth to tasks and teams.	Youth make some plans, decisions, and self-assignments within adult-defined structures and ground rules.	With guidance, youth define their tasks, structure their time, and assign themselves to tasks and teams.
Adults have youth do tasks the adults' way.	Adults assume that youth need advice about how to do things.	Youth define how they will do things and try out ways to do them.
Adults tell youth how to handle problems (or handle it for them).	Adults try to protect youth from making mistakes.	When youth struggle, adults let them work it out, or assist with Socratic questions.
When youth ask questions, adults answer them.	When youth ask questions, adults suggest where they might find answers.	When youth ask questions, adults often respond with other guiding questions.
When adults ask a question, they are seeking the "right" answer.	When adults ask a question, they hope for the "right" answer, but give youth some leeway.	Adults ask questions to stimulate thought and encourage youth to generate their own questions.
Adults set agendas for and lead meetings and planning sessions.	Adults allow youth input into agendas, and allow selected youth to lead parts of meetings.	Youth set agendas for and lead meetings and planning sessions, asking adults to assist as needed.
Adults believe they know a young person's needs and how to address them.	Adults address youth needs that young people identify.	Adults encourage youth to identify their needs and seek ways to meet those needs.
Adults offer some reflection opportunities but control the process.	Adults regularly facilitate reflection because "it seems good for the kids."	Youth lead their reflection processes.

EXHIBIT A: Essential Principles and Practices of Work-Based Learning

From "A Work-Based Learning Toolkit." Smokey House Center. Editors: Miller, C.; Ross, K.; Content contributors: Bondurant, L.; Parent, T.; Wallace, K.; PEER Associates, Inc. Danby, VT. 2011, pp. 4-5.

Meaningful Relationships with Skilled, Caring Adults
The relationship between youth and adult leaders as they work together to accomplish mutual goals is the foundation for academic, social, and emotional learning. Youth work in small teams (ideally six participants) with one skilled leader. This youth-adult ratio ensures that participants receive individualized attention and provides opportunities for them to form a personal relationship with a caring, responsible adult. The adult leader acts in the roles of supervisor, mentor, and instructor. Leaders demonstrate, encourage, challenge, teach, and work alongside the youths; over time, the goal is to help youth develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and habits required to succeed in the adult workplace.

Safe and Supportive Environment Modeling an authentic workplace is balanced with the provision of a safe and supportive environment that is necessary for learning. A supportive environment allows mistakes to be learning opportunities and empowers participants to take risks that help them grow socially and emotionally.

Clear Expectations and Ongoing Assessment Adult leaders establish clear guidelines for students' participation and behavior. Using a benchmarking system (the basis for school-awarded academic credit), leaders regularly assess and document youth participants' progress toward meeting industry-based standards of job skills, attitudes, and habits. With their leader, youth participants set individualized academic, social, and workplace goals; review progress; and set new goals.

Integrated and Applied Learning Work projects require youth to integrate and apply their knowledge in ways that are not feasible in the confines of a classroom. On the job, participants use academic skills (e.g., reading, writing, math, science), social skills (e.g., communication, teamwork), and workplace skills (e.g., managing resources, time and money) to solve real problems. In this way, they practice transferring knowledge between school and the workplace and learn how academic subjects are relevant beyond the classroom.

Active Engagement with School and Service Providers
The Work-Based Learning provider actively engages school personnel, human service providers, and parents or guardians to support the participant's learning goals and address issues that impede his or her ability to succeed.

Real Work Young people are engaged in real work; they make products or are involved in projects that support, or are valued by, the community. When participants see that community members rely on them, they are inspired to produce quality work and meet adult expectations. Through their work, youth take an active role in the community, building relationships with adults that nurture their sense of belonging and encourage continued success

Modeling the Employee/Employer Relationship The relationship between youth and service provider is that of employee and employer. Youth voluntarily apply for the position, are compensated for their work, wear uniforms or job appropriate clothing, and are held to industry-based standards with real consequences for exceeding, meeting, or not meeting expectations. Work-Based Learning models the real workplace so that learners develop appropriate workplace attitudes and habits.

Distinct School/Service Provider Roles A Work-Based Learning program augments but does not replace classroom learning. To ensure that students' education spans all fields of knowledge and vital results (see Vermont's Framework of Standards and Learning Opportunities), schools and service providers work together to balance school-based and Work-Based Learning. Collaborative agreements establish policies supporting each organization's role—the school as education institution and the service provider as employer. Agreements address academic credit for Work-Based Learning, define real workplace consequences for failure to meet expectations, and establish a "no school, no work" policy.

EXHIBIT B: SCANS Skills and Competencies

What workers need to survive and thrive in a high-performance workplace[9]

BASIC SKILLS
Reads and writes competently
Uses basic arithmetic and math
  competently
Listens effectively
Speaks clearly

THINKING
Thinks creatively
Makes well-thought-out
  decisions
Solves problems
Visions—"Sees things in the mind's
  eye"
Knows how to learn
Reasons

PERSONAL QUALITIES
Demonstrates responsibility
Possesses self-esteem
Demonstrates social skills
Manages him/herself
Demonstrates integrity/honesty

RESOURCES
Allocates time
Allocates money
Allocates material and facility
  resources
Allocates human resources

INFORMATION
Acquires and evaluates information
Organizes and maintains
  information
Interprets and communicates
  information
Uses computers to process
  information

INTERPERSONAL
Participates as a member
  of a team
Teaches others
Serves clients/customers
Exercises leadership
Negotiates to arrive at a decision
Works with cultural diversity

SYSTEMS
Understands systems
Monitors and corrects performance
Improves and designs systems

TECHNOLOGY
Selects technology
Applies technology to task
Maintains and troubleshoots
  technology

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[9] From "What Work Requires of Schools:
A SCANS Report For America 2000",
Secretary's Commission on Achieving
Necessary Skills, US Dept. of Labor, 1992

EXHIBIT C: 21st Century Skills

Learning for Life in Our Times[10]

CORE SUBJECTS AND 21ST CENTURY THEMES
- English reading or language arts
- World languages
- Art
- Mathematics
- Economics
- Science
- Geography
- History
- Government and civics

LEARNING AND INNOVATION SKILLS
- Creativity and innovation
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Communication and collaboration

INFORMATION, MEDIA, AND TECHNOLOGY SKILLS
- Information literacy
- Media literacy
- Information, communications,
  and technology literacy

LIFE AND CAREER SKILLS
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Initiative and self-direction
- Social and cross cultural skills
- Productivity and accountability
- Leadership and responsibility

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[10] From Trilling, B. and Fadel, C. (2009). 21st Century Skills: Learning
for Life in Our Times. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass and The
Partnership for 21st Century Skills' P21 Website: http://p21.org

EXHIBIT D: Comparison of 21st Century Skills with Employer Priorities

	21st CENTURY SKILLS[11]	HART RESEARCH EMPLOYER PRIORITIES FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES[12]
LEARNING AND INNOVATION SKILLS	**Critical Thinking and Problem Solving** • Reason effectively • Use systems thinking • Make judgments and decisions • Solve problems **Creativity and Innovation** • Think creatively • Work creatively with others • Implement innovations **Communication and Collaboration** • Communicate clearly • Collaborate with others **Visual Literacy** • Recognize and interpret visual information • Appreciate and understand visual information **Scientific and Numerical Literacy** • Evaluate scientific/numerical information • Pose and evaluate scientific arguments • Reason with mathematical concepts **Cross-Disciplinary Thinking** • Apply knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and skills across disciplines **Basic Literacy** • Use language to read, write, listen, and speak	**TOP SEVEN** • Critical thinking and analytical reasoning skills • The ability to analyze and solve complex problems • The ability to effectively communicate orally • The ability to effectively communicate in writing • The ability to apply knowledge and skills to real-world settings • The ability to locate, organize, and evaluate information from multiple sources • The ability to innovate and be creative **LOWER PRIORITY** (from here down) • Teamwork skills and the ability to collaborate with others in diverse group settings • Knowledge about science and technology • The ability to work with numbers and understand statistics
INFORMATION, MEDIA & TECHNOLOGY SKILLS	**Information Literacy** • Access and evaluate information • Use and manage information **Media Literacy** • Analyze media • Create media products **Information, Communications, and Technology (ICT) Literacy** • Apply technology effectively	• The ability to work with numbers and understand statistics • Knowledge about science and technology
LIFE AND CAREER SKILLS	**Flexibility and Adaptability** • Adapt to change • Be flexible **Initiative and Self-Direction** • Manage goals and time • Work independently • Be a self-directed learner **Social and Cross-Cultural Skills** • Interact effectively with others • Work effectively in diverse teams **Productivity and Accountability** • Manage projects • Produce results **Leadership and Responsibility** • Guide and lead others • Be responsible to others	• Teamwork skills and the ability to collaborate with others in diverse group settings • The ability to connect choices and actions to ethical decisions
21st CENTURY THEMES	**Global Awareness** **Financial, Economic, Business, and Entrepreneurial Literacy** **Civic Literacy** **Health Literacy** **Environmental Literacy**	• Proficiency in a language other than English • Knowledge about global issues & developments & implications for the future • Knowledge about the role of the United States in the world • Knowledge about cultural diversity in America and other countries • Civic knowledge, civic participation, and community engagement • Knowledge about democratic institutions and values

[11] Summary chart created by Center for Youth and Communities at Brandeis University based on Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21) http://p21.org.

[12] Hart Research Associates (2013). IT TAKES MORE THAN A MAJOR: Employer Priorities for College Learning and Student Success. An Online Survey among Employers Conducted on Behalf of The Association of American Colleges and Universities. Washington, DC: Hart Research Associates May 2014

EXHIBIT E: Examples of Learning-Rich Work

Summer work projects can help youth develop skills and create tangible, valuable outcomes. This section first briefly describes a number of learning-rich projects that summer jobs programs have conducted in which youth played major planning, implementing, and evaluating roles and then offers more detailed examples of project-based work and learning.

Facilities Construction, Maintenance, and Improvement
- Convert a vacant lot or underutilized schoolyard into a softball field.
- Improve the grounds and buildings of a residential facility.
- Conduct an inventory of maintenance and improvement work needed at a school, public facility, or community organization.
- Build a safe playground.
- Renovate a room to turn it into a teen center.
- Conduct weatherization or insulation projects.
- Construct an outdoor amphitheater.
- Paint or renovate public housing, schools, gymnasiums, or other community facilities.
- Tackle a graffiti problem.

Environmental Protection and Renewal
- Create or rehabilitate a nature trail.
- Construct an environmental teaching station.
- Conduct an environmental reclamation or erosion control project in a park.
- Analyze the effects of water temperature at a power plant outflow on fish and plants.
- Conduct a landscaping project at an urban park.
- Plant community gardens and teach residents about gardening.
- Convert vacant lots into gardens.
- Design and construct a greenhouse to supply plants for public areas.
- Design a traffic flow plan for a congested intersection, and propose it to local leaders.
- Conduct a water survey, and present findings to the state environmental agency.
- Compare sites being proposed for a landfill and present findings to local leaders.

Elder Services
- Lead a "meals on wheels" project.
- Coordinate social visits to homebound elders or nursing home residents.
- Chat by phone and bond with elders while monitoring their well-being.
- Make improvements on and maintain elders' homes and grounds.
- Construct an exercise course for elders.
- Interview elders to record community history.

Youth Services
- Organize and operate a youth sports league.
- Coordinate youth theater groups focusing on youth issues.
- Produce a video or public service announcement on a subject of interest to youth.
- Develop an anti-violence campaign.
- Convene diverse youth to learn about each other and fight stereotypes.
- Set up a tutoring system for local children.

Media and Communications
- Publish a student-led newsletter.
- Produce a video documentary highlighting work-based learning activities.
- Produce articles, documentaries, or video clips for local commercial, public, or cable television.
- Develop a yearbook.
- Create a visitors' guidebook highlighting local attractions.

Community and Civic Responsibility

- Develop a route for school buses transporting students from many neighborhoods to one citywide school.
- Produce a video or public service announcement.
- Assist with blood drives or immunization programs.
- Develop a neighborhood fair or festival.
- Organize a voter registration drive.
- Conduct a project to aid children and families in need.
- Conduct research on community issues and present results.
- Publish and market a newsletter or newspaper focusing on important local issues.
- Organize an important ceremony (e.g., a graduation ceremony for GED recipients).
- Restore discarded furniture and donate it to low-income families.
- Redesign toys so that disabled children can use them.
- Lead HIV/AIDS awareness programs.
- Design an interactive computer program to teach children about dental hygiene.
- Petition for mobile medical services for communities with limited access to health care.

Arts and Community Service

- Design and paint a public mural.
- Design and market a poster that conveys an important social message.

- Produce a quilt focusing on an important issue.
- Create paintings of community life and arrange a showing to display and sell them.
- Paint park or bus stop benches artistically.
- Analyze the architecture of historic buildings and present preservation recommendations to the historical society.
- Paint all or part of a historic structure according to historic preservation standards.
- Create a theater or dance production.
- Convert a Shakespeare play into modern "street language" and perform the play.
- Write and perform an original song on a chosen subject.

Entrepreneurship and Product Design

- Conduct a survey to identify businesses that residents want more of in their communities and present findings to the Chamber of Commerce.
- Design and implement a business plan focusing on a community need.
- Operate a custom, silkscreened T-shirt business.
- Run a used clothing store.
- Operate a business that sells and maintains small plants for office workers' desks.
- Run an environmentally-friendly landscaping business
- Make and sell baked goods.
- Operate a "Rent-A-Teen" odd job service.
- Research, identify, and sell a product using an original marketing approach.

Detailed Examples of Project-Based Work & Learning

Philadelphia, PA (2012)

WorkReady Philadelphia offered team-based, learning-rich, service-learning projects for youth ages 14+. With adult guidance, participants conducted projects that benefitted their communities and learned valuable skills. Each week, youth engaged in 15 hours of service and 4 hours of reflection or other learning activities. At the end of the summer, the youth presented their projects at an EXPO. Two examples of summer projects:

- At the Gay and Lesbian Latino AIDS Education Initiative, two young mothers conducted research on and developed a booklet for other young people on sexually transmitted infections and diseases. They learned about research and writing as well as about the health and sexuality issues they were addressing.

- Three teams of foster youth at the Achieving Independence Center developed logos for the organization's Learn-And-Earn Program. One was selected as the official program logo.

Hartford, CT (2012)

In Hartford, Connecticut, learning-rich projects included:

- Developing a student-run, "cooking healthy" cafeteria.
- Addressing storm damage by identifying neighborhood problems with water levels, drainage, and flooding.
- Creating a train-the-trainer nonviolence curriculum.
- Creating a nature trail.
- Creating murals, greeting cards, ornaments, and self-portraits.
- Using music and video equipment to create public service announcements and documentaries.

Participants regularly reflected, often through journal writing, about the competencies they were using and about other learning; used Facebook and email to document and communicate their experiences; and included reflections about what they had learned during their capstone presentations.

Detroit, MI (ARRA, 2009)

The Conservation Leadership Corps, a public-private partnership, employed 110 youth in environmental stewardship and conservation projects such as tree planting, landscaping, native planting, trail development and maintenance, native timber bench construction, removing invasive species, repairing damaged and eroded areas, and constructing a greenhouse for an elementary school outdoor classroom.

In a separate project designed and managed by the Good Neighborhoods Technical Assistance Center at the University of Michigan's School of Social Work, 60 young people conducted community asset surveys and focus groups to assess neighborhood assets and concerns, and explore how safe, healthy, educated, and prepared for adulthood local youth were. Prior to data collection, youth participated in role plays to give them tools to help them recruit survey respondents and generate the focus group questions. They conducted basic asset mapping, compiled what they learned, and presented their findings to the Michigan Governor's Council.

Chicago, IL (ARRA, 2009)

The Survey Lab at the University of Chicago's Social Science Division employed five youth in a summer study of resources in University-area neighborhoods. Youth underwent 12 hours of training on topics including an orientation to the Lab, confidentiality issues, work expectations, project purpose and goals, and communication and interpersonal skills. Next, in cooperation with University students, they documented the businesses and organizations at each address, checked them against the project database, and used a cell phone-based application

to send updated information to the database. To reinforce high expectations and a sense of status, staff emphasized to youth that they represented the University. The youth selected which streets they would cover, explained the project to residents, learned about building a database, and improved their planning and communication skills as well as their understanding of the neighborhoods.

Phoenix & Maricopa County, AZ (2012)
Arizona Call-A-Teen Youth Resources (ACYR) instituted project-based work and learning (PBL) in its Smart Summer 2012 initiative, using a positive youth development approach (focusing on youth assets, not deficits), and learning-rich, community service-oriented summer projects to convey workforce and facilitative leadership skills. Project Leads served as facilitators/coaches and supported a PBL approach with 22 young people in four projects.

Young people began their experience with a four-day "Participatory Facilitation Methods" training (by Partners in Participation, LLC, http://partnersinparticipation.com) that teaches the techniques of facilitating a conversation, reaching consensus, and developing an action plan. Participants built on this to create action plans for and implement their projects. They met daily with Project Leads to reflect on progress, revisit plans, and ensure completion. From a set of topic areas devised by the Project Leads, youth developed four projects:

- Community Health and Nutrition. This team investigated how factors such as education, income, diet and nutrition, exercise, and leisure time activities and behavior influence community members' health and well-being. The final presentation highlighted health challenges in the community, community-based options for continued learning about health issues, and choices for healthy changes.

- Arizona Jobs for the Future. This team's goal was to provide information about the future of jobs in their community and the skills youth need for better employment opportunities. They collected data from local youth, human resource departments, and other sources to find out what jobs are needed. They also collected data on the importance of education, communication, finances, and technology in the local economy.

- Artful and Meaningful Documentation. This team's mission was to establish the summer program's online presence through Facebook, the web, art, photography, and music. Participants worked closely with the entire summer program to document events, successes, and community life. Among its products was the web page www.acyrpbldoc.wix.com/project-based-learning.

- Sharing Findings with the Community. This team designed, planned, publicized, and implemented the "End of Summer Celebration," a participatory community event to present the four Summer 2012 projects' findings and products to peers, family, and the community. They designed and implemented a marketing strategy and coordinated with community partners, speakers, and ACYR. They shared presentations and brochures about health, wellness, youth employment, healthy home tips, and STD and tobacco awareness; a video showing employer-youth interviews; and a slideshow of photos showing youth learning about event planning. Handcrafted projects and a "picture wall" demonstrated the youths' summer journey. A DJ kept the music going, and all were invited to participate in a Zumba demonstration.

Lessons Learned

- Project Leads need (1) group facilitation skills, to transition from a traditional supervision approach to the facilitating/coaching needed for PBL, and (2) support to remember that youth leaders are more likely to emerge when one asks rather than tells. (They were often inclined to meet challenges with a quick fix—that is, telling youth what to do.) At the same time, youth need clarity about expectations and accountability.

- Building relationships is a key part of PBL and leads to more open communication. However, Project Leads worried about balancing work on products with the time needed to develop relationships with participants.

- Youth need to respect adults and adult ideas; however, pushback from them is healthy and they need to feel that they can often do it their way. For example, at first, youth were not keen on doing the research required for the projects; however, given the opportunity to define the projects further and encouragement to connect research and goals, they became more enthusiastic, creative, and productive.

- Project Leads and youth had to learn to "trust the process." Positive discussions about the big picture helped, as did time: accomplishing worthwhile goals enabled youth to put frustrations in perspective.

- Tapping into youths' intrinsic motivation to do something valuable and make a difference can enhance the PBL approach. Adults can help them tie their experience to employability and career paths.

- Reflection is important but not easy to facilitate. See *Guide on Reflection.*

ACYR is currently reworking its Facilitators Guide to PBL to add a section on being a supervisor in a project-based context and recognizes that adults and youth need significant training for PBL to work effectively.

Recommended Resources Regarding Project-Based Work & Learning

If you wish to learn more about project-based work and learning, please explore the websites listed below (all available as of October 2014). Project-based work and learning shares many characteristics with other state-of-the-art educational concepts, such as work-based learning, service-learning, cooperative learning, competency education, and student-centered learning. Although many of the suggested resources were written for teachers, most ideas are applicable and transferable to summer youth employment programs.

- This introductory video for teachers, worksite supervisors, and young people shows how project-based work and learning differs from traditional educational approaches:

  Buck Institute for Education (BIE). "Project Based Learning Explained." http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LMCZvGesRz8

- The following Buck Institute-related resource offers links concerning project design, instructional strategies, and other resources:

  Buck Institute for Education (BIE). "Project Based Learning: The Online Resource for PBL." http://pbl-online.org

- This website provides links, blogs, articles, videos, group discussions, and profiles:

  Edutopia: What Works In Education. "Project-Based Work & Learning." The George Lucas Educational Foundation. http://www.edutopia.org/project-based-education

- Wikipedia has a decent encyclopedic piece on project-based work and learning—useful as a primer: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Project-based_learning

- This detailed guide, although aimed at school teachers, contains excellent information transferable to summer programs:

  The National Academy Foundation and Pearson Foundation. "PBL Guide: Project-Based Work & Learning—A Resource for Instructors and Program Coordinators." http://naf.org/files/PBL_Guide.pdf

- These documents investigate student-centered education, competency education and mastery, and related learning approaches:

  The Nellie Mae Educational Foundation. "Learning Can Be Flexible." http://www.nmefoundation.org/resources

  Website suggests several important publications: "Restructuring Schools to be Student-Centered," "Competency Education in Action," "Investing in Student-Centered Approaches."

Reflection on Employability Development

Making Summer Work & Learning Meaningful

Overview

Summer youth employment programs are not just about jobs; they are also about having young people learn and enhance their employability. One way to dramatically increase young people's learning is through reflection—that is, having the youth consider what they're doing, how they do it, how they might improve it, what they're learning, what their learning means (for them and others), and how and where they can apply their learning.

Young people who think about and verbalize the skills they are learning are much more likely to value and retain what they have learned. Formal, regular, and intentional reflection opportunities can transform an ordinary experience into one which raises a participant's level of skill, competence, and confidence. These opportunities can be relatively easy to implement and do not have to take up much time (although allowing more time leads to better results).

This Practical Advice Guide is meant for youth practitioners and worksite supervisors who wish to build structured reflection activities into their summer youth employment programs.

Included:

- What is Reflection and Why Should Youth Reflect?
- Suggestions for Organizing Reflection Activities
- Why Reflect Regularly?
- Exhibit A: Focused Conversation Worksheet

Brandeis University

THE CENTER FOR YOUTH AND COMMUNITIES — *Making Knowledge Productive for 30+ Years*
THE HELLER SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

What is Reflection and Why Should Youth Reflect?

Reflection is a process of thinking about an issue or activity, verbalizing what we are doing, and then drawing the learning out of it. When people reflect regularly, their learning improves. Reflection is especially needed in summer youth employment programs because:

- Many young people need to be introduced to the importance of workplace skills and behaviors. This includes learning about and improving both interpersonal skills (communication, teamwork, leadership, attitude, etc.) and intrapersonal skills (self esteem, self confidence, reliability, responsibility, etc.). Structured reflection helps young people become aware of the value of these skills by providing opportunities to use, verbalize, and assess them.

- Youth who use a skill aren't necessarily aware that they are using it. When focused on a complex task or activity, youth tend to pay more attention to the work being done than to the skills they are using or the learning that is taking place. Reflecting on the skills they are using will help them refine those skills.

- Just because people use a skill doesn't mean that they know how to use it well or improve it. Young people who spend time identifying the behaviors and actions that comprise a skill, and questioning which components contribute to effective use of those skills, will enhance their skills.

- Just because people use a skill in one context does not mean that they know where else they can apply it. Considering the "transferability" of what they are learning—i.e., reflecting on additional situations in which a skill might also be used—deepens learning and ability. For example,

a participant may use a skill like brainstorming in a group without recognizing that they could use this process in other work and even personal situations. The same applies to academic skills— when applied on the job, it is helpful to reflect on how this learning can be used in other situations, such as classrooms.

- Reflection can help young people learn to prioritize goals or tasks. Reflection processes can easily incorporate a discussion of learning objectives at the beginning of a job. Workers who are aware of learning objectives are more likely to recognize where to focus their attention, especially important when time is limited.

- Young people may not recognize the value of what they are doing. When asked about the value of their work, youth may answer without clarity about why they are implementing particular tasks. Reflection in combination with a meaningful relationship with a skilled caring adult can deepen their understanding about the value of work and their place in the "world of work."

Suggestions for Organizing Reflection Activities

Variety is helpful when it comes to engaging young people in reflection. Typically, participants tackle an aspect of their work (e.g., planning, implementing, evaluating, or problem solving) and then draw out the learning through reflection activities. Activities might include one-on-one discussions with the supervisor, one-on-one discussion with a peer, or group reflection experiences. Here are a few ideas:

- Reflection on a personal level about the knowledge, skills, and behaviors they are learning, with work supervisors, mentors, counselors, or other adults who work with them directly.

- Full group discussions where all participants focus on the same topic, such as developing a list of learning objectives or creating a rubric to assess the development of their skills.

- Subgroup or peer-to-peer discussions focusing on the same topic simultaneously and then (if appropriate) reporting out their conclusions to the full group.

- Subgroup or peer-to-peer discussions focusing on different topics and then (if appropriate) reporting out their conclusions to the full group.

- Participation in an activity that differs from previous activities, but uses the same skills, followed by a discussion that compares the activities and identifies the transferable skills.

- Brainstorming sessions generating possible effective practices for various skills.

- Daily and/or ongoing "reflective writing" of group or personal reflection experiences (e.g., keeping a job journal). Periodic private review of this reflective writing can be coupled with group discussions of important insights and thoughts.

- Periodic public presentations.

- Reflection games (e.g., altering common board games so that learners must address reflection issues in order to advance).

Reflection Topics and Ideas

Consider the learning goals of your summer program and/or your worksite. What do you really want young people to learn? Reflection activities can focus on many different concepts. Open–ended questions are generally most useful for reflection. Following are suggestions for questions that you might ask young people.

Skills/content learning and labeling
- What knowledge, skills, and behaviors are you using to carry out each task?
- How does what you are learning in school apply to what you're doing through your work tasks and vice versa? Specifically, what academic, technical, or vocational subjects (such as math) apply to your work tasks? How do they apply?
- What skills that would help you with a specific job or career are you addressing in your work?

Ongoing project benchmarking and continuous quality improvement
- How and in what ways are your tasks progressing?
- What's working and what's not?
- What problems are you encountering, and why? For example:
  – Which goals have you not reached, and why?
  – Is your project on schedule? Why or why not?
  – Are all of the people in your group pulling their weight?
  – Do you have all of the supplies and materials you need?
  – What should you keep doing? Why?
  – What should you change? How? Why?
  – What might be done to improve your performance and learning? How? When? By whom?
  – How do you feel while you are working on these tasks?

Transferable knowledge and skills
- Where else in your life might you use what you are learning and doing?
- In what jobs or careers might these skills and knowledge areas be particularly valuable?
- How might you connect the skills and knowledge you are gaining from the job to your educational or extracurricular activities?

Citizenship and community service skills

- How does it feel to perform this service or action?
- What are the benefits for you and for your community of your taking action to help or improve your community?
- What is the ideal role of a citizen in his/her community?

Why Reflect Regularly?

A key to successful reflection is to engage in it regularly and at the right time. Reflection time ideally occurs immediately before an action or activity, in the middle of the action/activity, and immediately after the action/activity.

- Example: If young people work on a project Monday through Friday, and don't reflect on the week's events until Friday, the reflection process will be minimally helpful. The details of their Monday through Thursday experiences will have become foggy and it may be too late to capture important learning.

There are several common approaches to scheduling successful reflection time. The following are examples of effective practices:

- Schedule formal reflection time each workday. To the extent possible, set aside time before, during, and after the day's work to discuss the work ahead while reflecting on previous activities. Consider productivity, talk about work-related problems, assign tasks and adjust work plans, and discuss competencies/skills themes related to the work at hand.

- Take advantage of informal reflection opportunities. Look for "teachable moments" during the work activities and periodically ask participants about what's happening, what's working or not working, what's being learned, etc.

- Use meals (if any) to reflect informally or formally as a group. Build on the social nature of meals by engaging participants in discussions about workday events, and reflect on issues that surface.

- Include ample reflection time in the project schedule. It is better to reduce the scope of the work in advance than to lack adequate reflection time. Reflection will increase learning about the employability skills being gained—which, after all, is the main objective of the summer youth employment program.

Following is a quick and minimal set of reflection steps that you can add to the workday with young people:

- At the start of the workday, ask: What worked well on previous days that should be continued today? What might be done differently and better today, and why?
- In the middle of the workday, ask: How are things going? What's working? What's not? How can you improve?
- At the end of the workday, ask: What have you learned today? How do you feel about your accomplishments so far today? What did you learn about yourself? Where else might you use this learning?

Example of Reflection Activities

In the Phoenix/Maricopa County 2012 Smart Summer initiative, each young person completed a Daily Reflection Journal on topics such as effective communication, using PowerPoint, employability, customer service, prioritizing, time management, stress management, ethics, and self-marketing. On paydays, they participated in group reflection activities. The "Focused Conversation Worksheet" (Exhibit A) guided payday group reflection processes.

Exhibit A: Focused Conversation Worksheet

(from Arizona Call-A-Teen Youth Resources, Phoenix, AZ)

Summer Work Experience; Payday Reflection #1		
Rational Aim: (Intent or practical goal of the conversation): To review and reflect on our summer work experience and on the significance and usefulness of these experiences for future work and life goals.		**Experiential Aim:** (1) For participants to experience comfort, authenticity, and a deeper understanding of summer work experience to apply to remainder of summer, and (2) to create eagerness to come to upcoming Pay Day Workshop Reflections.
Opening (set stage, introduce topic): Let's take the next 40 minutes to explore what we have been doing, experiencing and learning in our summer jobs and roles. Please be ready to share positive and challenging insights.		
Conversation 'level'	**Questions for each level**	**Sample follow-up questions**
OBJECTIVE Facts and information	(Hear from each person on this level) What are one or two things you think about when you think about work? What else have you been doing at your summer work experience? What different types of people do you get to work with? What is one thing you've learned?	What is one word or phrase you remember? What is one thing you know about… What topics were covered today? Briefly describe the current situation? What specifically did you see? What caught your attention?
REFLECTIVE Personal reactions, internal responses, feeling, association	Anyone! What has been a challenge? What has been going well? What has been surprising? What about this work experience reminds you of another experience you have had?	What does this remind you of? What bothers you about…. What do you like or appreciate? What surprises you? What challenges you? What is your gut reaction to… What questions are raised?
INTERPRETIVE Meaning, values, significance, implications	How is it different working with adults versus teens? What are you learning? How is this experience changing your thoughts about plans to reach your goals? How are you different because of this work experience?	What is really being said here? What values are emerging as we talk? What options are surfacing? What is one root cause? What might we have done differently? What is missing from this session?
DECISIONAL Resolution, consensus, decisions and future actions	What is one thing you have learned that you want to apply to your life now and in the future? Will you pursue this field as a career? What career options are you considering? Does this experience make you want to stay in school? If so, how? Are there any other action steps you plan to take?	What are next steps? How would you summarize our conversation today? Draw a picture of your work experience. What choices remain before us? How might we use this information? How can we prevent this from happening next time? What are you willing to commit to?
Closing: Confirm individual or group resolve. Thank you!		

Tips

- Be sure to have each person say something on the first question.
- No need to comment after people talk; use eyes and body language to let them know they are heard and affirmed.
- Silence is fine—particularly in a small group. Give people time to think!

Recommended Resources Regarding Reflection

If you are interested in delving deeper into the process of reflection, you might check out the following websites (as of October 2014):

• Helpful and transferable ideas about "reflective writing" in youth programs:

  Leonard, Jennifer (independent consultant to Commonwealth Corporation, Boston, MA). "Reflection Questions—Part 1." http://skillspages.com/blog/?p=715. Skills Pages Youth Employment Blog. 03 April 2012.

• An in-depth look at the reflection process and a user-friendly, annotated bibliography with helpful tips:

  Campus Compact. http://www.compact.org/disciplines/reflection/bibliography. Boston, MA. Copyright August 2001.

PRACTICAL ADVICE GUIDE:
Youth Motivation

A Primer on Motivation for Worksite Supervisors and Others Working with Youth

Overview

Providing an environment that motivates young people to achieve success in work, education, and life is a crucial aspect of summer youth employment programs. However, the concept of "motivation"—and how it can be fostered—is not well understood.

The key to a work and learning program that motivates youth is a youth-centered system that takes into account how young people learn and develop. Adults whose approach is deficit-based often say that "lack of motivation" is why some young people fail to thrive, even in good programs that offer many positive experiences. In contrast, those with an asset-driven approach ask, "How can we create conditions in which young people are motivated to learn, work hard, and achieve?"

This Practical Advice Guide discusses concepts that may help adults create conditions that enhance young people's motivation within the framework of an asset-driven approach.

It is meant for worksite supervisors and staff who wish to use an asset-driven approach to addressing youth motivation.

Included:

- Understanding Youth Motivation
- Unlocking Youth Motivation

Understanding Youth Motivation

What motivates young people to learn, work hard, and achieve? Efforts to develop motivation in youth should be firmly grounded in positive youth development practices that recognize that youth need the following to thrive:

- Relationships with competent, caring, positive adults
- Regular access to safe places
- Meaningful work and learning experiences enabling them to acquire marketable skills
- Access to resources that contribute to their physical, social-emotional, and mental health
- Opportunities to serve others
- Age and stage appropriate placements and tasks
- High quality experiences that incorporate positive youth development principles

Further, learning and support strategies that help youth link their efforts to effective outcomes over time are more likely to have lasting effects on motivation. Research on learning and cognitive development suggests that "quick-fix" approaches alone are insufficient to change behavior or increase motivation. (Many adults have found that the "motivation" generated by even the most exciting motivational workshop deteriorates quickly.)

To have a chance for success, interventions with young people should occur in the context of the psychological, emotional, and social development that accompanies their passage through adolescence. Adolescents, especially younger ones, differ sharply from adults in learning styles and developmental needs. Adolescents are often exploring and defining their values, goals, and identities. They are not children, but they are not yet adults (although many have adult responsibilities). Young people often struggle with strong but dichotomous feelings that present both challenges and opportunities for programs, such as:

- Low self-esteem coupled with a desire to do well and be accepted.
- Negative attitudes toward classroom learning. coupled with a desire to do meaningful work.
- Distrust of adults coupled with a desire to trust and look up to adults.
- Competitive attitudes toward peers coupled with strong peer loyalty.

The remainder of this section discusses three key concepts—incentive, expectancy, and attribution—that help us understand "motivation."

- Incentive: Believing that the value of accomplishing a task exceeds the cost of the effort required to succeed.
- Expectancy: Believing that one can succeed in performing a task and control the outcomes through one's efforts.
- Attribution: Believing that successes or failures are due in large measure to one's own efforts.

Incentive: Believing that the value of accomplishing a task exceeds the cost of the effort required to succeed.

People feel an incentive to perform a task if they perceive a benefit from performing it, i.e., if they can answer the question, "What's in it for me?" To feel truly motivated, young people need to see the tangible or intangible benefits of completing a task, as well as to feel engaged with the task for its own sake (intrinsic motivation). [13] In a summer youth employment pro-

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[13] No external reward can replace the incentive of pure engagement and meaningful achievement. Research on external rewards has yielded mixed results. Rewards to reinforce behaviors such as good attendance or punctuality are widely seen as effective. Evidence also suggests that rewards linked to cooperative activities, such as a team tackling a project, can have positive effects. (See, for example, R. E. Slavin (1983), "When does cooperative learning increase student achievement?" Psychological Bulletin 94:429-445.) However, some researchers have concluded that people who are rewarded for activities in which they were initially interested (intrinsic motivation) may later lose interest in those activities, especially if they see the reward as a "bribe."

gram, we need to help youth understand the value of the skills and knowledge they can gain from their experience, how these gains can help them in the future, and how the tasks link to their interests. We need to ask what they want from their job (beyond a paycheck), whether they find the work and/or project goals meaningful and related to their personal goals, and whether they think that accomplishing the work/project goals is worth the effort.

Bringing "incentive" to life: early in the summer program, have youth reflect on and verbalize why they are working and what they hope to gain. As the program progresses, have them reflect on what they are actually gaining.

It is also important to recognize that everyone struggles with competing incentives, and that this is even more significant for vulnerable youth. For example, a young single mother whose child is sick or whose daycare provider is unavailable does not have the resources to obtain high-quality alternative care. Does she address her child's needs or go to work? A young person who is attending summer school while also participating in a youth employment program may feel torn between staying after class for help versus getting to work on time. Programs that have supports in place to help youth cope with such competing incentives are more likely to help them stay motivated.

About Incentive—From the 2012 Smart Summer Programs. One incentive for young people in the 2012 programs was the paycheck. Another was their desire to use the money in ways that were important to them, such as helping to support their families, buying clothes and supplies for school, saving for college, and having spending money. Other incentives—building on the young people's intrinsic motivation—included jobs connected to their interests, their recognition of a job's long-term benefits, and their desire to make a difference.

- In Hartford, young people had interviews with previously identified summer employers of interest at Employer Expositions. By the end of each Expo, nearly all knew where they would be working and had had a job interview experience.

- In Detroit, youth participated in weekly workshops on topics such as CPR training, facilitation, and confidence-building. A program coordinator said, "I give [them] a choice as to what they want to learn and then try to facilitate that learning."

At various sites, youth talked about their intrinsic motivation:

- "I do it for the passion, not the money."
- "Seeing a child smile. That's what I get out of it. Knowing I helped them."
- "I'm not going to wait for someone to come change my community. I live here; my nieces and nephews live here. I'm going to change it myself."
- "I am doing it for the kids in the community."
- "It's like school with structure and routine, only it's better because it's freer and I'm learning about having a job and I am getting work experience."
- "I want to learn skills too; it's not just about the money."
- "If I'm focused, I can learn skills that will help me in life and work."
- "The program is a way into the workforce. It's a way for us to prove ourselves."
- "This summer I'm going to work on communication skills, asking questions when I need help, and how to ask effectively."

Expectancy: Believing that one can perform a task successfully and control the outcomes through one's efforts.

People who believe that they are able to perform a task, and can control the outcome, are more likely to be motivated. In other words, a high level of expectancy is associated with motivation. A youth with high expectancy says, "I'm not sure how to do this,

but I'll figure it out." If they have concerns about their capacity to handle the tasks, they are willing and able to ask for help.

When faced with challenging tasks, young people with low expectancy tend to exert minimal effort because they expect defeat. They believe that they will fail in this new challenge—that it will be one more in a series of failures: "Why should I work on this? I'll screw it up anyway, just as I've done so many times before." Young people with low expectancy may not express their worries, and may not know how to ask for help or where to find help. They may walk away feeling defeated before they start. They may put in minimal effort because they expect defeat.

Bringing "expectancy" to life: provide opportunities for young people to reflect on their feelings about their capacity to succeed at their assigned tasks, to identify and discuss concerns, and to problem solve. Help them connect effort and outcomes by encouraging reflection about the tasks they undertake, from start to finish.

Adult expectations of young people's performance can improve their level of expectancy. The powerful effects of teacher expectations on student performance are by now well established in the literature. At the same time, adults should express high expectations in supportive and encouraging ways. (See next section, "Unlocking Youth Motivation.") Aligning the youth participants' abilities and interests with the assigned tasks will lead to the most positive results.

A related finding is that credible praise can increase expectancy. Praise is more credible (and useful) when it responds specifically to solid effort, perseverance, and achievement ("You did a great job putting that newsletter together"), compared to general praise or praise based on personal characteristics ("You are so smart"). Praise should be offered often enough to be encouraging, but not so often that youth write it off as insincere. In addition, the source of the praise is important. For example, a credible source might be a counselor, teacher, or worksite

supervisor who has faced similar challenges and/or who is knowledgeable about the degree of difficulty of the task.

About Expectancy—From the 2012 Smart Summer Programs. Smart Summer programs helped youth develop a positive sense of expectancy through opportunities to try new things, make mistakes, analyze ways to improve, and learn skills.

- In Hartford's tiered system, youth learn and perform in developmentally appropriate settings. They advance based upon effort and attainment of competencies. Repeating a tier is not viewed as a failure.

- In Phoenix-Maricopa County, young people regularly and formally reflected on their experiences and became more confident in their abilities. As they solved often complex problems, they improved performance and gained confidence.

- Los Angeles offered workshops to prepare young people to earn an employability credential accepted by many local employers.

- A Detroit worksite offered weekly workshops on topics such as conflict resolution, positive reinforcement, hygiene, self-development, setting and achieving goals, managing money, career building, and developing vision. Youth develop short and long-term goals using a "Life Plan Workbook." A program coordinator said, "They need to understand that their dream is something they can accomplish and that there are things they can do to get there."

- In Chicago's Social and Emotional Learning program, young people investigated concepts such as self-awareness, self-management, goal setting and personal intentions, and other concepts connected with motivation (especially expectancy). Reflection and discussion with peers and adult mentors were key elements.

- In New York City, young people with special needs and/or disabilities learned how to travel on the city's subways and buses, which helped them to attain a higher level of independence and take a step toward work readiness.

Attribution: Believing that success or failure is due in large part to one's own efforts.

People view the reasons for their successes or failures differently, which affects their confidence and motivation to persist at a task. Research suggests that young people's perceptions of their own effectiveness often determine the effort they will exert and their persistence in the face of difficulty.[14] Low achievers are more likely to attribute failures to low personal ability and successes to low task difficulty.

A useful concept in considering attribution is Carol Dweck's identification of "mastery" and "helpless" coping styles:[15]

- Individuals with a "helpless" style often have histories of failure. Even experiencing success will not necessarily change their attribution: they may attribute successes to luck rather than to their own abilities. When they experience failure, they may reduce their effort and choose less challenging tasks, thus losing an opportunity to improve their problem-solving skills. They attribute failure to lack of ability or intelligence, often believing that intelligence is fixed and that they have no control over their ability to be successful. A "helpless" youth might say: "It doesn't matter what I do. Something will go wrong. I am inadequate and I am not in control."

- Individuals with a "mastery" orientation attribute accomplishments to their own efforts and abilities. They tend to be more confident about coping with challenges, learning from failure, and seeking better ways to approach problems. Youth with "mastery" styles tend to attribute successes to factors such as effort or the knowledge needed to solve the problem. They attribute failure to the difficulty of the task or to insufficient effort. A "mastery" oriented youth might ask: "What could I have done differently?"

An important part of enhancing motivation for youth who have histories marked by failure—especially academic failure—is helping them move from "helpless" to "mastery" styles and helping them change their view on the reasons for successes or failures. Appropriate learning goals coupled with opportunities to reflect on reasons for successes or failures can help.

Vulnerable young people may lack the skills needed to make progress and to enjoy learning, and this lack of skill will affect their attribution and their motivation. They need to hear that they can learn skills and acquire knowledge—in other words, "You aren't necessarily born smart; you get smart." At the same time, attention to basic skills such as "a capacity to focus attention on an activity, to define goals and means to attaining them, to seek feedback, and to balance challenges and skills" can help them stay engaged in a long-term learning process and feel more motivated.[16] Similarly, young people who learn to practice "self-regulation," develop a "sense of urgency," and strive to become "self-learners"[16] move toward a "mastery" style.

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[14] See, for example, Weiner, B. (1985). "An attributional theory of achievement motivation and emotion." Psychological Review, 92: 548-573.

[15] Role in motivation, personality and development. Philadelphia: The Psychology Press.

[16] Catherine Higgins (1992). Structure and Sequence: Motivational Aspects of Programmatic Structure in Employment and Training Interventions for Disadvantaged Youth, p. 146. Paper No. 3 in Dilemmas in Youth Employment Programming: Findings from the Youth Research and Technical Assistance Project, Vol. 1; Research and Evaluation Report Series 92-C, U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration. http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/FullText_Documents/1992_06_NEW.pdf

[16] Nakkula, Michael J. and Toshalis, Eric (April 2012). Students at the Center. Motivation, Engagement, and Student Voice. http://www.studentsatthecenter.org/papers/motivation

Bringing "attribution" to life: have young people reflect—in groups, in conversations with adults, through journals, or in other ways—on their beliefs about what leads to their successes or failures. If the adults working with them monitor each young person's sense of attribution they can make commensurate adjustments to summer work and learning strategies.

About Attribution—From the 2012 Smart Summer Programs. Smart Summer programs helped youth learn that effort is a key to success, become "self-learners," and understand that one learns and improves through effort and struggle.

- In Phoenix-Maricopa County, young people regularly and formally reflected on their work. They learned that becoming skilled and persistent problem solvers helped them improve performance and gain confidence. They saw the importance of their personal contributions as they and others progressed toward ambitious goals.

- The Los Angeles Employability Certification process (also mentioned under "Expectancy") has a culminating event in which young people must show that they can successfully complete job applications and job interviews. Those who pass receive a certificate; those who fail are told why, and can repeat the process until they succeed (i.e., personal effort is rewarded).

- Many young people in Hartford's summer program produce and present Capstone Projects, which gives them a chance to highlight their work and program accomplishments to people they care about, and to receive accolades for their efforts.

Unlocking Youth Motivation

Following are selected strategies, grounded in the prior discussion, to help young people unlock their personal motivation.

Build programs around task-based relationships with caring adults. Young people make strides in motivation, learning, and maturity when they work closely with a competent adult who expresses confidence in them and is genuinely interested in their progress. Youth development researchers have increasingly shown that non-parental adults—such as worksite supervisors, crew leaders, counselors, teachers, and coaches—can be key players in facilitating youths' progress toward meeting the expectations and challenges of the adult world.

Combining work and learning with strong adult leadership and guidance instills a greater sense of pride in accomplishment than a young person can attain on his or her own[17] and contributes significantly to motivation. Without a relationship with a caring adult, youth find it very difficult to learn and succeed.

The key to a productive relationship is mutual engagement of the youth and the adult over time as they work together to solve problems and achieve real results. Ideally, such a relationship develops naturally as an energetic, competent, interested adult works closely with a young person in joint pursuit of achievable and meaningful goals.

Hold youth to high, yet reasonable, expectations. Worksite supervisors and other adults in summer programs should strive to ensure that high expectations—the notion that all young people can learn—are a driving force in youth programs, and that:

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[17] From "The ABCs of Adolescence," one of a series of occasional papers by the Smokey House Project. For a discussion of early adolescents, see Peter C. Scales, A Portrait of Young Adolescents in the 1990s; Implications for Promoting Healthy Growth and Development (Carrboro, NC: Center for Early Adolescence, 1991) and Public/Private Ventures' "Adolescent Development," one in a series of research papers prepared as part of the Youth Research and Technical Assistance Project, a Brandeis-USDOL initiative.

- Outcomes are challenging but achievable.
- Youth have input into setting their work and learning goals.
- Youth are assisted to find resources to help them reach their goals.
- Activities are designed to help participants become independent young adults.

Select appropriate learning goals. During summer youth employment, programs focusing on effort and learning goals rather than on performance goals is key to helping young people tolerate the anxiety of new learning situations, to take risks and accept challenges, and to persist until they experience success. Research suggests that youth—especially those with "helpless" coping styles—often do not do well with performance goals.

Learning goals are designed to help young people learn something new. The emphasis is on the process, not on a demonstration of competence or comparison with others. Progressive learning approaches—project-based work and learning, work-based learning, cooperative learning, mastery learning, computer-assisted instruction, and alternative assessment systems such as portfolios—use learning goals extensively. In contrast, performance goals are competitive, often one-time opportunities to demonstrate knowledge or skill. Most traditional learning situations—usually in schools—emphasize single test demonstrations of mastery, grades, and rank to indicate success or failure.

Ensure Task Clarity, Appropriateness, and Value. Building on the motivational factors of incentive, expectancy, and attribution, worksite supervisors should help youth construct learning tasks that are:
- Specific and clear.
- Short-term.
- Sufficiently challenging.
- Interesting.
- Skills-rich.
- Meaningful.

Consistent strategies across worksites, classrooms, and counseling sessions will help youth develop strong links between individual efforts and outcomes and thus help them unlock motivation.

Make Alternative Task Strategies Explicit. Young people who have opportunities to experiment with different approaches to tackling problems can enhance their motivation. When supervisors, teachers, and other adults help youth think through the action steps to achieving goals, youth will come to recognize that everyone's approach to problem-solving is different, and they will expand their repertoire of strategies for solving problems, making decisions, and gaining skills. They will also see that their own life experiences—positive or negative—give them a resource from which to draw ideas for solving problems.

Help Youth Make Positive Attributions through Reflection. Young people should engage in regular reflection activities that help them consider their experiences, think about what they have learned, and get feedback designed to link their personal efforts with the outcomes. See *Guide on Reflection*. As youth recognize and celebrate their skills, abilities, responsibilities, and personal impacts—and see how they have changed and improved—they can set increasingly ambitious goals, reinforce their sense of competence, take on new challenges, and increase their expectations.

Help young people document their work with portfolios. Creating portfolios—records of their work, products, and reflections—can help youth link their outcomes and effort, build confidence in their ability to succeed, and learn from experience, leading to positive effects on motivation (especially in terms of expectancy and attribution). See *Guide on Portfolios.*

Recommended Resources Regarding Youth Motivation

If you are interested in delving more deeply into the concept of youth motivation, Brandeis recommends the following websites (as of October 2014):

- This website from Germany offers user-friendly motivation tips (especially for practitioners who work with groups of young people). It is a Christian organization's site; however, this piece has no religious overtones.

  Hirling, Hans (2000). Youthwork-Practice. Games, Ideas and More for Youth Work. Motivation and How to Motivate Others. http://www.youthwork-practice.com/youthworker-training/motivation.html

- This resource and link offer helpful writings about aspects of youth motivation and a video with Dr. Eric Toshalis of the Lewis & Clark College Graduate School of Education. Although focused on schools and students, many concepts apply to summer youth employment programs.

  Nakkula, Michael J. and Toshalis, Eric (April 2012). Students at the Center. Motivation, Engagement, and Student Voice. http://www.studentsatthecenter.org/papers/motivation

- This doctoral thesis looks at issues such as self-esteem, self-mastery, youth perceptions of performance goals and learning goals, ability versus effort, and perceived control for learning. A central tenet is that "the perceptions workers hold of their own efficacy will be a powerful element in their ability to perform."

  McCausland, Suzy G. Adolescent Motivation and Learning in a Summer Youth Employment Program. http://ir.library.oregonstate.edu/xmlui/discover

Developing Teamwork Skills

Helping Young People Develop Effective Teamwork Skills and Behaviors

Overview

The capacity to operate as a productive team member is increasingly important, as more and more workplaces have moved toward team-based and project-based approaches for organizing their work. Summer youth employment programs can play a major role in helping youth to develop effective teamwork skills, thus enhancing their employability.

Because young people operate in crews, groups, or teams at many summer youth employment worksites, summer programs present excellent opportunities to help them learn how to operate effectively in teams. Experienced summer supervisors recognize that some youth thrive in cooperative activities while others struggle. Addressing this situation is a challenge, because "teamwork" is a complex collection of actions and behaviors rather than just one skill or competency. Supervisors should consider *intentional* ways to help young people use and learn teamwork skills.

The following Practical Advice Guide is meant for worksite supervisors and staff as they develop processes that contribute to effective youth teamwork and therefore to youth employability.

Included:

- Teamwork: A Complex Collection of Actions and Behaviors
- Supportive Feedback Approaches to Teamwork

- Introducing Youth to Teamwork through Mini-Projects
- Recommended Resources Regarding Teamwork
- Exhibit A: Effective Teamwork Benchmarks

Teamwork: A Complex Collection of Actions and Behaviors

"Teamwork" is a complex collection of actions and behaviors rather than just one skill or competency. The following definitions of teamwork may be useful in introducing the topic:

"Work done by several associates with each doing a part but all subordinating personal prominence to the efficiency of the whole."
—Merriam-Webster Dictionary

"Cooperative effort by members of a group or team to achieve a common goal."
—American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition.

"The process of working collaboratively with a group of people in order to achieve a goal."
—www.businessdictionary.com

"Simply stated, it is less me and more we."
—Author unknown

"Teamwork is often a crucial part of a business, as it is often necessary for colleagues to work well together, trying their best in any circumstance. Teamwork means that people will try to cooperate, using their individual skills and providing constructive feedback, despite any personal conflict between individuals."
—www.businessdictionary.com

Exhibit A presents one way to characterize the components of effective teamwork: positive communication, engagement and inclusivity, creativity and constructive debate, effective action planning, team productivity, and team leadership. The chart lists observable actions and behaviors that facilitate the development of each component, and thus may be a useful way to break down the complexity of effective teamwork and convey specific goals to youth. Supervisors and staff might consider it as a basis for benchmarking teamwork skills. Such benchmarks could also be implemented as a system for team and individual feedback and evaluation (see next section, "Supportive Feedback Approaches"). To that end, the chart includes a simple rating scale.

Exhibit A: Effective Teamwork Benchmarks

Teamwork Component	Related Team Member Actions and Behaviors	Competence level (High, Medium, Low)
EFFECTIVE ACTION PLANNING	Reach agreement on team objectives.	
	Reach agreement on tasks needed to achieve objectives.	
	Allocate tasks & workload through a logical plan.	
	Develop frameworks for making decisions & resolving conflicts. Agree on decision-making processes (consensus, majority vote, etc.).	
TEAM PRODUCTIVITY	Define rules of operation & behavior for the team and for individuals.	
	Identify processes for enforcing rules of operation & behavior.	
	Determine clear roles, tasks, & responsibilities for each team member.	
	Emphasize equitable task distribution.	
	Carry out assigned roles/tasks. Enter team meetings with work done & information to contribute.	
	Hold each other accountable: no division of "doers" & "slackers."	
	Define rules of operation & behavior for the team and for individuals.	
	Keep discussions on task.	
	Make productive statements about the team experience.	
	Demonstrate awareness of team operations & dynamics.	
	Delegate clear assignments when a plan of action is agreed upon.	
	Leave team meetings with clear next steps.	
	Complete tasks on time & at a predefined level of quality.	
	Recognize when tasks cannot be completed as planned; adjust accordingly.	
	Formally commit to creating & maintaining an environment of trust.	
	Successfully request help, resources, and knowledge from other members.	
ENGAGEMENT AND INCLUSIVITY	Ensure that everyone contributes thoughts, ideas, & feelings.	
	Ask introverts or quiet members for input (instead of ignoring them).	
	Encourage all members or subgroups to contribute equally to discussions, operations, or decisions.	
CREATIVITY AND CONSTRUCTIVE DEBATE	Encourage each other to generate ideas.	
	Use brainstorming processes.	
	Offer constructive criticism.	
	Engage in on-task debates without suppressing disagreement.	
	Resolve disagreements before taking group action.	
	Listen or make constructive comments, not "shut-down" remarks.	
	Examine reasons & judgments.	
TEAM LEADERSHIP	Share & rotate leadership roles.	
	Contribute & participate on the same level as leaders in meetings & tasks.	
	Share power equitably between members as the team operates.	
	Teach each other.	

Supportive Feedback Approaches to Teamwork

If young people are to learn a skill or behavior, they need regular feedback about the extent to which they are successfully applying the concepts. Supervisors play a key role here, as do the young people themselves. Following are suggestions for supportive approaches that can help supervisors provide feedback to assist youth as they move toward the benchmarks described in Exhibit A.

Operating with the Supervisor as Observer and Feedback Provider. A supervisor can observe how participants operate and interact as team members over time, noting strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. The supervisor can provide feedback to individual youth and/or to the group. The most useful type of feedback includes specific, concrete suggestions for improvement.

Exploiting "Teachable Moments." Supervisors should take advantage of moments of opportunity during team activities—in partnership with the young people—to explore and reflect on lessons from both positive and negative teamwork behaviors and how participants' behaviors affect their collective performance.

Drawing on Youth as Observers and Feedback Providers. Supervisors can coach young people to serve as observers and feedback providers. During meetings or group activities, supervisors can assign one or more youth to observe teamwork behaviors and other positive work actions and to provide valuable feedback. This also presents a good opportunity for participants to practice presenting findings in a constructive manner. A key is to ensure that youth observers know exactly what they should be looking for. Questions devised by the supervisor and the youth themselves can guide the observations and help the youth observers to structure their feedback. Exhibit A can serve as one resource for these questions. (The chart can also serve as a self-rating resource, so that youth can observe and assess their own behaviors and actions.)

Using Reflection Processes to Advance Teamwork. Reflection is a powerful tool for learning and is a useful approach to feedback. Young people can be asked to reflect regularly—in the group or individually—about how they are operating as a team and how they can improve. See *Guide on Reflection*.

Using Portfolios to Advance Teamwork. Youth portfolios can be used as a learning tool and a teamwork improvement device. Young people operating in teams should incorporate their own individual work as well as their team efforts and products into their portfolios. Furthermore, in their portfolio entries, youth should be able to describe their roles in the team efforts, what they learned from their group work, including teamwork concepts, what products resulted from their individual efforts, and how their products contributed to their team's efforts. See *Guide on Portfolios*.

Staff at several Smart Summer 2012 worksites helped young people learn about and practice teamwork. For example, mentors in Chicago helped young people plan the tasks they were undertaking in rejuvenating a garden and reflect on what they were learning at each step about teamwork and other skills. A supervisor in New York City set aside time each day to work with youth to plan the next day's steps on a team project, helping them take responsibility for particular aspects of the work and think about their role on the team.

Supervisors can use several strategies to empower youth to make progress in terms of teamwork, team achievement, and learning, and individual problem-solving skills, for example:

- Ensure that group goals, individual roles, and accountability guidelines are clear.

- Have team members define acceptable behaviors for the team and for individual team members up front.

- Establish a ground rule that each team member is expected to make a significant contribution toward the team's goals.

- Use the Socratic Method or similar approaches. If young people ask for a solution, turn their question back to them with a response such as, "That's a really good question! What do you think? How do you think it might be handled?"

- Acknowledge and reinforce youth efforts to handle challenges through their own creative thinking and problem-solving abilities. Keep letting them know that they are capable of handling such situations and doing more than they think they can.

- When a young person does not pull his/her weight on a team, talk privately and in a caring way to explore the reasons for the youth's lack of involvement. For example, the young person might be very shy and find it difficult to deal with more verbal, assertive, and/or dominating team members. After listening carefully, try to respond to the youth's situation in a practical way that inspires him or her to become a more active team member. Consider the following suggestions:

  –Identify a simple, achievable task the youth can tackle as a step toward more ambitious involvement on the team. Provide support, reinforcement, and even incentives.

  –Work with the youth to identify specific ways in which to use his/her existing skills, knowledge, abilities, and interests to make a valuable contribution to the team and the project, or to identify ways to enhance skills or knowledge so that s/he can contribute more.

  –Provide a mentor who can give the youth close and regular support.

Introducing Youth to Teamwork Through Mini-Projects

During young people's summer program orientations, or during the programs' early stages, worksite supervisors can give youth opportunities to learn and practice teamwork concepts through mini-projects—ideally connected to their upcoming day-to-day work—that require positive team actions and behaviors. Such mini-projects might take anywhere from a few hours to a few days to develop and complete.

Many summer participants will have had little experience working in teams or understanding teamwork concepts (other than what they perceive to be teamwork in sports). Young people may find the prospect of working in teams daunting. To help them transition into team-based work, it may be helpful for supervisors to provide more direction and structure up front, then gradually release control and responsibility to the young people. A beneficial first step is to provide young people with a set of relatively easy, structured tasks:

- Conduct a simple brainstorming activity among team members that focuses on a small, relatively easy task involved in launching one aspect of their upcoming summer work or project. This task should show youth that they are capable of operating on a team and in a project-based mode. Reflecting on brainstorming "rules" (e.g., a problem may have multiple solutions and even apparently eccentric ideas may have merit) will help youth with the immediate task and introduce them to problem-solving skills.

- Have young people identify teamwork ground rules (governing how they will work with and treat their teammates, and laying out expectations for the team and for individuals), and penalties for those who break the rules.

- As they proceed, have teams evaluate their teamwork, their individual participation, and their collective skills.

- Have individual youth identify their personal skills and talents and relate them to the work at hand.

- Incorporate regular reflection into the aforementioned activities, especially regarding effective teamwork practices.

Recommended Resources Regarding Teamwork

If you are interested in delving more deeply into the concept of teamwork, Brandeis recommends the following websites (as of October 2014):

- Simple, facilitated processes that introduce basic aspects of teamwork to youth in a workforce development setting:

  U.S. Department of Labor. "Skills to Pay the Bills: Mastering Soft Skills for Workplace Success." Skill #3: Teamwork. http://www.dol.gov/odep/topics/youth/softskills/Teamwork.pdf.

- Two helpful charts showing common teamwork problems, related social skills, and possible social roles:

  de A'Echavarria, Anne. Learning and Thinking Skills resource/Teaching Expertise: Teach, Lead & Succeed. "Developing pupils' social skills to improve teamwork: part 1." www.teachingexpertise.com. March 2009

- Methods and tips for helping a group learn teamwork skills, plus other valuable links:

  Centre for Teaching Excellence. University of Waterloo. CTE Teaching Tips. "Teamwork Skills: Being an Effective Group Member." http://cte.uwaterloo.ca. Ontario, Canada. (Use CTE's search function for "teamwork").

- A comprehensive toolkit with helpful background information, tools, processes, and tips. Designed for college students, but adaptable to adolescents in youth employment programs:

  Crebert, G., Patrick, C.-J., Cragnolini, V., Smith, C., Worsfold, K., & Webb, F. Teamwork Skills Toolkit 2nd Edition. http://www.griffith.edu.au. Griffith University. 2011 (Use Griffith search function for "Teamwork Skills Toolkit").

- An excellent website, designed for teachers in the education field of "Cooperative Learning," provides valuable concepts, tips, and links about helping youth learn teamwork concepts and skills that are transferable to youth employment program worksite supervisors:

  Science Education Resource Center (SERC). Carleton College. Starting Point: Teaching Entry Level GeoScience. http://serc.Carleton.edu/introgeo/cooperative/index.html.

Developing Youth Presentation Portfolios

Building Confidence and Employability

Overview

A summer youth employment initiative is not just about providing young people with a job; it's also about improving their future employability. To this end, a portfolio can be a very important product resulting from young people's summer experiences. Portfolios can help summer employers assess what youth have learned. Further, as a self-marketing tool, portfolios can enhance youth applications for jobs or educational or training programs. Portfolios have the added advantages of being portable (youth can readily show them to others) and dynamic (youth can add to portfolios over time).

This Practical Advice Guide is meant for youth practitioners and worksite supervisors who wish to incorporate portfolios into their summer youth employability programs.

Included:

- What is a Youth Portfolio?
- Helping Youth Develop Presentation Portfolios

What is a Youth Portfolio?

A youth portfolio collects and documents a young person's work, reflections, learning, and evaluation over time. Youth participants in a summer jobs program create portfolios to document skills, knowledge, job performance, and products that demonstrate progress and achievements. Youth often find that creating a portfolio is very meaningful. It may be the

first time they've been encouraged to focus on their work in such a positive, productive way. It may be a needed confidence-builder as they realize all that they have accomplished and learned. It may help them feel more professional.

The completed portfolio will aid them in a number of ways:
- Youth can use portfolios during job hunts and postsecondary education interviews.
- A portfolio can serve as a reflection tool providing youth with a source of performance improvement considerations, increased learning, pride, and motivation.
- Portfolios can be used for evaluation: portfolio assessment supplies direct evidence of how youth apply knowledge and skills, and can supplement or substitute for traditional assessments that measure knowledge and skills. It demonstrates, through real work situations, the thinking skills deemed critical by employers.

Types of Portfolios

Of the two main types of portfolios—presentation and developmental[18]—this document focuses on presentation portfolios, as they are more pertinent to summer jobs projects.

Presentation Portfolios. A presentation portfolio might contain the following items:
- Current resume
- Reports, drawings, blueprints, charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or other materials documenting the youth's accomplishments

- Copies of positive employer evaluations
- Letters of reference or accolades
- Thank you letters or emails
- News articles about the youth's work
- Other documentation of learning and/or a job well done
- Youths' comments and reflections about what they did and learned

Developmental Portfolios. Although not feasible during a summer program, a developmental portfolio supplements a presentation portfolio. It is a collection of "evidence" typically used in year-round programs to help educational advisors coordinate a youth's learning across programs and schools. Items in a developmental portfolio demonstrate progress, improvement, and learning over time, and might include rough and final drafts of products, early work compared with current work, written reflections, supervisor/teacher observations and checklists, and other representations of progress.

Assessing Presentation Portfolios

Summer programs might consider a simple three-level—Low, Medium, and High—portfolio quality rating system. The following is one approach.

Content Quality
- Low: inadequate materials
- Medium: appropriate but minimal and/or bland materials
- High: clear, engaging, and abundant materials

Organization & Presentation
- Low: disorganized, sloppy
- Medium: organized but lackluster presentation
- High: contents are well-organized, sections are defined, and design is creative

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[18] Portfolio labels vary. A presentation portfolio may also be called a showcase, selection, or product portfolio; a developmental portfolio may also be called a growth, evaluation, process, documentation, or all-inclusive portfolio.

Learning Goals
- **Low:** does not report what was learned
- **Medium:** few explanations of what was learned
- **High:** explains in detail what was learned

Connections between work and learning
- **Low:** makes a few connections between work and learning
- **Medium:** connects work experiences, school/academic subjects, and future employment and education
- **High:** analyzes connections and draws conclusions about the transferability of skills and knowledge

Helping Youth Develop Presentation Portfolios

A presentation portfolio may take many forms, including file folders, a sealed box, expanding files, and/or electronic files. It should contain examples of a youth's best work and include the youth's reflections as well as comments from fellow workers and supervisors. The portfolio should be organized so that it showcases the youth's skills and abilities and any observer can appreciate the value of the work. Following are tips and strategies for helping youth develop and be enthusiastic about presentation portfolios.

Orient youth and staff to portfolio development. To help worksite supervisors, other staff, and youth learn how to develop and use portfolios, provide samples of portfolios from previous summer programs. Youth also value receiving something in which they can keep track of materials, such as a box, folder, or flash drive.

Involve youth early in the portfolio process and ensure that they see the value of their portfolios. Young people are more likely to be excited about the value of portfolios if they start the process early and understand how portfolios can provide an advantage when they apply for jobs or educational programs, enabling them to reflect intelligently about their

experience and to present their best work professionally and proudly. A useful activity to help youth see what a powerful and informative tool a portfolio can be is to ask them to look at a few portfolios and determine which of the candidates they would hire for a hypothetical position.

Stress that youth own their portfolios. The young people decide what goes into them, although they may need advice about what to include. At the end of the summer, youth take their portfolios with them. If the program wishes to keep a copy, it must seek the youth's permission and handle duplication.

Integrate portfolios into participants' summer experiences. Ensure that worksite supervisors or instructors view portfolios as a meaningful complement to the summer experience or curriculum and use the portfolio to inform summer learning, monitor the acquisition of skills and knowledge, and encourage youth to take responsibility for their own learning. Creating the portfolio helps young people to recognize and articulate their accomplishments, the content they have learned, and the skills they have enhanced or developed. Portfolio development is especially effective in summer workshops that deal with resume development and other aspects of job hunting.[19]

Have a digital camera available to support portfolio development. Photos can provide important documentation for portfolios. Having a digital camera on hand will ensure frequent documentation and add potentially creative materials to the portfolio.

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[19] Various activities can help youth enjoy portfolio development even as they learn. For example, the Facilitator's Guide to the New York State Office of Children and Family Services Youth Portfolio suggests having the youth develop a resume for someone else—a cartoon or comic book character, a movie or TV show character, or a famous person—as practice for developing their own. See http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/owd/portfolio/Facilitator/FacilitatorGuide.pdf

Develop a portfolio content checklist. Including a checklist of suggested portfolio items can simplify portfolio development for staff and youth, and might help assure that each youth has something valuable in a portfolio by summer's end.

Include regular reflection as part of portfolio development. Portfolios can be a valuable part of discussions about work, learning, products, and experiences, helping adults and youth to review what they have been doing and learning together. When youth document and assess their progress through portfolios, they take more control of their learning.

Help youth learn to talk about their portfolios. Help youth to consider how the portfolio might contribute to future jobs or schooling. For portfolios to be an effective job hunting or educational advancement tool, youth must be able to verbally describe the portfolio contents, their roles in the activities documented in the portfolio, and their resulting learning.

Expand portfolios beyond summer experiences. Encourage youth to consider incorporating skills, knowledge, experiences, and products that demonstrate their abilities—from school, family, community, or extracurricular activities—into their portfolios. Adults should discuss with youth the best ways to include these additional items as portfolio content.

Celebrate portfolios at summer's end. At the completion of the program, include young people's portfolios as an integral part of any celebrations.

Recommended Resources Regarding Youth Portfolios

If you wish to learn more about portfolios and how to enhance young people's summer learning experiences using portfolios, please explore the websites listed below. All references are available as of October 2014.

Since few online resources focus specifically on the use of portfolios in summer youth employment programs, several of the suggested resources were written primarily for teachers. However, many of the concepts have immediate applicability and transferability to summer youth employment programs.

- New York State offers a detailed document about portfolios that is full of good information applicable to summer youth employment programs.

  New York State Office of Children & Family Services, "Facilitator's Guide to the NYSOCFS Youth Portfolio." http://www.ocfs.state.ny.us/main/owd/portfolio/Facilitator/FacilitatorGuide.pdf

- A superb document about authentic assessment, portfolios, and reflection by Jon Mueller, a North Central College psychology professor.

  Mueller, John. "Authentic Assessment Toolbox —Portfolios." http://jfmueller.faculty.noctrl.edu/toolbox/portfolios.htm

Case Management

A Primer on Case Management for Worksite Supervisors and Others Working with Youth [20]

Overview

A participant-centered, strengths-based, goal-oriented case management system is an effective way to help summer youth employment program staff maximize their limited time with youth participants. Case management provides a structure for identifying and achieving goals (and a way to determine whether they have been met), and a strategy to encourage positive youth-adult partnerships that help young people to "own" their employability development. It can help staff assess participants' needs for work readiness and personal development, assist them in maximizing opportunities and planning constructively, and design learning opportunities that foster growth.

The following Practical Advice Guide is intended to provide useful ideas for developing a case management system that helps youth become work ready, and helps staff and youth develop more productive relationships in summer youth employment programs. Even if it is not possible to develop a full case management system, the contents may help staff move toward more of a case management approach.

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[20] This Practical Advice Guide is adapted from a presentation by Anne Adams and Anne Berrigan in a 2012 Commonwealth Corporation Summer Youth Employment Seminar.

Included:

- A Systematic Approach to Working with Youth
- Using a Developmental Approach in Serving Youth
- Key Elements of Positive Youth-Staff Relationships
- Exhibit A: Blank Paper Planning Exercise
- Exhibit B: Dennis Saleebey's Five Types of Questions to Assess Strengths

A Systematic Approach to Working with Youth

A summer youth employment program should do more than just assist youth in their summer work assignment. It should also help "grow" the young people to the level of maturity required for long-term employability in an increasingly complex world of work. Ideally, summer youth employment programs serve the dual purpose of providing both an enriched employment experience and a youth development[21] experience. A systematic approach to service de-livery is recommended for any such goal-specific interventions which require individual growth and/or change.
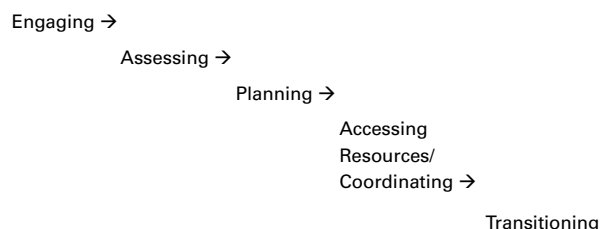
What are we up against?

As the 21st Century world of work becomes more complex, most people—youth in particular—need assistance in negotiating it successfully. We are likely to be working with young people who are neither developmentally ready nor adequately prepared (through home, school, and community) to meet the demands for focus and maturity in both the work-force and education systems. Youth are likely to be focused on the here and now and on their immedi-ate needs and desires. Additionally, summer youth employment participants may have experienced challenges that have delayed their efforts to become work ready. So, for example, they may be less con-

fident in being assertive or may not fully understand how to exhibit some of the 21st Century skills.

Moreover, the playing field is uneven: the well-doc-umented inequalities in our educational system lead to significant inequities in the workforce. Youth with the advantage of better education also often have better access to opportunities due to their personal affiliations (such as through families and friends), giving them even more of an edge as they mature. At its best, the workforce development system can help to minimize these inequities.

One way to provide the assistance needed is a case management system—a standardized process to achieve a primary goal (in this case, significant prog-ress towards long term employability). Developing such a system helps ensure that each young person receives the specific supports and opportunities needed so s/he can succeed, and enhances our abil-ity to develop, achieve, and document performance objectives. The goal is to make sure that all youth in the program have equal access to the supports and opportunities available.

We present here a framework for a systematic ser-vice delivery approach for a summer youth employ-ment program that will help to ensure that each youth has both an enriched employment experience and a youth development experience. The system is organized around five phases during which specified services are offered to the extent necessary for each individual:

Engaging →
      Assessing →
           Planning →
               Accessing
               Resources/
               Coordinating →
                    Transitioning

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[21] A major tenet of a youth development approach is to see yourself, and act as a facilitator—and not do anything for young people that they can do for themselves.

The phases define the work that should take place at a given time and help case managers balance service with accountability. Programs should determine general time frames for each phase; then case managers can use the time frames as benchmarks to help to routinely assess youth progress and inform their activity with a given youth. Case managers should push for youth ownership and leadership throughout the phases. In keeping with the partnership relationship, there are tasks and activities in which youth can and should be engaged, and which can be evaluated to determine progress.

- **Engaging.** Engaging is a critical stage in any program. It takes enthusiastic workers to stimulate enthusiasm in participants. It is important to engage young people at the very start and help them to see their summer assignment as not only a job, but also a career development opportunity, and a chance to move towards employment readiness.

- **Assessing.** Assessment is the foundation of a good case management system. Especially in a short-term program, it is important to determine up front exactly what we need to know to accomplish our goals, then keep our assessments focused on those factors. For instance, because we want to enhance long term employability, it is important to learn what the youth already know and think about work, and assess them accordingly in terms of work readiness expectations. What have they learned about being a wage earner—through their own or others' work, service learning, and similar experiences? Conducting this type of assessment in small groups can make it more enjoyable and allow youth to draw on others' experiences for their own growth and development. Collect this information in a way that focuses youth on their personal work readiness, and use a variety of methods and tools:

- Dialogue
- Structured questioning
- Observations
- Self-assessment checklists
- Structured worksheets
- Internet resources
- Formal, standardized tests and protocols

- **Planning.** It is important to get young people thinking about and planning for their futures. For many, this is a new concept; they have mostly been told by others what they should or should not do. Appeal to their emerging adulthood—their need to take charge of their lives. Guide young people through the planning process in a way that helps them own it. Developing a process that can be revisited reinforces personal commitment. Exhibit A offers information on a tool called Blank Paper Planning. This process can have a dynamic effect. Again, it works well with small groups where participants can be encouraged to think about their futures together. We suggest linking this planning process to portfolio development: teach young people that resumes may get them the job interview, but portfolios can help them get the job. Encourage them to think about work products and how they can document their work experiences or achievements (certificates, pictures, writing samples, individual assignments, etc.) Consider mock interviews where students present their portfolios to a group of their peers, who act as "employers." See *Guide on Portfolios.*

- **Accessing Resources/Coordinating.** It is important programmatically to put young people in charge of their lives, and have high expectations. Staff should offer guidance only when necessary, and focus on assuring youths' success in whatever they are attempting to do. For example, participants can plan events, trips, and parties, individually or in groups—typically they can do everything but write checks to cover the costs. When they are given the opportunities to engage

with vendors and other event planners, they acquire valuable skills that are not available through classroom learning. Additionally, they can chair meetings, develop lesson plans and, in many cases, deliver instruction, with staff ever-present for support and clarification. Leadership opportunities help them discover and/or develop personal strengths and self-awareness, and cultivate interests and aptitudes which might otherwise remain dormant in their lives.

- **Transitioning.** A significant benchmark of success with the summer youth employment effort is the young person's specificity about their next steps. Consider having them complete a transition tool as both a summarizing exercise and as a "hand off" to their next step (school, the next program phase, etc.). A number of options, such as developing a portfolio, can help to accomplish this. Also consider having the youth be the primary planners of a celebration to mark the end of the program. Have them determine what they want to highlight.

Using a Developmental Approach in Serving Youth

Case managers should be familiar with developmental phases and be able to determine the age and stage appropriateness of the young people's behaviors. It is helpful to see a problem in terms of developmental issues as opposed to personal deficits. Erik Erikson's "Eight Ages of Man" is a useful schematic that is complementary to world of work expectations. It is a good human behavior and personality development tool for understanding youth behavior and determining if it is age and stage appropriate. Too many of our participants have developed traits to the right side of each of the items in the chart, which makes them unready for the 21st Century world of work. To the extent that we can address this, we can help youth to move through the "ages" appropriately.

Erikson's Eight Ages of Man[22]

TRUST VS. MISTRUST
(Birth through one year)

AUTONOMY VS. DOUBT
(Ages two and three)

INITIATIVE VS. GUILT
(Ages four and five)

INDUSTRY VS. INFERIORITY
(Ages six through eleven)

IDENTITY VS. ROLE CONFUSION
(Ages twelve through eighteen)

INTIMACY VS. ISOLATION
(Late adolescence to early middle age)

GENERATIVITY VS. SELF-ABSORPTION
(Middle age)

INTEGRITY VS. DESPAIR
(Late years to death)

Key Elements of Positive Youth-Staff Relationships

Even though you may have too many young people in your summer caseload to develop close relationships with them, meaningful youth-staff relationships are the cornerstone of an effective case management system. These relationships are ideally youth-focused, strengths-based, and partnership-oriented.

- **Youth-focused:** Engage summer youth early on (in the first week of the program) in exploring their work interests. Placing them in a venue associated with their interests is one way to maintain their enthusiasm. Engage them in an activity to identify which aspects of their summer work assignment might serve as a foundation for exploring or

[22] David Elkin, "Erik Erikson's Eight Ages of Man," The New York Times Magazine, April 5, 1970.

working toward their future interests. (Push them on this assignment, because the answers might not be obvious.) Take the time to listen to the young people. Clearly distinguish each one in your mind as an individual with specific strengths, needs, and priorities, before you consider what assistance you might offer. Determine the young person's priorities and see how your programs and services can help him or her address those priorities—not how the priorities can be shaped to fit your programs and services.

- **Strengths-based:** A strengths-based approach is based on the assumption that each person has strengths and resources. Engage youth in identifying their strengths. A strengths-based approach assures that the case manager assesses what the youth are able to do and how they can build upon their strengths to develop higher levels of skill. It increases their hope of reaching their goals and enhances their sense of capacity. It helps the case manager to view them in terms of their potential as opposed to viewing them in terms of deficits. It also protects against imposing ceilings on their maximum development. (See Attachment B for guidance on asking questions to assess strengths.)

- **Partnership-oriented:** A partnership approach puts the philosophy of "teaching people to fish rather than giving them a fish" into action. It helps

youth improve their skills and build new ones while helping case managers to avoid fostering dependency and spending their limited time on unnecessary tasks. It also helps ensure that youth feel a sense of accomplishment at the end of the process, enhancing their motivation and self-image.

- Work on developing the partnerships BEFORE the youth get too far into the program: if they go through the program without personal investment and self-direction, they will be no further ahead in their personal functioning than they were at our first encounter. Meeting case management goals usually requires growth and change on the part of the participant, which in turn requires an individual's active involvement.

- Support the youth's access to services on his or her own, thereby reducing dependency on the case manager.

- Much of the work that is done for young people can be done by them: not doing for people what they can do for themselves is a time-saving/ time management process.

- Do not work harder on a person's life than he or she is working!

EXHIBIT A: Blank Paper Planning Exercise[23]

Before the Exercise Begins
- Conduct assessments (tests, inventories, observations, interviews, etc.) of the individual's strengths and challenges, including what individual changes are needed.
- Share assessments with the youth, with emphasis on identifying strengths and on self-defeating behaviors.

Blank Paper Planning Exercise: Invite young people who are ready to consider a long-term plan to participate in the planning process. This can be done individually, but we recommend a small group process that permits young people to interact with both an adult facilitator and other participants.

Materials and Setting: The ideal setting to maximize engagement is a comfortable room with flipcharts available to each youth. Table-top flipcharts adapt especially well. However, this exercise can be conducted in a classroom with 8x11 paper for each youth. Have many and varied colored markers available.
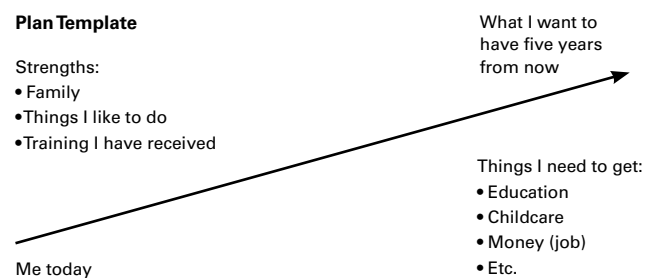
Process: Welcome the participants and invite them into the process. Explain that they are about to develop personal plans for achieving goals. Ask them to say how they feel about being here, what they are expecting, and whether they have questions or concerns before beginning.

As you give instructions, encourage participants to re-spond on paper in any way they want (words, pictures, stick-people, caricatures, etc.). Following each step, you might want to discuss your observations and/or have participants discuss their actions.

- **Step One:** At the bottom left corner of the blank paper, indicate how you are feeling about yourself, today.

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[23] This exercise was originally developed by Anne Adams for use in developing Individual Service Strategies (ISS), part of WIA youth programs. It allows service providers to satisfy the development of an ISS as a process that is more important than the form. Providers can back into the ISS form from this process while youth create a "living document" that they feel ownership for. It is presented here as an exercise for use in other youth case management programs.

- **Step Two:** At the top right corner, indicate your employment goal or what you want to have or achieve in three to five years. (It is not unusual for young people to be unsure of their employment goals but they usually have ideas about what they want to have or achieve.)
- **Step Three:** Draw an arrow between yourself, today, and where you want to be. Write along that line, "MY JOURNEY." (Discuss the meaning of a journey, e.g., it has a goal, it will have ups and downs as well as unexpected twists and turns, and some parts may be an adventure. At the end of the discussion ask if they will commit to taking this journey.)
- **Step Four:** At the top left corner, list all the things you have going for you right now. (This is an opportunity to determine how much of the pre-exercise discussion of strengths has been internalized. If they still find it difficult to identify strengths, be ready to assist them.)
- **Step Five:** At the bottom right, indicate what you need to reach the above goals. (The list usually centers on money, education, and support services, no matter how it is expressed.)

The following template might be useful to help them get started.

Plan Template

Strengths:
- Family
- Things I like to do
- Training I have received

What I want to have five years from now

Things I need to get:
- Education
- Childcare
- Money (job)
- Etc.

Me today

Overall, it is useful to aim for an employment goal, an educational goal, and the supports or services that are required to overcome barriers or challenges.

Preserve the completed personal plan as an important document (e.g., provide a folder or laminate it) so that youth can revisit it during their "journey."

Survival Questions
- How have you managed to survive (or thrive) thus far, given all the challenges you have had to contend with?
- How have you been able to rise to the challenges put before you?
- What was your mind-set as you faced these difficulties?
- What have you learned about yourself and your world during your struggles?
- Which of these difficulties have given you special strength, insight, or skill?
- What are the special qualities on which you can rely?

Support Questions
- What people have given you special understanding, support, and guidance?
- Who are the special people on whom you can depend?
- What is it that these people give you that is exceptional?
- How did you find them or how did they come to you?
- What did they respond to in you?
- What associations, organizations, or groups have been especially helpful to you in the past?

Exception Questions
- When things were going well in life, what was different?
- In the past, when you felt that your life was better, more interesting, or more stable, what about your world, your relationships, your thinking was special or different?

- What parts of your world and your being would you like to recapture, reinvent, or relive?
- What moments or incidents in your life have given you special understanding, resilience, and guidance?

Possibility Questions
- What now do you want out of life?
- What are your hopes, visions, and aspirations?
- How far along are you toward achieving these?
- What people or personal qualities are helping you move in these directions?
- What do you like to do?
- What are your special talents and abilities?
- What fantasies and dreams have given you special hope and guidance?
- How can I help you achieve your goals or recover those special abilities and times that you have had in the past?

Esteem Questions
- When people say good things about you, what are they likely to say?
- What is it about your life, yourself, and your accomplishments that give you real pride?
- How will you know when things are going well in your life—what will you be doing, who will you be with, how will you be feeling, thinking, and acting?
- What gives you genuine pleasure in life?
- When was it that you began to believe that you might achieve some of the things you wanted in life?
- What people, events, and ideas were involved?

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[24] New Partnership for Children and Families, University of Wisconsin-Green Bay. Family-Centered Case Assessment and Planning (CORE 104). Developed: September, 2004. From The Strengths Perspective in Social Work Practice (3rd Edition), Dennis Saleebey, University of Kansas. 2002, NY: Allyn & Bacon.

Brandeis University
The Center for Youth and Communities
Heller School for Social Policy and Management
415 South Street
 Waltham, MA 02453
www.cyc.brandeis.edu

ESTABLISHED IN 1983, the Center for Youth and Communities at The Heller School for Social Policy and Management, Brandeis University, works to improve the quality of education, workforce development, and community systems in order to prepare young people for college, work, and life. By combining scholarly research and practical experience with an emphasis on young people whose supports and opportunities have been few, the Center's work is guided by three goals:

- **Using science-based research** to improve the quality and impact of youth programs and policies.

- **Strengthening governance, leadership and management** in philanthropy, the non-profit sector, education, socially responsible business, and communities.

- **Developing and using outcome-based planning** and evaluation methods to deepen public understanding, strengthen and prove the efficacy of particular programs, and shape policies.