

Staff Instructional Practices, Youth Engagement, and Belonging  
in Out-of-school Time Programs

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### Abstract

This study explores staff instructional practices in OST program activities, a topic related to effective teaching practices in schools, but distinct in important ways. The study involves analysis of a sample of 1176 youth nested in 147 program offerings and three additional replication samples. Instructional practices considered include welcoming atmosphere, active skill-building, and opportunities for youth to make plans, make choices, and reflect on their learning. Results reveal significant positive relationships between a composite score of observed staff practices and youth survey reports of engagement across the four samples. Further analyses show that the provision of active skill-building predicts engagement (and not belonging); while welcoming atmosphere predicts belonging (and not engagement), and some age-instruction interactions are found.

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Recent studies have produced promising evidence that youth participation in out-of-school time (OST) settings may lead to positive outcomes including academic achievement, reduced risk behaviors, civic engagement, and improved psychological functioning (Denault & Poulin, 2009; Fredericks & Eccles, 2006; Peck, Roeser, Zarrett, & Eccles, 2008) and that higher quality programs produce better outcomes for youth participants (Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010). We argue that for OST programs to provide educational and developmental benefits for youth, two basic phenomena must occur: Instructional practices must be of a certain quality to facilitate content delivery and promote positive interaction with people, materials, and ideas; and youth must engage with that content. In addition, feelings of belongingness are likely important for youth's continued attendance and engagement. In this study we set out to explore staff instructional practices that increase the likelihood that youth experience engagement and belonging within program offerings in OST.

Youth experience OST activities as dynamic person-environment transactions. Specifically, we define 'program offerings' as the microsystems in which youth engage with staff, activities, and resources (Smith & Akiva, 2008). Program offerings are the microsystems in which youth experience factors such as the eight optimal features promoted by the National Research Council (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). We define instructional quality in terms of a staff member's influence on the learning environment of a program offering; this includes staff-youth interactions, youth peer interactions, material supports, and the activities staff set up for and with youth (cf. 'point-of-service quality' in Smith and Akiva, 2005). Studies that directly examine the relationship between OST setting features and outcomes are rare (Mahoney, Larson, Eccles, &

Lord, 2005); however, theory and research suggests that staff-youth interactions are critical in learning and development (Morganett, 1991; Pianta & Hamre, 2009; Siegler & Alibali, 2005; Vygotsky, 1962; Wentzel & Wigfield, 1998).

Specifically, this study addresses five elements of instructional quality. First, welcoming atmosphere has been linked to positive behavioral outcomes (Wentzel, 1997) and to cognitive and academic outcomes (Brophy, 2006; Goodenow, 1993; Ryan & Patrick, 2001). Second, active skill-building approaches that provide opportunities for children to engage with materials and ideas have been linked with both child motivation and increased transfer of knowledge (Bransford, Brown, & Cocking, 1999). The final three elements are staff practices that involve youth in planning, making choices about, and reflecting to learn from their activities. Planning is often referred to in definitions of executive function (Meltzer, 2007), and is included with reflection (or evaluation) in most definitions of self-regulated learning (Zimmerman, 2002). Choice has been linked with motivational and other positive outcomes (Denton, 2005; Iyengar & Lepper, 1999). These five elements are representative of a youth development pedagogy developed by the HighScope Foundation over a period of three decades (Ilfeld, 1996; Smith, 2005).

We conceptualize youth engagement as a phenomenological, psychological state, involving interest, enjoyment, and challenge, comparable to “engagement with challenge” proposed by Hansen & Larson (2010). Belongingness is simply the idea that people want to feel like they fit in and matter in a group.<sup>1</sup>

While linear, mean-level analysis of the effects of generic instructional quality is attractive for its simplicity and practical application, we acknowledge the limitations of this

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<sup>1</sup> Several terms are used in the literature including belongingness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Ford & Smith, 2007), sense of belonging (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Maslow, 1943), and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

approach. The process-product studies of the 1970s, which sought to link observations of teacher practices with academic achievement, did not revolutionize teaching as optimistic early reports predicted (Rosenshine & Furst, 1973). These studies highlighted how the complex practice of teaching cannot be simplified down to a few prescriptions (Brophy & Good, 1986)—pedagogical content knowledge is important, as are individual student needs. In addition, some argue that learning environments are integrated; that is, teaching practices are not necessarily orthogonal to each other (Blumenfeld, Marx, & Harris, 2006).

Nevertheless, studies consistently confirm the common sense notion that teachers and teaching practices make a difference (Brophy, 2006; Decker, Mayer, & Glazerman, 2004). The idea of ‘best practices’—behaviors instructional staff do that are generally better in most situations—has some resonance in education (Pianta & Hamre, 2009). While research on practices in OST is just beginning, staff practices that support youth engagement and belonging may be even more important in OST than school. The very factors that make OST program offerings different from school classrooms—flexibility of content, voluntary youth attendance, and non-certification of staff—may make basic relationships and supports all the more critical to examine in this context.

### **Hypotheses and research questions**

The present study will address the following hypotheses:

1. Overall instructional practice (total score) should predict engagement and belonging.
2. Active Skill-building, planning, & reflection should predict engagement.
3. Staff warmth and choice should predict belonging.

The first two hypotheses will be addressed across four samples, and the third in a single, main sample. Additionally, in exploratory analysis with the main sample we will explore the effects of age and content on the instructional practice to youth outcomes relationships.

### **Methods**

This study uses one main sample and three replication samples to examine the associations between observed instructional practices and youth engagement in OST programs. All data sets include scored observations of program offerings and survey responses from the youth participating in those program offerings. The three replication samples were selected for their inclusion of the same variables as the main sample and the same nested structure of youth within program offerings.

### **Samples**

The main sample comes from Wave 3 of the Youth Program Quality Intervention, a randomized field trial conducted by the Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality (Smith et al., in preparation). Observational assessment data were collected from 78 youth programs (147 offerings) across Florida (19 programs), Michigan (18), Minnesota (32), and New York (9). These programs included a mixture of community-based and school-based programs, funded by a number of different sources (fee-based, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Community Learning Centers, Department of Health and Human Service, etc.). Program offerings included academics (21%), enrichment (17%), arts & crafts (24%), social emotional learning (18%), free choice (10%), and organized sports (8%). A total of 1176 youth surveys were administered during these program offerings, with an average of 17.6 per offering (ranging from three to 36, standard deviation [SD]

=8.2). Youth demographic information was as follows: average age was 11.8 (SD=2.4); 54% female; 56% reported that a parent or other adult required them to attend; 41% reported that their parents had college degrees (19% missing).

The first replication sample comes from Wave 1 of the Youth Program Quality Intervention (replication-1) and includes 800 youth nested in 87 program offerings. Wave 1 occurred 16 months before Wave 3 and includes different program offerings and different youth from Wave 3. Youth demographic information was as follows: Average age was 11.21; 55% female; 48% required to attend; 48% parents had college degrees (19% missing).<sup>2</sup> The second replication sample is from a quality improvement initiative in a Southern state (replication-2) and includes 592 youth nested within 48 program offerings (from 31 programs). Youth demographic information was as follows: Average age was 11.36 years; 49% female; 69% required to attend; 31% reported that their parents had a college degree (42% missing).<sup>3</sup> The third replication sample is from a quality improvement initiative in a Midwest state (replication-3) and includes 124 youth nested within 21 program offerings. Youth demographic information was as follows: Average age was 12.92 years; 53% female; 43% required to attend, and 43% reported that their parents had college degrees (15% missing).

## Measures

Instructional quality. This was assessed using the Youth Program Quality Assessment (PQA), an observation-based instrument (Smith & Hohmann, 2005). Completion of the instrument requires observation for a program offering at an OST program, usually 1-2 hours.

The data collector generates a running record of events that occur during the offering, then after

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<sup>2</sup> For additional sample information on YPQI Wave 1 and Wave 3 see Smith et al., in preparation

<sup>3</sup> (For sample and other information, see Smith, Akiva, Blazeovski, Pelle, & Devaney, 2008; Spielberger & Lockaby, 2008).

the observation period is complete, uses the written record to score items on a 3-point scale (See Figure 1 for a sample item rubric). Data collectors, across all four samples, achieved 80% perfect agreement to video gold standard scores at the item level (Smith et al., in preparation).

The *Total Score* represents the theoretical hierarchy suggested by the developers of the Youth PQA (Smith & Hohmann, 2005). Items on the Youth PQA are averaged together to construct 13 scales, which are then averaged to produce three domain scores, and the Total Score is an average of the three domain scores. See Figure 2 for a list of domains, items, and scales.

The five instructional scales examined are a subset of scales (different from the scales within the Total Score) from a confirmatory factor analysis of the Youth PQA (Smith, Peck, Denault, Blazevski, & Akiva, 2010). Table 1 shows internal consistency for these scales across the four datasets, and Table 2 lists correlations between these scales and youth outcome variables in the main sample. Active skill building is highly, significantly correlated with planning (.48) and correlated significantly, but at lower levels, with all other instructional practice scales. These bivariate relationships are comparable across data sets, with the exception of the PBC data set in which active skill building is not as highly correlated with planning (.18).

Youth outcomes. Both outcome measures are from a survey administered to youth who were in the same program offerings in which Youth PQA observations were collected. Engagement (with challenge) is the mean of eight items about interest and challenge, and belonging is made up of two items (see Table 1 for individual items and scale information). Both engagement and belonging are z-scores, centered on zero and constrained to have a standard deviation of one. The two scales show a bivariate correlation of .70 (see table 2).

Covariates: Several covariates were used in analyses including gender (dichotomous with zero representing female and one representing male), attendance frequency (four-point



scale), and voluntariness (dichotomous with one as yes: “Do your parents or teacher require you to attend this youth program?”) Average age of youth at each offering was computed as a mean from youth reports on their age in years. Content was coded based on titles and descriptions of program offerings, from observers and from staff surveys.

### **Data Analytic Strategy**

Our first step is to look at the average engagement and belonging across content areas. Then we move to hierarchical linear modeling with fully unconditional models. We then build covariate models, first by creating level-1 models, then adding the level-2 covariates. We then construct the *Total Score Model*, which, as a composite of numerous instructional practice scores arranged in a theoretically driven hierarchy, represents a holistic measure of quality. Next we create the *Main Effects Model* to assess the individual contributions of particular practices to predictions of youth engagement and belonging. While including multiple instructional practice scales in single regression models introduces theoretical and methodological limitations (described more fully in the discussion), this allows us to see the unique contribution of each scale. Engagement models are then repeated with replication samples. Finally, we conduct exploratory analyses in the main sample, examining instruction interactions with age and content.

## **Results**

### **Main Analyses**

Fully unconditional (FUM) and covariate models. The FUM for the main sample yielded a reliability of .78 for youth engagement as dependent variable, and an Intra-Class Correlation

(ICC) of 0.33, indicating that 33% of the variance in youth engagement occurs between program offerings. The FUM for belonging yielded reliability of .55 and ICC of .14. Due to missing data, our sample for both engagement and belonging models (and for all analyses below) is reduced to 1146 youth nested in 122 program offerings. Initial level-1 models included the covariates of age, gender, attendance duration, attendance frequency, and voluntariness. Gender and attendance frequency were significant predictors of engagement and belonging, so these covariates were included in level-2 models. While age was not predictive at level-1 in some models, average age at level-2 was consistently predictive of both engagement and belonging, and this variable was included in all subsequent analyses. While voluntariness was not significant in any model, it was included for theoretical reasons. Exploratory analyses (described below) suggested the inclusion of two content variables at level-2: academic and enrichment.

Engagement models. Table 4 presents the series of models run with the main sample, with engagement as the outcome variable. Intercept reliability in the total score and main effects models remained high, at .75 and .74 respectively. Older youth and females tend to indicate higher engagement than younger youth and males, and higher attendance frequency relates to higher engagement. Voluntariness shows no relationship with engagement. Total score significantly predicts engagement with a coefficient of .18, and skill-building predicts engagement in the main effects model with a coefficient of .20. Both coefficients indicate that a one point increase in the predictor is associated with about a fifth of a standard deviation increase in engagement.

Belonging models. Table 5 presents the main sample models with belonging as the outcome variable. Intercept reliability for belonging is lower than with engagement, but is acceptable, at .52 or .53 in the full models. Covariate patterns are the same as with engagement,

with older youth, females, and frequent attendees reporting higher belonging. Again, voluntariness has no effect on the outcome. Total score does not significantly predict belonging, but welcoming atmosphere does.

Replication models. Table 6 shows the total score and main effects models for engagement across four datasets. The effects of gender and age are less pronounced across the replication samples. Attendance frequency correlates with higher engagement in all but replication-3. Total score significantly predicts engagement across all four samples. Active skill-building is a strong predictor across three of the four samples (all except replication-2). Planning and reflection do not demonstrate effects in any model. Choice is positively correlated with belonging in one of the samples (replication-2)

### **Exploratory Analyses Using Main Sample**

Does content matter? Table 3 provides a summary of content codes in the sample and the average engagement and belonging for youth in each type of programs. In order to assess the effects of content, we ran HLM models with single level-2 predictors of interest, in turn testing each content type. Academics was significantly negatively correlated with both engagement and belonging. Enrichment was positively correlated in the belonging model and approached significance in the engagement model. Free choice was negatively correlated with engagement. Sample size limitations prevent further exploration of how content might matter.<sup>4</sup>

Does age matter? When age of youth is included in HLM models both at level-1 and average age at level-2, average age has a significant positive effect in every model, and individual age is significant in only a few models. However, we were interested in exploring the

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<sup>4</sup> We did test interactions, using the two content codes of academic and enrichment: we created interaction variables for total score and each of the practices (e.g., welcoming\*academic), but these analyses yielded no notable results.

impact of age on instructional effects. For example, is youth planning more effective with younger versus older youth? We conducted two sets of analyses to explore this avenue. First, we used a subset of the main sample, including only those programs in which the average age was 11 or older. This reduced the sample to 76 offerings with 664 youth respondents. Average age was not included in these models for reasons of sample size, but otherwise we ran the same HLM models listed in Tables 4 and 5. Results followed the same patterns as the main models presented above, with two notable exceptions. In the engagement model, welcoming atmosphere was a significant predictor ( $\beta=.26$ ,  $p=.05$ ) along with skill-building ( $\beta=.20$ ,  $p=.04$ ) and in the belonging model planning was significant ( $\beta =.10$ ,  $p=.06$ ) and welcoming was only nearly significant ( $\beta =.17$ ,  $p=.13$ ). Second, we ran a series of HLM models with the full sample to test interactions of age and each of the instructional practices. These models yielded only one notable finding: a significant interaction of planning and age on the outcome of belonging. In a model with planning and average age (and all the covariates used in the replication analyses), planning was not a significant predictor ( $\beta =.01$ ;  $p=.77$ ) and mean age was ( $\beta =.05$ ;  $p=.01$ ). However when the interaction term was added to this model, age was no longer significant ( $\beta=-.02$ ,  $p=.58$ ), but the interaction term was ( $\beta =.02$ ,  $p=.003$ ). This, along with the findings from the subsample described above suggest that planning and age interact, though sample size prevents further exploration.<sup>5</sup>

## Discussion

We found support for several elements of our hypotheses: Overall instructional quality appears to be significantly related to youth reports of engagement but not belonging. In the main

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<sup>5</sup> Another way to examine this is to let the age-belonging slope vary randomly in the HLM model and then use planning to predict this slope. However, when we ran such models, intercept and slope reliability estimates dropped below .1.

effects model, Active skill building predicts engagement but opportunities for planning and reflection, on average, do not. There is also evidence—in one of four samples—that choice may have a small positive effect on engagement. Welcoming atmosphere predicts belonging, but choice does not. Both content and age appear to have significant impacts on relationships between staff instructional practices and proximal youth outcomes.

In addition, while not our primary focus, the inclusion of covariates produced several findings. Gender and average age are consistently associated with both youth engagement and belonging such that females and older youth tend to report higher engagement. This may indicate higher engagement or may reflect age-related biases in how youth answer these survey questions. Attendance frequency is also important—the more youth attend the more they feel engaged. Surprisingly, we found no relationships between youth reporting they were required to attend by a parent or teacher and their engagement. As this was a single survey item, the results may reflect measurement error, but this finding was consistent across all datasets.

As these analyses are non-experimental, we cannot determine the causal direction of these correlations. While our hypotheses that higher instructional quality leads to better youth engagement and belonging is potentially true, a counter-hypothesis, that youth more prone to higher engagement self-select high instructional quality offerings is also possible. In reality, a combination of these two causal paths may be occurring. That is, in the dynamic transactions of youth program offerings, it is the interplay of youth and instructional practice that define the microsystem and determine outcomes. For example a youth who tends to be highly engaged may contribute her positive attitude to a program offerings, which makes it more likely for staff to engage in high quality practices, and raises overall engagement of the group.

While the main sample provides a large, rich dataset for the explorations contained in this paper, more fully exploring interactions—particularly with instruction in content areas—would require even greater sample sizes. Additionally, while the main effects models here provide an easy-to-understand method for examining the unique contributions of particular practices, instructional practices don't happen in isolation from each other. The main effects models show the unique variance that each scale explains, when it may be that practices such as skill-building and reflection work together to promote motivation and learning. Future studies may examine practices and collections of practices in additional ways to further explore the relationships of instructional practices and the proximal experiences of youth.

Table 1

*Items, Scales, and Internal Consistency across Four Samples*

Measure	Scale internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha)			
	Main	R-1	R-2	R-3
Program offering (level-2)				
Welcoming (2 items)	.646	.731	.877	.896
Staff use a warm tone of voice and respectful language				
Staff smile, use friendly gestures, and make eye contact				
Skill Building (5 items)	.714	.732	.576	.767
Activities balance concrete experiences with abstract concepts				
Youth receive support from staff despite imperfect results, errors, or failure				
Staff provide intentional opportunities for development of specific skills				
Staff are actively involved with youth				
Staff make frequent use of open-ended questions				
Choices (2 items)	.565	.678	.637	.661
Youth have opportunities to make content choices				
Youth have opportunities to make process choice				
Planning (2 items)	.915	.865	.793	.828
Youth have opportunities to make plans for projects and activities				
Youth use multiple planning strategies				
Reflect (2 items)	.896	.852	.638	.888
Youth reflect on what they are doing or have done				
Youth reflect in multiple ways				
Youth (level-1)				
Engagement (with challenge)	.816	.863	.792	.876
I was interested in what we did				
The activities were important to me				
I wished I was doing something else (Reversed)				
I tried to do things I have never done before				
I was challenged in a good way				
I really had to concentrate to complete the activities				
I was using my skills				
The activities were too easy (Reversed)				
Belonging	.741	.848	.886	.853
I feel like I belong at this program.				
I feel like I matter at this program.				

Table 2

*Correlations between Youth PQA Scales in Main Sample (n=123)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Welcoming atmosphere	—					
2. Active skill building	.37**	—				
3. Planning opportunities	.07	.48**	—			
4. Choice opportunities	.10	.20*	.39**	—		
5. Reflection opportunities	-.02	.34**	.28**	.09	—	
6. Average engagement	.10	.34**	.27**	.05	.05	—
7. Average belongingness	.16+	.09	.15+	-.03	-.09	.70**

+ p &lt; .10; \* p &lt; .05; \*\* p &lt; .01; \*\*\* p &lt; .001



Table 3

*Content of Program Offerings*

Content Area	#/%	Average Engagement	Average Belonging
Academics Homework, tutoring, academic remediation like test prep, and academic content like math, language arts, science.	26 (21%)	-.23**	-.17*
Enrichment Content you wouldn't typically find in school academic setting such as cooking, games with purpose, program newsletters, technology, health, & nutrition.	21 (17%)	.23	.31**
Arts & crafts Visual arts, crafts, sculpture, music, drama, dance, creative writing.	30 (24%)	.24+	.09
Social Emotional Learning (SEL) SEL-focused, character education, leadership, pregnancy prevention, conflict resolution, multicultural understanding, service learning.	22 (18%)	.25	.03
Free choice Indoor or outdoor free choice, open computer, drop-in, leisure games like tag.	12 (10%)	-.18	.18
Sports Team sports like baseball & soccer, lighter sports like ping-pong.	10 (8%)	-.14	-.13
Missing Couldn't be determined from data sources.	3 (2%)	.06	-.50

Notes: Engagement and belonging variables are standardized. Significance tests use independent *t*-tests to compare engagement or belonging in offerings with a content area versus all other offerings.

Table 4

*Engagement Models*

Fixed Effect	FUM	Covariate	Total Score	Main Effects
Intercept, $\gamma_{00}$	.05	.14+	.15+	.16+
Gender (level-1)		-.27***	-.27***	-.26***
Attendance frequency (level-1)		.05**	.05*	.05*
Voluntariness (level-1)		.09	.09	.10
Average Age (level-2)		.13***	.12***	.11***
Academics (level-2)		-.21	-.20	-.22
Enrichment (level-2)		.13	.08	.02
Total Score (level-2)			.18*	
Welcoming atmosphere				.02
Active skill building				.20*
Planning opportunities				-.01
Choice opportunities				.05
Reflection opportunities				-.04
Variance explained at level-1	0%	4%	4%	4%
Variance explained at level-2	0%	15%	18%	21%
Chi-square	666***	579***	549***	515***

+  $p < .10$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Table 5

*Belonging Models*

Fixed Effect	FUM	Covariate	Total Score	Main Effects
Intercept, $\gamma_{00}$	.02	.14+	.14+	.15*
Gender (level-1)		-.28***	-.29***	-.28***
Attendance frequency (level-1)		.10***	.10***	.10***
Voluntariness (level-1)		.01	.01	.00
Average Age (level-2)		.05**	.06*	.05*
Academics (level-2)		-.12	-.12	-.12
Enrichment (level-2)		.25*	.26*	.25*
Total Score (level-2)			-.02	
Welcoming atmosphere				.18**
Active skill building				-.02
Planning opportunities				.04
Choice opportunities				-.03
Reflection opportunities				-.04
Variance explained at level-1	0%	4%	4%	4%
Variance explained at level-2	0%	21%	19%	23%
Chi-square	297***	246***	246***	232***

+  $p < .10$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Table 6

*Replication of Total Score and Main Effects Engagement Models Across Four Samples*

	Main Sample		Replication-1		Replication-2		Replication-3	
	Total Score	Main Effects	Total Score	Main Effects	Total Score	Main Effects	Total Score	Main Effects
Fixed Effect								
Intercept, $\gamma_{00}$	.12+	.12+	.14	.15	2.92***	2.92***	3.11***	3.13***
Gender (level-1)	-.27***	-.26***	-.12+	-.12+	.02	.02	-.04	-.04
Attendance freq. (level-1)	.05*	.05*	.06+	.06+	.08***	.09***	-.05	-.07
Voluntariness (level-1)	.09	.10	-.06	-.06	.02	.02	-.07	-.09
Average Age (level-2)	.13***	.12***	.09***	.09***	.06*	.06*	.01	.00
Total Score (level-2)	.20**		.20*		.14*		.20+	
Welcoming atmosphere		.02		-.05		.08		-.08
Active skill building		.21*		.19+		.04		.20
Planning opp.		.04		-.01		-.01		-.05
Choice opp.		.00		-.01		.07*		-.05
Reflection opp.		-.04		.07		-.04		.02

+  $p < .10$ ; \*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$

Figure 1

*Youth PQA Sample Item*

<b>IV. Engagement</b> <b>IV-Q. Youth have opportunities to make choices based on their interests.</b> <small>Note: (a) <b>Discrete</b> refers to a finite list of specific alternatives. (b) <b>Open-ended</b> indicates nondiscrete, open possibilities within some boundaries. (c) <b>All youth</b> refers to situations where all youth make individual choices or situations where all youth participate in group decision making.</small>		
Indicators	Supporting Evidence/Anecdotes	
<p><i>If you do not observe an indicator, ask the corresponding follow-up questions.</i></p> <p><b>1</b> The activities do not provide opportunities for all youth to make content choices.</p> <p><b>3</b> All youth have opportunities to choose among content alternatives, but choices are limited to discrete choices presented by the leader.</p> <p><b>5</b> All youth have the opportunity to make at least one open-ended content choice within the content framework of the activities (e.g., youth decide topics within a given subject area, subtopics, or aspects of a given topic).</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>In prior sessions, did youth make choices about <i>what</i> content was covered in today's program offering?                      n/o = 1</p>

Figure 2

*Youth PQA Domains and Scales (total score)*

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**II. Supportive Environment**

- IIF. Staff provide a welcoming atmosphere (3 items)
- IIG. Session flow is planned, presented, and paced for youth (5 items)
- IIH. Activities support active engagement (4 items)
- IiI. Staff support youth in building new skills (2 items)
- IIJ. Staff support youth with encouragement (3 items)
- IIK. Staff use youth-centered approaches to reframe conflict (4 items)

**III. Interaction**

- IIIL. Youth have opportunities to develop a sense of belonging (4 items)
- IIIM. Youth have opportunities to participate in small groups (3 items)
- IIIN. Youth have opportunities to act as group facilitators and mentors (3 items)
- IIIO. Youth have opportunities to partner with adults (2 items)

**IV. Engagement**

- IVP. Youth have opportunities to set goals and make plans (2 items)
  - IVQ. Youth have opportunities to make choices based on their interests (2 items)
  - IVR. Youth have opportunities to reflect (4 items)
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