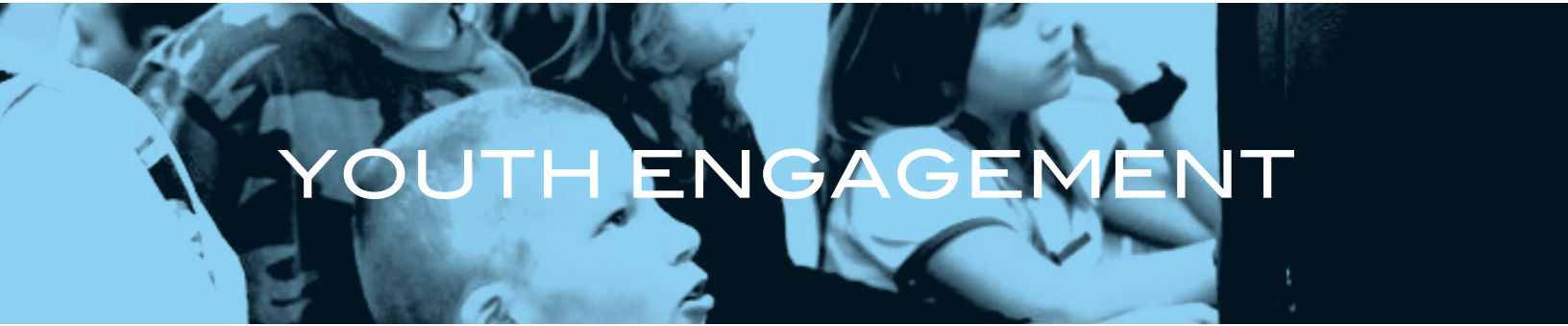




DAVID P. WEIKART
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planning & reflection

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT





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PROGRAM QUALITY

The David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality,

a division of the Forum for Youth Investment, is dedicated to empowering education and human service leaders to adapt, implement, and scale best-in-class, research-validated quality improvement systems to advance child and youth development. The Weikart Center encourages managers to prioritize program quality. We offer training, technical assistance, and research services that all come together in the Youth Program Quality Intervention, a comprehensive system for improving the quality of youth programs.

Bringing together over fifty years of experience and the latest research,

the Youth Work Methods are proven strategies for working with youth. Whether you believe that the purpose of an out-of-school time program is to improve academics, to build life skills, or just to provide a place where kids can hang out and be kids, the approach presented in the Youth Work Methods series provides a foundation for building safe and productive places for youth.

To learn more, please visit www.cypq.org.



planning & reflection

Ravi Ramaswamy, Gina McGovern, Tom Akiva, & Maureen Okasinski



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Produced by the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, a division of The Forum for Youth Investment.

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For further information or to request permissions, please contact the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality at 124 Pearl Street, Suite 601, Ypsilanti, Michigan 48197.
Phone: 734.961.6900. Email: info@cypq.org. Web: www.cypq.org



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**CENTER FOR YOUTH
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Acknowledgments

The youth development approach described in these pages was originally developed and tested at the HighScope Summer Workshop for Teens (founded in 1963), later called the Institute for IDEAS. In the late 1990s, HighScope's Youth Development Group took the learning approach developed at the Institute for IDEAS and delivered training for youth workers. These workshops, grounded in HighScope's direct experience, were extended by the David P. Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality through research in positive youth development and evolved into what is currently our Youth Work Methods series.

The current training framework rests on a foundation developed by many, including David P. Weikart, Nicole Yohalem, John Weiss, Becky Prior, Kiku Johnson, Aaron Wilson-Ahlstrom, Laenne Thompson, Tom Akiva, Alicia Wilson-Ahlstrom, David Martineau, Linda Horne, Mary Hohmann, Charles Hohmann, Charles Smith, Monica Jones, and many others.

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powerful methods, powerful cycle

Planning and Reflection are two parts of a basic learning cycle. This guide will define both concepts as well as provide concrete strategies that adults can apply in order to support youth as they plan and reflect on their work.

Background

The Planning and Reflection Method was developed at the HighScope Institute for IDEAS, a residential summer program for teenagers that operated in Clinton, Michigan from 1963-2005. Staff supported youth participants in planning and reflecting throughout a wide variety of activities: science, language, and social studies workshops; work projects involving construction, welding, and landscaping skills; fine arts programming including music, dance, and painting; community building activities including community meetings, conflict resolution, and community cleanup. The method provided staff with the opportunity to formalize learning within a camp setting, which led to consistent, positive results for the youth involved in the program.

The Learning Cycle

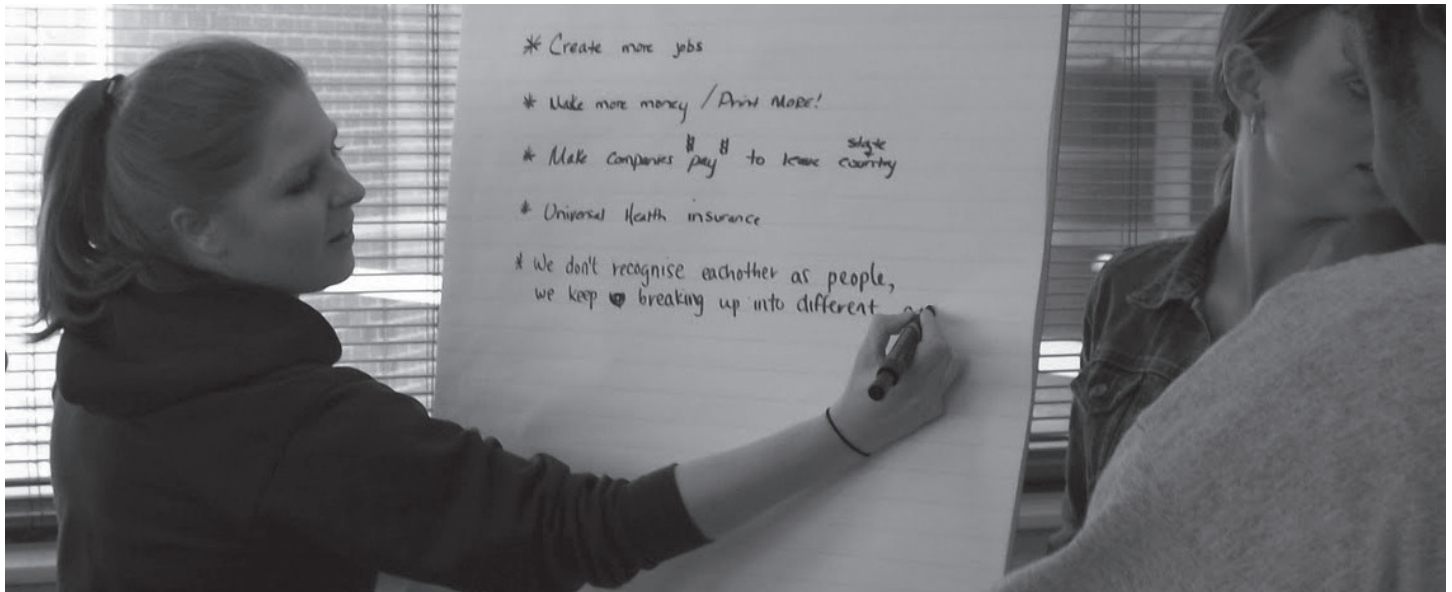
Planning and Reflection are two components of the experiential learning cycle. They work together to strengthen the experience that you provide for the young people in your program. The methods help youth build their critical thinking skills, apply what they've learned and fit their current experience and learning into the context of their prior knowledge.

The entire three-part sequence is:

PLAN Youth think through and express a plan, usually through talking or writing it down. This can happen with individual youths, with a small group, or even with a full group.

DO Young people carry out plans. Through this process they make choices, test different approaches, and modify their original plan.

REFLECT Through a group debrief conversation or some other structured or unstructured activity, young people review their experience. They also consider and determine revisions to original ideas or plans that might have resulted in more desirable outcomes.



While High/Scope promotes engaging children in planning as early as preschool age, the increased cognitive abilities that emerge in adolescence make planning particularly important for young people. Adolescents are able to think abstractly and consider the implications of different plans. Making plans—even for simple projects—helps them establish patterns that may have lifelong implications. If, for instance, young people can plan a performance, they may use those same skills in planning a pathway to higher education.

Almost any activity can involve young people both planning and reflecting. Even if young people are working on a half-hour project, taking a few minutes for planning and for reflection can greatly improve their experience.

Planning and reflection can also occur over a greater span of time. For example, young people may spend several sessions planning, complete a several-week project, and then reflect.

Planning and reflection make for a cyclical process; for example, reviewing a project's progress at the end of a work session will inevitably lead to further planning for future stages of the project. And shorter planning and reflection sequences may occur within the greater project.

Why does planning and reflection make such a difference in the learning experience of young people? Some programs think they are doing a great job if kids are busy doing things all the time. They move from one activity to the next without pause. However, when we do not include planning and reflection, young people are not able to make sense of what they have done.

Planning and Reflection provides time to think about what worked and didn't, make sense of experiences and concepts, connect it to prior learning experiences, and modify ideas and skills. When programs do this, they increase their ability to transfer learning to new settings and events.

¹ John D. Bransford, Ann L. Brown, & Rodney R. Cocking (Eds.). (1999). *How people learn: Brain, mind, experience, and school*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press, p. 12.

overview

What are Planning and Reflection?

Planning and Reflection as a Method refers to supporting young people throughout the basic Plan-Do-Reflect learning process focusing on establishing clear, comprehensive plans at the beginning of an activity and reflecting on the results and process after the activity has been completed.

Why are Planning and Reflection important?

Each of the gray boxes below present some of the things that may happen when young people plan and reflect. Providing time for planning and reflection allow for connections to be made and learning to occur.

The Method

The Planning and Reflection Method is built on the following strategies. The pages that follow provide details.

Planning

Planning is choice with intention. Four ways that adults can support youth in planning are:

- Including time for planning in activities
- Giving youth tools for planning
- Making planning explicit
- Modeling planning

When young people reflect, they:

1. Recapture experiences
2. Consider how their feelings connect to experiences
3. Evaluate experiences
4. Connect experiences to their ideas about how the world works
5. Refine their understanding
6. Learn
7. Engage in critical thinking
8. Recognize accomplishments
9. Make new plans

When Young People plan, they:

1. Articulate ideas
2. Make decisions
3. Set goals
4. Concentrate
5. Imagine and anticipate actions
6. Shape intentions into actions
7. Consider implications
8. Analyze situations
9. Consider their own thinking
10. Take on a curious attitude
11. Become involved and engaged
12. Experience a sense of control
13. Participate in increasingly complex ways

Reflection

Reflection is remembering with analysis. Four ways that adults can support youth in reflection are:

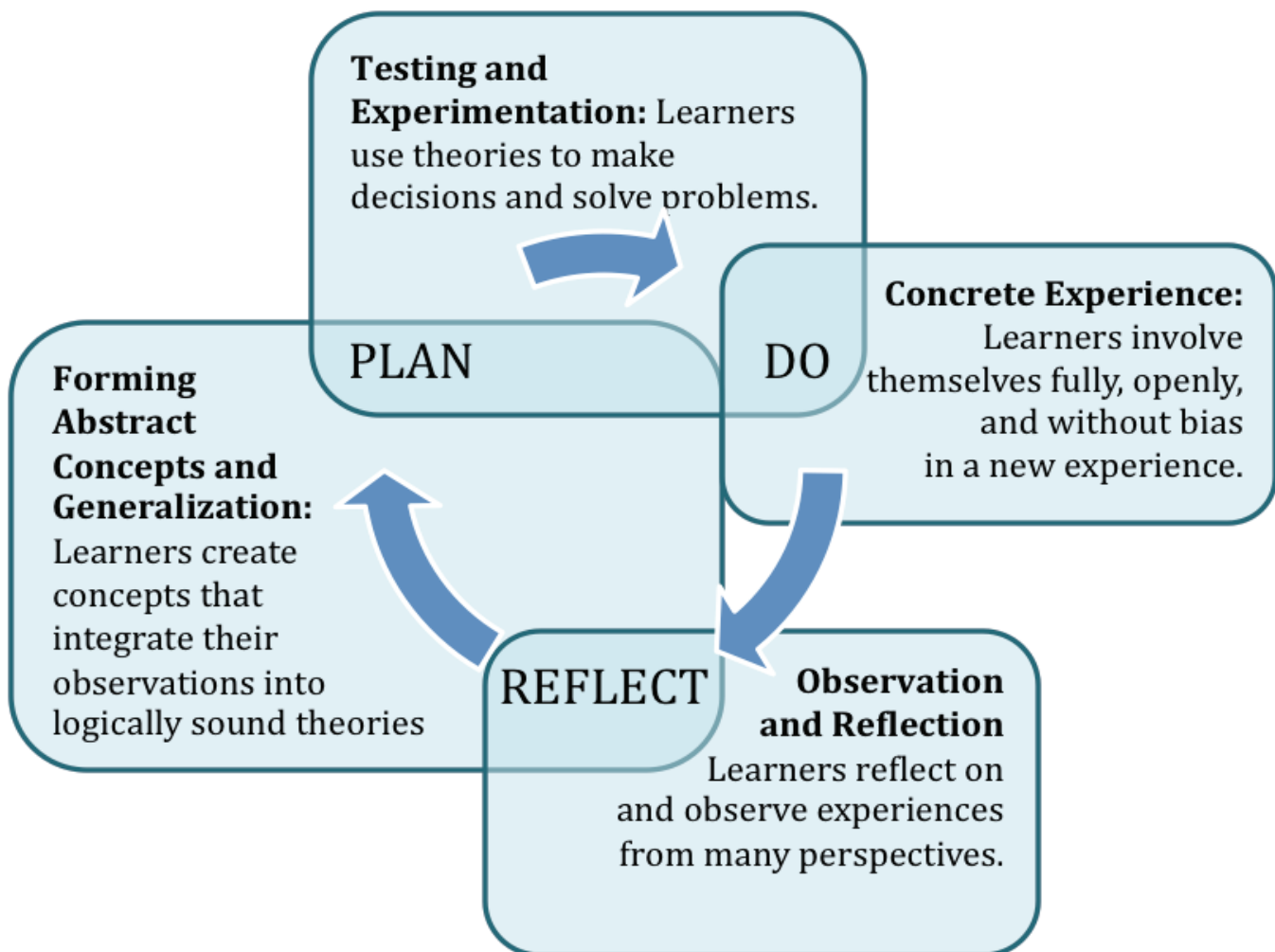
- Including time for reflection in activities
- Asking questions to deepen learning
- Making reflection explicit
- Modeling reflection

The Plan-Do-Reflect Cycle and Experiential Learning

Planning and Reflection are both great methods by themselves. But when they're put together, they become key components of a learning cycle - an ongoing cycle that helps youth get more from their activities and that can lead to future activities. For example, reviewing a project's progress at the end of a work session will inevitably lead to further planning for future stages of the project. And shorter planning and reflection sequences may occur within the greater project.

The Planning and Reflection method is fully compatible with and can be thought of as a complement to experiential learning.² The most popular experiential learning model comes from Kolb.³ He proposes that learning involves a cycle through processes of concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Specifically, planning and reflection provide intentionality to the corresponding parts of Kolb's cycle: abstract conceptualization and reflective observation.

The boxes below represent stages of Kolb's experiential learning cycle, and here we overlap how those stages relate to the Plan-Do-Reflect sequence.



² For more information on the experiential learning cycle, visit www.learningfromexperience.com

³ Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.

Using the Guidebook

Bring Planning and Reflection ideas into your staff meetings by using the materials in this guidebook. Below are suggested activities to accompany each set of content.

Support for Planning (pages 7-8) 10-15 minutes

Have staff read the description of Support for Planning, then divide them into small groups to work on the Planning Scenarios. Use whatever time you have left to discuss their answers, checking to make sure that all four supports are present.

Support for Reflection (pages 8-9) 10-15 minutes

Have staff read the description of Support for Reflection, then divide them into small groups to work on the Reflection Scenarios. Use whatever time you have left to discuss their answers, checking to make sure that all four supports are present.

The Learning Cycle (page 14) 10-15 minutes

Review the extension article on The Learning Cycle. Ask staff to Think-Pair-Share, individually describing how the cycle will apply to an activity or project they plan to lead in the future, then sharing with a partner, and then followed by a large group discussion.

Across Age Groups & Content Areas (pages 21-22)

15-20 minutes

Write a different content area (e.g., art, math, literature, sports, etc.) at the top of large sheets of paper. Have staff rotate to each of the sheets and brainstorm cooperative learning activities that could work for different age groups. After all the ideas are posted, have staff do a gallery walk to gather ideas from the posted sheets.

Planning and Reflection Activities (pages 35-74)

20-30 minutes

Individually, have staff prepare to lead the rest of the group through at least two different planning or reflection activities as though their coworkers were youth participants in their program offering. After a staff member has had a chance to lead everyone through an activity, debrief the experience.

The Research (pages 76-83) 20-30 minutes

Have staff read the Research Review before coming to the meeting. Begin the session by having staff underline two sentences in the text that stand out as important or intriguing. Have staff form group of no larger than 4. Have one person in each group begin by reading the statement that they underlined, without going into why they underlined it. The person to the left then shares their thoughts on the quote the leader read aloud. The next person shares their thoughts on that same quote, and so on until it gets back to the leader. Then the leader has the “last word” to share their thoughts. Then the leadership shifts to the next person. Debrief with the large group once all of the small groups have completed the exercise.



Planning and Reflection Activities

The time devoted to these strategies can be as brief as five minutes for smaller activities or as long as 30-60 minutes for more involved projects or learning activities. In even longer projects that are stretched out over more than one session, multiple planning and reflection strategies may be used at different points in the process. Peruse the selection of strategies and determine what might work best with your group of young people, in the space that you have to work with, and within the time constraints you are given.

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Concentric Circles



what

The group divides in two forming an inner and an outer circle. This format provides an opportunity for individuals to interact one on one with several other members of the group in a short time.

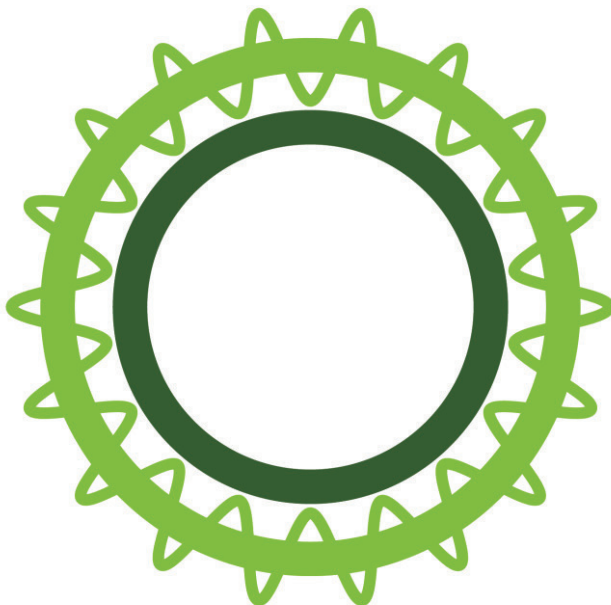
how to do it

1. Divide participants into two groups. Ask one group to become an inner circle and the other an outer circle. Members of the inner circle face outward while members of the outer circle face inward so that inner and outer circle members are facing each other. Make sure there are equal members in each group – if you have an even number of participants, everyone should be standing across from a partner; if you have an odd number, one can wait around or there can be a group of three.
2. Pose a question for participants to ask or answer with the person facing them.
3. When you call for the group to switch, the inner circle stays in place while the outer circle shifts one to the right. Each person should be facing a new partner. You can then pose a second question. The exercise continues for several rounds or until the original partners meet each other again.

examples

Preparing for a field trip to the science museum with elementary age kids:

1. “What are you looking forward to seeing?”
2. “What do you hope to learn in the Grossology special exhibit?”
3. “What will you and your buddy do to make sure you stick with the group?”



time

5 - 15 minutes

materials

questions to be asked

adaptations

Youth can write their own questions for this activity.

Provide a card with prewritten questions for youth to use.

Milling to Music



what

Youth move around the room while music plays. When it stops they discuss a topic with a peer.

how to do it

1. Play music either with a musical instrument or recording (upbeat music without words tends to work well).
2. While the music plays, have young people move around the room—they don't have to dance or even move to the beat; they simply mill about.
3. When the music stops, ask them to form a pair with the person closest to them.
4. Give pairs a question to respond to. Pairs take a few minutes to ask and answer the question to each other.
5. Start the music again to signal to participants to "mill". You can repeat this for several rounds.

examples

The adult plays South American dance music and ask young people to mill about. After participants move around for several seconds, the music stops. The leader says, "Find a partner closest to you." Once everyone is paired up, the leader says, "Share with your partner what you did over the weekend." After a minute or two, the music plays again to form different pairs and pose another question.



time

10-15 minutes

materials

music and music player

adaptations

Mill to music questions can be general, like "how do you feel?", or specific: "Tell your partner the steps you took to complete your project."

Mill to music can work particularly well in combination with Back-to-Back, a grouping strategy.



Twenty Questions



what

In this technique the youth list questions they have on a topic and then narrow down the questions in order to focus their research and planning on the subject.

time

10-20 minutes

materials

none

how to do it

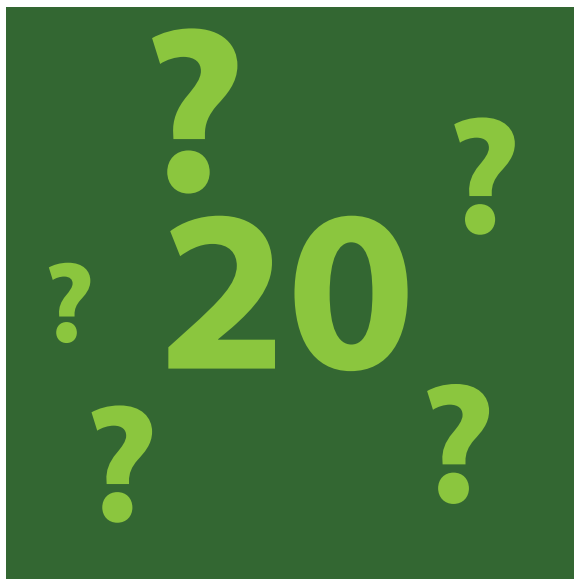
1. Have young people select a topic on which they are interested in doing research or a hands-on project.
2. Have youth brainstorm 20 questions they have about the topic.
3. Ask youth to narrow the questions down to a handful that are most important.
4. Address these questions with youth through research or a project.

adaptations

For planning an activity, have youth brainstorm the 20 questions they should know the answers to in order to be successful (e.g., when will it be? how will we pay for it? who will be invited to attend? what will happen first?). Then answer them!

example

A small group is putting together a presentation on sexually transmitted infections. The leader had them brainstorm and list twenty questions they have about STIs. Next they circled the five in which they had the most interest – How would I know if I had an infection?, What happens if I do get an infection?, What does it mean if I get HIV?, What are some myths about STIs?, What's the difference between preventing STI and preventing pregnancy?". The group divided up the questions and began their research.



Planning and Reflection: The Research

Looking to the past and the future in order to bring order, understanding, and intention to the present. These are the purposes for engaging youth in planning and reflection, two macro-strategies that humans utilize constantly in their daily lives but that have been infrequently addressed in educational research (see box for examples of planning and reflection in out-of-school time contexts). Likely associated with executive function and self-regulated learning (Meltzer, 2007), these instructional strategies ask youth to verbalize their intentions and understandings. That is, when youth engage in planning or reflection, they must examine their own thinking and behaviors. Such examination promotes organized, intentional decision-making—powerful strategies for achievement and life.

The Planning and Reflection Method is a key component of the active-participatory approach promoted by the Weikart Center for Youth Program Quality, an approach with empirically demonstrated effects on observed staff quality and youth outcomes (Smith, 2005). The Planning and Reflection Method was developed at the HighScope Institute for IDEAS (initiative, diversity, expectations, achievement, service), a residential summer program for teenagers that operated from 1963-2005 and that demonstrated improved postsecondary outcomes for participants in a quasi-experimental longitudinal study (For description of program, see Ilfeld, 1996; for research, see Oden, Kelly, Ma, & Weikart, 1992). Planning and reflection strategies at the Institute grew alongside the plan-do-review

method, which is the central organizing feature of the HighScope curriculum for early childhood (Epstein, 2003; Hohmann & Weikart, 2002).

Self-Regulated Learning and Metacognition

While planning and reflection as specific instructional strategies have been given limited attention in educational research (a point taken up later in this document), the cognitive psychological processes of planning and considering one's experiences have been explored through research in self-regulated learning and metacognition. Self-regulation is generally defined as the ability to control one's emotions and behavior (Vohs & Baumeister, 2004), and self-regulated learning is self-regulation in relation to learning, typically described as involving the cognitive strategies of planning, monitoring, and evaluating progress (Dinsmore, Alexander, & Loughlin, 2008). A related concept, metacognition, is thinking about thinking.¹ Since the 1980s, there

Examples of planning and reflection in out-of-school time contexts

Activity	Planning	Reflection
Elementary school-age students making Mother's Day crafts	The staff member shows children several examples of crafts (bracelets, cup holders, etc.) and asks them to plan what they will make with available materials. She chats with each child about their plan before giving them materials to begin.	At the end of the session the staff member asks each child to show and describe to the group what she or he made.
Middle school-age students in robotics club	Using Lego® robotics kits, youth first follow directions to build simple, step-by-step models. They then work in teams, drawing written plans for more elaborate robots. A staff member helps them refine their plans before they start building.	Several days later, after each group has finished their project, individual youth fill out a short form about what worked, what didn't work, what they learned, and what they want to try next.
Youth take part in a park clean-up service learning project	Before the project, youth write down their expectations and set goals for what they hope to accomplish.	After cleaning, the youth walk around the park, surveying their work. The staff member asks several questions and the group discusses why a clean park is important, covering civic and environmental topics.
Teens host a fundraising performance event	A group of youth, working with an adult staff member, spend weeks making decisions about marketing, event logistics, performers, etc.	After the event, the staff leads the youth through a half hour conversation in which they discuss what went well, what didn't go as well, and what they learned from the experience.

¹ While there have been some recent attempts to disentangle terminology (Dinsmore et al., 2008), the terms self-regulation, self-control, SRL, and metacognition may all be thought of as dimensions or subtypes of a single phenomenon (Kaplan, 2008). In addition to pretask (e.g., planning) and posttask (e.g., reflection) phases, most formulations of SRL focus on self-monitoring, of which metacognition is an integral part—that is, students understanding what they know (metacomprehension), their perceptions of progress, and their knowledge of cognitive strategies (Schunk & Ertmer, 2000).

Planning and Reflection and the Active-Participatory Approach

Planning and Reflection are core practices to the Active-Participatory Approach. In fact, engaging young people in planning and reflection can make the difference between simply entertaining kids with fun activities, and providing solid learning experiences.

Planning and Reflection and Other Youth Work Methods

As with all methods in this series, the strategies for building opportunities and supports for planning and reflection can be strengthened in parallel with other methods. By incorporating other Youth Work Methods, you will be better able to incorporate Planning and Reflection.

The **Ask-Listen-Encourage** (A-L-E) Method includes strategies for promoting positive adult-youth interaction—strategies that support planning and reflection.

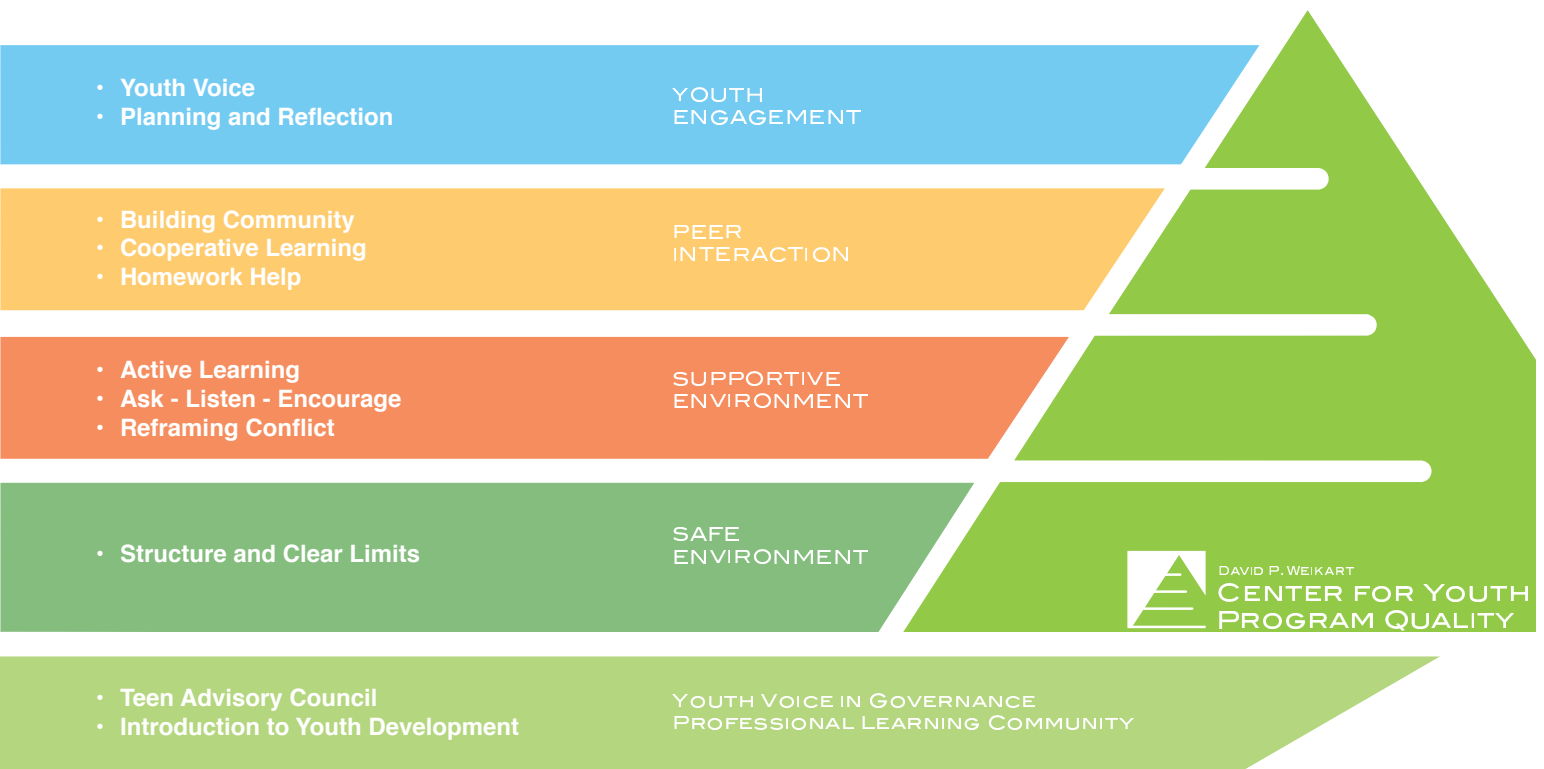
The **Voice and Choice** method promotes youth autonomy and responsibility. Voice and choice can increase motivation, ownership, and engagement in active learning projects.



To learn more about the history of the Active Participatory Approach, visit www.highscope.org.

The Youth Work Methods Series

The Youth Work Methods are powerful strategies for working with young people, based on positive youth development. The Methods are a key part of the Youth Program Quality Intervention (YPQI), a comprehensive system for integrating assessment and training. Each Method is linked to assessment items and designed to help youth workers improve the areas they choose to focus on.



To learn more about these and other Weikart Center workshops, please visit www.cypq.org.