

D-I-Y PBL

**DO-IT-YOURSELF
PROJECT-BASED
LEARNING**



CENTER FOR AFTERSCHOOL EDUCATION
FOUNDATIONS, INC.

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Published by the Center for Afterschool Education, Foundations, Inc., Moorestown, NJ.



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INTRODUCTION

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING FOR ALL AGES AND GRADES

Projects are about hands-on learning by doing. Children and youth are engaged, identifying topics and problems, and working independently toward an outcome they take pride in. Even when projects draw more on some academic skills than others, they cross academic lines, just as life does. A committee project to plan field trips, for example, merges language arts, math, social studies, and more. Producing a kid's transportation map pulls in math, art, science, and social studies. At the same time, projects build planning, teamwork, leadership, and other character and social skills.

Use the information, ideas, worksheets, and tools on this CD to:

- Generate project ideas
- Plan projects
- Facilitate group work
- Assess learning
- Train staff on project-based learning methods

Customize the tools to fit your program goals, children's interests, and staff's interests and skills.

Remember that children and young people may not have had much opportunity to learn to work independently, to work in teams or groups, or to direct their own learning. Staff, too, may not have much experience with this. Take the time to develop core working processes—for staff and for children—and let the fun begin!

RESOURCES

PBL-online.org

edutopia.org/project-learning

gsn.org/Web/pbl

<http://pblchecklist.4teachers.org>

lacnyc.org/resources/IT/pbl.htm



PLANNING PROJECTS

PART I



GOOD PROJECTS

Projects are engaging because they grow from real interests. They're about doing something, not about getting one right answer. And they're about showing or demonstrating learning, rather than passing a test based on information.

Good projects start with good ideas. Good ideas are interesting and stimulate learning. They also need clear objectives, and they must be do-able. You have to be able to plot them in achievable steps that work with the time, schedule, and resources available, and they must be appropriate to the skill and developmental levels of the participants. Finally, to capture the greatest learning opportunities, they should be well coordinated with school-day content.

Good projects also lead to good products. Projects usually extend over some period of time, with several sub-activities as steps along the way. The younger the children, the shorter the project time. Older children and youth can engage in projects lasting anywhere from several weeks, to months, to a semester or full year, particularly in the case of apprenticeships or service-learning projects. The grand-finale product—the showier the better!—obviously relates to the amount of time available. The finale can be an actual thing, like a book, artwork, machine, construction, or map. Or, it can be an event, performance, or demonstration. Longer projects should use intermediate products along the way to show progress and to provide opportunities for encouragement and feedback.

POWERFUL PROJECTS

- Are based on real interests, issues, and/or problems to solve
- Allow participation and success at all skill levels
- Draw on many subject areas
- Are open to many approaches, solutions, and ways to demonstrate learning
- Are clear, do-able, and time-limited
- Lead to meaningful final products
- Link well with school-based content



Good project demonstrations stay with you, as staff and leaders. The look of pride, the glow at the sound of applause, the hopeful offering of crafts and works of art, are unforgettable. Projects gain their strength by cultivating intrinsic motivation. That is, children do the project because they are interested in it. They find it meaningful and important. It is driven from within. The final product is the result of their work, and their pride comes from doing it well. Projects should offer all children the chance to succeed and show—to themselves and the adults they care about—that they can do it. Build performances, demonstrations, exhibitions, and recognitions into project finales.

PRODUCTS FROM PROJECTS

- Trip
- Workshop series
- Newsletter
- Play
- Debate
- Website, video, photo exhibition
- Art gallery
- Guidebook
- Gift to an organization
- Concert
- Guest presentation
- Community improvement
- Small business
- Food item
- Art object
- Meal, party, reception
- Report to a community board or organization
- Guidebook Construction
- Research report and recommendations



PROJECTS: FROM TOPICS TO FINALE

TOPIC	PROJECT	SAMPLE PROJECT ACTIVITIES	FINAL PROJECT OR EVENT
Animals in Winter (Content focus: science, language arts)	Write an illustrated Winter Trackers Guide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trip to zoo • Visit from veterinarian • Winter walks in different habitats • Photographs • Internet research • Videos 	Produce guide; book signing, reception and party; present to outdoors stores, Chamber of Commerce, clubs
Neighborhood Powers (Content focus: language arts, performing arts)	Write and produce skit series, Power People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research community history • Survey residents about who were/are power people • Collect oral histories 	Performance night(s); invited guests; booklet of skits for others to use
Getting Around (Content focus: science, math)	Create a Kid Zones map of neighborhood transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk the neighborhood • Bike the neighborhood • Take public transport, visit stations • Interview kids about how they get around • Invite a transit worker to talk about issues • Highlight points of (kid) interest on the routes 	Produce attractive map, sell advertising if possible, distribute to schools, centers, etc.



GENERATING IDEAS

Get ideas from books, lists, and websites. Look around at the world and the community, at group and individual interests, community resources, and school content. For triggers and prompts, try:

- Brainstorming questions and ideas with the group
- Conducting local surveys or interviews to identify issues
- Taking a walk and mapping assets and problems
- Following a local event or news item
- Identifying issues and needs important for the age group
- Looking at the local environment

For older youth, controversies make strong, if sometimes difficult, starting points. Think about things like rip-offs, scams, social issues (teen pregnancy, drugs, death penalty, reproductive issues, freedom of expression), and tough problem areas like juvenile justice systems, street law, police matters, crime and communities, gun control, sexuality, and health and safety. Consider controversies that are relevant to your group and build from there.

Life-stage concerns are a source of project ideas. Middle schoolers might be thinking about high schools, and high schoolers about what comes next. Young women may be thinking about balancing children and work, careers, or college. Develop projects to help young people learn about and deal with things that matter to them.

LOOK AROUND FOR PROJECT IDEAS...

- City critters
- Winter habitats
- Under the streets
- Art outside
- Finding food
- Getting around

FROM IDEAS TO PROJECTS: BEAUTY CARE SCARE

QUESTION: Can cosmetics be dangerous? How? Are some more dangerous than others?

PROJECT: Investigate the questions and produce a cosmetics demonstration of the findings

ACADEMIC CONTENT: Research, chemistry, biology, collecting and presenting data

ACTIVITIES/STEPS: Break down the questions, develop investigation tools, develop work plan (with pieces suitable for all participants), conduct investigation, design presentations

PRODUCT: Presentation, and guide to cosmetics safety



IDEAS FROM THEMES

Projects and activities can come from and build into themes. School curriculum in social studies, geography, and the arts are rich sources of themes and project ideas. Start with a theme, then brainstorm activity possibilities around it. Involve children, other teachers, and parents in the process. Find out what children and youth are studying in school. Use projects to reinforce, deepen and expand learning.

THEMES FROM SOCIAL STUDIES

'Social studies' is fertile ground for project ideas. In social studies, children learn how people live together in societies and provide for human needs of shelter, clothing, arts, and food. They learn about different cultures, history, geography and the built environment. Social studies helps young people understand where they come from and to see their history, culture, and viewpoints in global and cross-cultural contexts. With social studies-based projects, children use the academic skills of reading, writing, and research not as abstract exercises, but as tools for exploring and learning about their fascinating worlds.

As school subjects, social studies includes world, national, and local history and geography, cultural studies, political science, economics, psychology, and philosophy. The typical curriculum follows a pattern that goes from studying self and 'close to home' at younger ages, to the world and wider concerns as children get older. The social studies curriculum pattern below can help you align projects with what children are studying in school.

- K - 1** Self and family
- 2** Neighborhood
- 3** Community
- 4** State
- 5** American history and geography, from exploration to the Civil War and Reconstruction
- 6** Geography of Canada and Latin America
- 7** Geography of Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, and the Pacific Islands
- 8** American history and geography pre-Reconstruction, emphasizing democratic principles and foundations in the Constitution, Bill of Rights, and Declaration of Independence
- 9** World history and geography, including significant historical periods and patterns of change within and across ancient civilizations and cultures
- 10** World history and geography from colonization and settlement to contemporary times
- 11** American history and geography from Reconstruction to contemporary times
- 12** Political science and economics



THEMES FROM GEOGRAPHY

The general geography standards developed by the National Geographic Society¹ are a good source of ideas for projects that merge with social studies, math, English, and the arts.

Geography standards include:

- The world in spatial terms: using and understanding maps, including maps of people, places, and environments
- Places and regions: the physical and human characteristics of places and influences of culture on ideas of place and region
- Physical systems: physical processes that shape patterns and ecosystems on the earth's surface
- Human systems: characteristics, distribution, and migration of human population; the complexities of cultural mosaics; patterns of economic interdependence; patterns and processes of human settlement; and cooperation, conflict, and control
- Environment and society: how humans modify the physical environment; how physical systems affect human systems; and changes in the use, importance, meaning, and distribution of resources
- Uses of geography: using geography to interpret the past and plan for the future

THEMES FROM THE ARTS

Like social studies and geography, 'doing arts' is also doing language arts, math, and science. Measurement, planning, reading, and chemistry can all come into learning about and creating art. Dramatic arts, for example, clearly reinforce language arts. Visual arts can pull in technology, chemistry, and math.

The National Standards for Arts Education² were written by the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations under the guidance of the National Committee for Standards in the Arts. From kindergarten through high school, children are learning about dance, music, theater, and the visual arts.

Dance

- Using movement, techniques, choreography, and music to communicate meaning
- Thinking creatively and critically about dance, and using dance vocabulary
- Learning about dance around the world and throughout history

Music

- Learning about different styles of music across different cultures and history
- Singing, alone and in groups, with and without music
- Listening and discussing music critically, using music vocabulary
- Playing musical instruments



¹ Find more information at www.nationalgeographic.com/resources/ngo/education/standardslist.html

² Find the standards in their entirety at www.artsedge.kennedy center.org/professional_resources/standards.

Theatre

- Reading and writing scripts and dialogue
- Acting
- Reading, watching, and discussing theatre works critically, using theatre vocabulary
- Understanding and practicing elements of production, including directing, producing, set design and construction, costumes, lighting, music, performance, and stage management
- Learning the history of theatre and theatre in different cultures

Visual Arts

- Learning about and using techniques in different forms of visual art, including painting, drawing, photography, sculpture, digital, printmaking, and architecture
- Observing, interpreting, and discussing visual arts critically, and using art vocabulary
- Learning about the history of art and art in different cultures

INVESTIGATION PROJECTS

Investigation projects move from an identified, interesting topic, to children and youth forming questions about that topic. The project then encompasses investigation and exploration to answer the questions, then a presentation or event based on the findings. Investigation projects can mesh well with school content, and can draw from many themes.

SAMPLE INVESTIGATION PROJECT MODEL

BECOME DETECTIVES

Brainstorm with children to develop a topic. List questions about the topic and use them as a planning guide.

SEARCH AND EXPLORE

Investigate the topic with hands-on fieldwork: reading, interviewing, Internet searches, field trips, observations, discussions with other children and adults, drawing, building, experimenting, and guest speakers. Investigators record (in various ways) what they learn along the way.

REPORT FINDINGS

Present the results. Reports can take many forms: musical or dramatic presentations, written reports, art exhibitions, displays of artifacts, construction models, or a combination of any number of these.



INVESTIGATION PROJECTS PLANNING CHECKLIST

Is the topic driven by children's interests? ☐ Y ☐ N

Comments: _____

Do they already know something about it? ☐ Y ☐ N

Comments: _____

Are there real learning opportunities? What? _____

Does it bring together different content areas? Which content areas are most important?

What can the end product be? _____

Does it build on lots of hands-on activities? _____

Can the topic be investigated without a lot of adult help? _____

Is it realistic? Should it be modified to make it more realistic? _____

Can the community be involved? How? _____



INVESTIGATION PROJECT GUIDE

Names of team members: _____

Investigation topic: _____

Start date: _____ End date: _____

Questions to investigate: _____

What we already know

What we want to know

How we will investigate (where to go, who to ask, where to look, etc.)

We need: _____

Action plan (who will do what):

Who

What

When

Other things to think about _____

Teacher signature: _____

Team signatures: _____



LINKING TO ACADEMIC CONTENT

Linking projects with academic content may start from the project/product side, or from the content side. You may come up with a great idea for an activity or product, then look at the academic possibilities you can draw out. Or, you may start developing ideas from academic content goals.

If academic skill-building is an objective, look at curriculum and standards. Talk with teachers to guide development of projects that will expand, deepen, and reinforce specific school learning. This gives children additional ways of learning school material, which can be especially valuable for those who need the hands-on application or experience to bring the concepts home—which includes most of us!

If you want to emphasize particular subjects or skills, be sure to identify those objectives early in the planning stages. Clarifying learning objectives allows you to tailor projects and activities to specific skill-building, and to be sure it is a deliberate part of the project activities. Focusing and clarifying objectives also allows you to use the same project to serve different purposes. A multi-disciplinary project such as a fundraiser may include, for example, writing objectives and math.

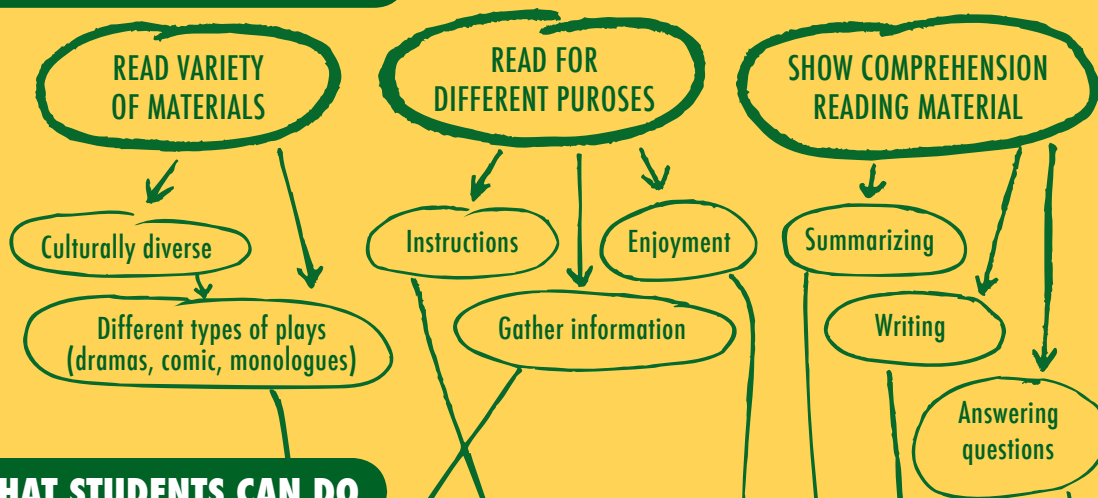
Within the same project, you may even target different skills and products to fit different students' needs. If the project is producing a play, the objective for one student might be to learn to use Excel and apply math to budgeting for a real event. For another, it might be to learn a graphics program and produce a flyer. For another focus on math skills, the product could be scale drawings for the staging; for writing skills it may be writing the program.

WEBS: LINKING ACADEMIC CONTENT AND PROJECTS

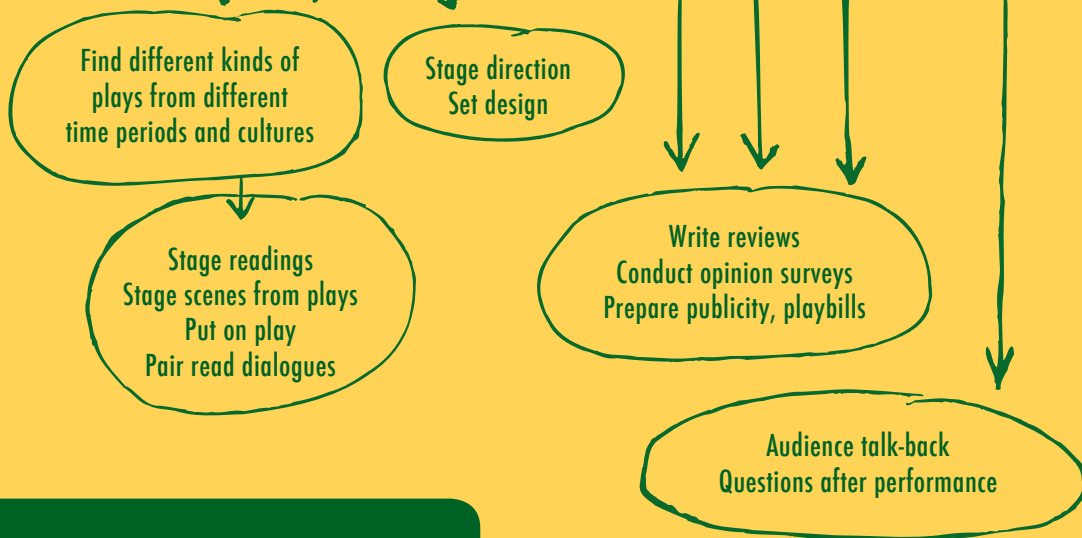
Webs start with core pieces and show sub-pieces that connect. This web starts with broad academic standards, teacher and student interest in drama, and works down to student projects and activities.



STANDARDS-BASED GOALS



WHAT STUDENTS CAN DO

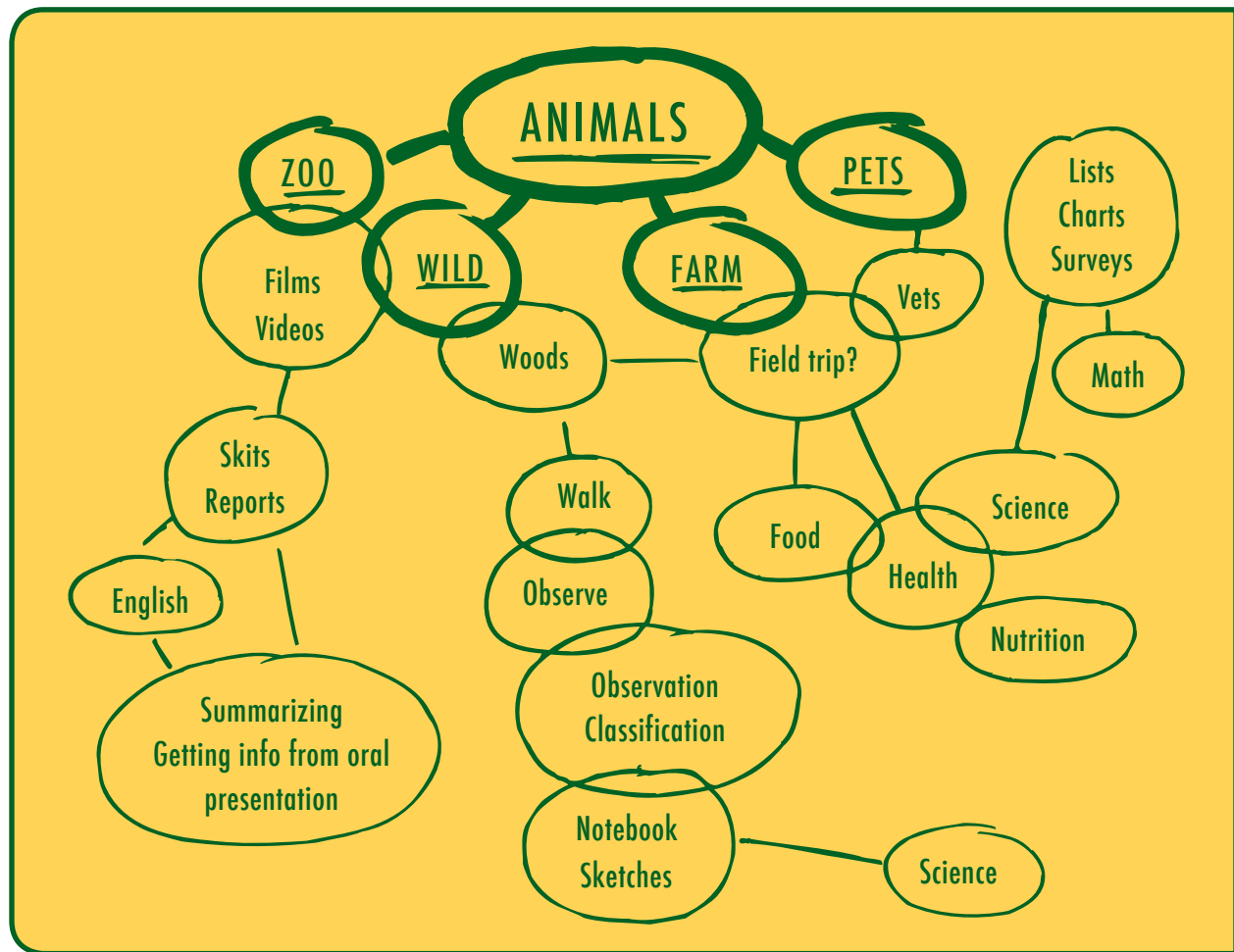


EVALUATION

Checklist of materials collected (for diversity)
 Presentation skills checklist
 Rubrics: writing, quality of presentations
 Participation levels
 Self-assessment (performance)



Webs like this are helpful starting exercises for planning a unit.



PLANNING CHECK AND PLANNER GUIDES

Be as mindful about planning projects as your can. While solid planning will help launch and manage good projects, the essence of PBL is that things will change and develop in potentially unexpected ways. Plan—but capitalize on the energy of discovery as it happens, and don't be afraid of changing the plan!



IDEAS TO PROJECTS

Turning good ideas into good projects calls for attention to the nitty-gritty. Use this form to see if the idea turns into a doable, meaningful—and enjoyable!—project.

Project idea _____

Where did this idea come from? _____

What are the goals or objectives? _____

Is it manageable? _____

Amount of time required _____ Amount of time available _____

Scheduling requirements _____

Space needs _____

Transportation needs _____

Will it work with the children/youth? ☐

Attendance requirements _____

Works with drop-in/out, or needs continuous commitment _____

Number that can be involved _____

Is this something children are interested in? ☐

Will it take cheerleading and motivating? ☐

Skills required of children _____

Adaptability for different ages _____

Resources _____

Skills required of staff _____

Materials and special equipment needs (computers, video, digital cameras, notebooks, tape recorders, special papers, books, etc.) _____

Evaluation and assessment possibilities _____



PROJECT PLANNING GUIDE

PROJECT CONCEPT

Project description (project will lead to): _____

or

Topic to investigate: _____

Questions to investigate: _____

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Subject-matter, academic content objective
(what specific academic learning will occur?)

Other objectives:

Supporting project component

(what part of the project fosters the learning?)

ASSESSMENT

How will outcomes be assessed? _____

Observation of working processes: _____

Observation of final product or performance: _____

Evaluation of final product against criteria: _____

Evaluation by outsiders: _____

Written evaluation by teacher: _____

Self-evaluation by participants: _____

Other: _____



INTERIM PRODUCTS OR PROGRESS DEMONSTRATIONS

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Schedules | <input type="checkbox"/> Deadlines | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work assignments | <input type="checkbox"/> Performances | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reports | <input type="checkbox"/> Drafts | |

IMPLEMENTATION MATTERS

Number of participants: _____ Materials, supplies: _____

Amount of time needed: _____

Start date: _____

End date: _____

Storage space needed: _____

Assessment dates: _____ Interims: _____ Final: _____

PLANNING CHECK

Does the topic...

- ☐ Build on what children already know?
- ☐ Offer real-world learning opportunities?
- ☐ Encourage easy hands-on learning experiences?
- ☐ Reach a range of ages, learning styles, and levels?
- ☐ Seem interesting?
- ☐ Involve many content areas?
- ☐ Have enough to keep it going for the length of project?
- ☐ Foster independent learning?

Does the culminating project...

- ☐ Demonstrate learning?
- ☐ Demonstrate achievement?
- ☐ Permit meaningful contributions from all levels?
- ☐ Offer opportunities for interim products and markers of progress?
- ☐ Offer opportunity for pride in the work done?

Is it...

- ☐ Do-able given time, space, and materials requirement?
- ☐ Within the scope of resources available?
- ☐ Within the scope of participants' abilities?
- ☐ Within the scope of teachers' knowledge and skills?



PROJECT PLANNING REVIEW

Use this checklist to help think through project ideas with kids or with other staff.

- ☐ **What is at the heart of the project? What question or interest area?**
(For example, learning about kids' legal rights, or what it means to be a lawyer.)

- ☐ **What does it take to do the project? Is it do-able?**

- ☐ **Who needs to be involved? What are the roles or responsibilities for staff?
For participants? For community members or others?**

- ☐ **Is it driven by kids' interests? How are kids involved in setting up,
managing, or evaluating?**

- ☐ **What are the hoped-for outcomes? How will they be demonstrated?**

- ☐ **How can learning be demonstrated or shared with others?**
(For example, performances, newsletters, videos, PowerPoints®, etc.)



PROJECTS IN ACTION

PART II



HELPING TO GET GOING AND KEEP GOING

The teacher's role in projects varies with the age of the participants; the type and difficulty of the project; special needs for scheduling, transportation, or equipment; the stage or phase of the project; and other factors. Observe and monitor, and adjust your role(s) accordingly.

Projects should always involve independent learning, but the level of independence for starting and completing projects grows as children do.

From **kindergarten** to about **fifth grade**, children need more direction. Teachers may choose to select themes and develop projects, or use guided choices with limited selections. Actively plan the steps and schedule and make project goals and guidelines clear. The director role is important.

In **grades 6 through 8**, young people are moving toward more independence and should learn to work with less input from you. Be ready to offer suggestions and advice when asked or if you think it is needed. You are a guide, coach, and cheerleader.

In **grades 9 through 12**, young people need much greater independence and should have a major role in developing their projects. This is a real opportunity for you to be a co-learner and learn from your high schoolers. Your role is largely coach and cheerleader.

FACILITATING PBL

Which roles best fit you, your project ideas, and your participants?

Sometimes you will be:

- ☐ **Director**, developing specific learning experiences to meet particular goals and carefully delineating project limits and guidelines
- ☐ **Guide**, helping plan do-able steps, monitoring progress, and keeping things on track
- ☐ **Coach**, giving suggestions when needed and help when asked
- ☐ **Co-learner**, exploring areas that are new for you, too
- ☐ **Cheerleader**, offering encouragement along the way



GROUP WORK

BRAINSTORMING

Brainstorming is a great technique for getting children and young people actively engaged in thinking of ideas and coming up with solutions and strategies during implementation of projects.

If you are not used to doing brainstorming sessions with your group, use the Brainstorm Planner checklist to plan the session and to look back afterward to see how it went. Facilitating good brainstorming sessions is a skill!

KNOW/WHAT TO KNOW/HOW/LEARNED

A K/W/H/L chart is a simple way to focus and organize information. It is based on four questions: What I know; what I want to know; how I can learn more, and what I learned. It is used by teachers and students to help plan activities and strategies.

KWLH			
SOLAR SYSTEM			
WHAT I KNOW	WHAT I WANT TO KNOW	HOW I CAN LEARN MORE	WHAT I LEARNED
There are eight planets: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune. Planets orbit around the sun.	What are comets made of? What is the biggest planet?	Trip to planetarium Internet Library	Comets are like big snowballs and made up of frozen gasses. Jupiter is the biggest planet. The sun is a star, not a planet.



BRAINSTORM PLANNER

If you are not used to doing brainstorming sessions, use this checklist to plan the session. Check back afterward to think about how it went.

Topic/question: _____ Date: _____

GETTING READY

- ☐ Topic question clear and specific
- ☐ Place for writing responses (board, easel/pad, paper)

GETTING STARTED

- ☐ Guidelines clear and understood by all:
 - Participants can say whatever response comes to mind.
 - Responses are recorded without judgment. There are no right, wrong, or silly responses.
 - The more responses, the better.
- ☐ Timekeeper, recorder (to write responses), and facilitator (to make sure all responses are heard) selected

LOOKING BACK

- ☐ Question was well understood
- ☐ Question needed too much explanation; should be re-worded
- Time limit:** ☐ Reasonable ☐ Needed more ☐ Too much
- ☐ Participants responded well, lots of answers ☐ Relaxed, comfortable feeling
- ☐ Too quiet, limited responses ☐ Participants shy; need encouragement
- ☐ Question needs re-wording ☐ Need more conversation beforehand
- ☐ Out-of-hand shouting ☐ Need better facilitation
- ☐ Responses useful ☐ Everyone could see response list
- ☐ Session led to next step ☐ I thought the process was useful
- ☐ Participants seemed to find process interesting/helpful/useful.

Comments/Revisions to Make _____



FACILITATING GROUP WORK

Young people learn best by doing. Your goal is to help them learn and do their best while supporting their group work, independence, and social development. Your project role, then, is more as facilitator than director. The following pointers can help with the facilitator role.

- **Be clear about expectations.** Make sure the group understands what is involved in committing to the project.
- **Ask groups** to set guidelines for working together (see page 14 for typical agreements).
- **Circulate, watch, and listen** for dynamics.
- **Listen actively** and ask open-ended questions to stimulate thinking.
- **Encourage** students to clarify and expand on their contributions.
- **Restate and summarize** to show you are listening and understand. Summarizing helps groups stay on track.
- **Promote an inclusive, respectful environment.** Observe groups and invite full participation, with students contributing in different ways.
- **Remain neutral.** Avoid inserting your opinions or suggestions to encourage the group's own free-flowing discussion. If you are asked for guidance, try to provide it along with questions back to the group, such as, "What do you think of..." or "Has anyone ever tried something like..."

SUPPORTING CHILDREN AS FACILITATORS

As groups work on projects, help children learn to facilitate their own group work. Share the following tips and guidelines. You may want to post or hand out tips for facilitating group discussions.



GUIDE FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

- Listen even if you don't agree
- Allow people to finish what they're saying
- Agree or disagree with ideas without making it personal
- Allow for silence; let people think
- Stay on topic and task
- Give everyone a chance; don't hog time
- Appreciate that people are participating, even if you don't agree with their idea



BEING A GOOD FACILITATOR

WHEN A GROUP MEMBER OR MEMBERS...	...GOOD FACILITATORS...
...do not contribute or are hesitant to contribute to the discussion	...don't put people on the spot or 'force' participation. Suggest or provide opportunities for talking in pairs, threes, or small groups for periods of time.
...dominate the conversation	...ask the rest of the group for ideas or comments. Acknowledge the person's contributions and invite others to respond.
...make vague statements	...ask for clarification, examples, or illustrations of points. Encourage rephrasing and summarizing, asking "Is this an example of what you mean?" or similar questions.
...become tense, repetitive	...reframe the point the person is making to be sure they feel heard. If needed, acknowledge strong feelings, and revisit the group agreements about how to discuss through disagreement.
...seem to have said all they have to say	...ask for group consensus. If none, summarize what has been said and encourage the group to narrow their choices.
...go off topic	...ask for summaries of what's been said so far and ask what more needs to be discussed.
...goof around	...call for a stretch break; move on.
...are not participating	...break into small groups, pairs, etc., with clear discussion questions.



GROUP ROLES

It is often useful to help children think through different roles they may take on as members of a group working on a project. Depending on the age of the children and the type of project, you may assign or suggest roles, or help group members define and select roles themselves.

Roles might include:

- **Manager:** Keeps the group “on track” and insures that members are fulfilling their roles.
- **Timekeeper:** Watches the time and moves group along so that they complete the task on time.
- **Recorder:** Keeps a record of the group’s actions, takes notes on discussions, and prepares a written report, if needed.
- **Observer:** Uses a guide, such as a checklist, to watch the group’s activities and may offer feedback.
- **Data Collector:** Uses resources to get needed information for the group.
- **Checker:** Makes sure that everyone understands the concepts and that all group members have reached their goals.
- **Spokesperson:** Communicates with the teacher and other groups when help or information is needed. Represents the group in presentations.
- **Materials Manager:** Makes sure the group has all the materials needed. Helps keep the area organized.
- **Designer:** Leads the artistic representation of the group’s work.
- **Stand-In:** Assumes role of any missing group member.

COMMITTEES

Organize committees to take on real tasks and responsibilities. From kindergarteners in snack committees to high schoolers in events planning, committees are a natural interface with projects and content-based learning. Committee work actively demonstrates learning by performance.

Committees provide opportunities to develop planning, group process, and leadership skills, learn teamwork, and develop responsibility. They lend themselves well to multi-age, multi-skill groups, and once committee structures are set up, young people can move through them year after year.



COMMITTEE POSSIBILITIES

Committees can be charged with planning, helping, or actually carrying out all kinds of tasks.

Which of these can you form committees to work on?

- ☐ Snack selection, ordering, serving, and cleaning up
- ☐ Trips and outings
- ☐ Guest speakers
- ☐ Special events, parties, and celebrations
- ☐ Announcements, news, and weather reports
- ☐ Record keeping, attendance
- ☐ Communications
- ☐ Materials selections and supply maintenance
- ☐ Library materials and systems
- ☐ Workshops and special lessons

Other committee project ideas: _____



COMMITTEE PLANNING WORKSHEET

Committee Name: _____

Possible Age Groups: _____

COMMITTEE PURPOSE

Example: Committee will plan monthly snack menu using a budget

GUIDELINES

Example: Committee must submit menus to director on the 15th of each month and stay within budget and nutrition guidelines

SUPPORTS NEEDED

Examples:

Children: How to use a budget; how to read nutrition information

Staff: Facilitating committees

Resources: FDA guidelines, calculators, or computers

TIME

Example: Committee will meet the first two Mondays of each month during enrichment time

ADULT SUPPORT

Name a staff person who will support this committee

ROLES ON COMMITTEE

Example: Note taker, researcher, math checker, etc.



WRITING PROJECTS

JOURNALS

Journaling projects help children and youth develop greater writing fluency, see writing as a means of personal expression, and use writing as a recording tool.

Typically journals are not corrected, which builds fluency by removing the fear-of-criticism factor. Journal entries can be directed by questions, themes, or topics, or may be left as 'free-writing' time. Regular journal writing can be scheduled as part of daily activity time. Examples of uses of journals include:

- Describing an event of the day (good, bad, annoying, exciting, etc.) and reactions to it
- Recording daily activities and progress of a project
- Collection of 3-minute quick-writes on topics or subjects picked by the individual, the teacher, or another student (see below)
- Describing service-learning activities and writing about what is being learned
- Participating in group research projects by keeping track of, for example, hours of TV watched or foods eaten
- Travel log

REVIEWS

Children and young people of all ages can write reviews of movies, CD's, books, products, teachers, programs, stores, etc. Projects can be planned around producing guidebooks, watching films together, or writing evaluation reports. The point of writing a review is to tell someone else what you think—be sure to build in the shared communication part.

INTERVIEWS, SURVEYS, QUESTIONNAIRES, AND REPORTS

Projects based on collecting information from others are writing-rich:

- Brainstorm and write lists of topics or people to interview
- Write survey or interview questions
- Write responses as people answer questions
- Make a questionnaire for people to fill out
- Summarize the information gathered
- Present results



PUBLISHING

Publishing projects help keep children and young people writing for different purposes. Children and youth can produce anything from hand-printed materials to fully designed and printed publications. Access to computer publishing expands the possibilities. Consider:

- Collecting and testing recipes and writing a cookbook
- Producing a handbook for new students
- Writing a guidebook to the neighborhood
- Producing a young person's guide to job hunting
- Writing a guide to high schools or colleges
- Producing flyers for events

DRAMA, POETRY SLAMS, AND PRESENTATIONS

Selecting, reading, writing, and producing plays provides a powerful learning opportunity for a range of skills, including writing directions, dialogue, and description, reading, listening, and speaking. Children and young people of all ages and all language abilities can be involved, and the project scope can range from quick skits to productions of a complete play. Plays, skits, and exercises written by and for young people are readily available, you can dramatize any story or event you choose, and there are countless guides to using drama with youth groups.

If young people are writing poetry in school (or anytime), they may want to hold a poetry slam. For any presentation, children and youth can write flyers, publicity letters, fund-raising letters, and invitations.

COMMUNITY ACTION, CIVICS

Writing is a critical skill in a democracy. From an early age, children can learn about writing to government and other officials, writing letters to the newspaper, and writing articles about community events. Older children and youth can identify issues, decide how they want to approach the issue, and write the surveys, letters, flyers, etc., they need.

SERVICE-LEARNING PROJECTS

Service-learning builds connections between children and youth and their wider communities. It teaches the value of being part of communities, and shows how learning, teaching, giving, and receiving all happen at the same time. At its best, service-learning helps young people learn to learn from their communities, their experiences, and from interactions with others. Service-learning projects usually have two parts: (1) children and young people look at and understand their communities, then do something that contributes to the community, and (2) they think and talk about what they are gaining and learning.



Children of all ages can participate. The 'service' action for younger children may last only one session. Older children and teenagers can plan and commit to more sustained work, including research, developing ideas, and working off-site. A service-learning contract helps formalize and structure the work.

SERVICE-LEARNING ACTIVITY EXAMPLES

A key element in service-learning is reflection: thinking about what learning is happening. Young people in service-learning projects may keep written journals or use tapes, photos, or video to present and discuss what they are doing. Service-learning usually entails a structured, guided reflection, often with a group of young people sharing their experiences, observations, questions, issues, and thoughts. Many use the "3 Whats" to guide reflection, asking, "What did you do?" "So what?" and "Now what?"

The Internet is an excellent source of information about service-learning, and national organizations publish detailed guides, ideas, contracts, and materials. A major source of information is the National Service-Learning Clearinghouse at www.servicelearning.org and Learn and Serve (the Corporation for National and Community Service) at www.learnandserve.org

THE 3 WHAT'S OF SERVICE-LEARNING

WHAT DID YOU DO?

Build skills in summarizing, presenting facts and information, and explaining processes.

SO WHAT?

Build skills of analysis, critical thinking, and forming opinions.

NOW WHAT?

Build skills of making hypotheses, drawing conclusions from evidence, planning, and presenting ideas.

SHORT SHOTS

- School clean-up or painting
- Collect basic supplies for a homeless shelter
- Perform at a senior center
- Pick up litter in a local park or playground

ONGOING OR SEVERAL-WEEK PROJECTS

- Collect oral histories and make a book
- Tutor younger children
- Help children or seniors learn computer skills
- Serve on a community board or committee
- Work with a housing organization
- Participate in a mural arts program
- Organize a food and toy drive
- Volunteer at a hospital or clinic
- Conversation buddies with newcomers learning English
- Assist with voter registration



SERVICE-LEARNING CONTRACT

Name: _____

Project summary description: _____

Site/organization name: _____

Address: _____

Contact/supervisor name: _____ Phone/e-mail: _____

Project start date: _____ End date: _____

RESPONSIBILITIES

Student will be present at the site on (days):

From: _____ to _____ o'clock Weeks _____

For: _____ hours per week

Check in upon arrival with: _____

Get signature from: _____

On-site, the student will: _____

The supervisor will: _____

EXPECTATIONS

	Student	Organizations/supervisor
I want to gain and learn from this experience		
I am looking forward to		
I am concerned about		



LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE

Student agrees to:

Keep records of work and experience in:

☐ Hours log ☐ Journal or diary entries ☐ Other: _____

How often? _____

Show records to/discuss experience with:

Who

How often/when

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Afterschool teacher agrees to:

- ☐ Be available to discuss work/project/activity conditions, progress, and problems
- ☐ Provide guidance for journal entries or other records
- ☐ Review experience and learning with learner on agreed schedule and as needed
- ☐ Other: _____

Reviews will be scheduled on: _____

Agreed By:

_____	_____
Student	Date

_____	_____
Afterschool teacher	Date

_____	_____
Organization/supervisor	Date

Other Comments: _____



SCIENCE AND STEM PROJECTS

STEM—science, technology, engineering and math—is a rich area for project-based learning. The best in science learning is hands-on, using the scientific processes of forming a question, a hypothesis about the solution or answer, collecting data through observation, surveys, experiments, etc., analyzing what you found, reaching some conclusions, and coming up with more questions. The model for Inquiry Projects is a good starting place for STEM projects.

Following are some starter project ideas that encompass STEM directly. More can be developed from some of the other starter ideas presented.

SCIENCE IN THE COMMUNITY Organize a committee to plan a year’s worth of field trips and guest presenters around STEM. This might include field trips to museums, science centers, zoos, or labs, and bringing in veterinarians, pharmacists, doctors, farmers, engineers, and others.

CREATURE TOURS Create creature tours of the neighborhood. Identify and classify pets and pests, set targets for bio-diversity. Form multiple groups each to create their own tours, then conduct the tours with each other, explaining what they found, how they classified it, and what they know about the creatures.

WE ARE WHAT WE DRINK? Create a project around looking at water and pollution. This can include a field trip to a treatment plant, investigations into drinking water quality, what goes down drains to where, impacts of agriculture, and drinking water status around the world. Experiments can be developed around filtration, looking at what lives in water, and impacts of changing water quality.

SKINNY ON FAST FOOD Engage children and young people in a look at fast food, nutrition, and the relationships of nutrition, marketing, and culture. Create guides on what and where to eat—and not—after school.

BABY BEANS Planting projects are great, especially with younger children. Planting bean seeds can be turned into a project by discussing what plants need to grow, planting seeds and providing some with light and some not, some with water and some not, and having children make systematic observations. They can keep Baby Bean Journals with drawings and data on how the plants in the different groups are doing, then presenting their findings to the group—along with a bean salad!

RESOURCES, INFORMATION, AND PROJECT GUIDES ABOUT STEM PBL CAN BE FOUND AT:

Edutopia.org

[National Science Digital Library
nsdl.org](http://NationalScienceDigitalLibrary
nsdl.org)

[National Council of Teachers
of Mathematics
standards.nctm.org/document](http://NationalCouncilofTeachers
ofMathematics
standards.nctm.org/document)

[Pre-Engineering K-12
prek-12engineering.org](http://Pre-EngineeringK-12
prek-12engineering.org)



From Academic Content, Afterschool Style: A Notebook and Guide.

MORE PROJECT STARTER IDEAS

STORE Set up a play store with pennies and play money for elementary grades, or a real store for middle and upper grades.

DAILY NEWS AND WEATHER Form committees to collect and report daily news from the class, school, or neighborhood, and to report and predict weather. Keep a calendar of schedules and events.

SPORTS REPORTS Form a committee to work as sports reporters. Track scores, keep records, compare teams, and make charts of teams, wins, and losses, produce sports reports, present sports reports to the group.

SNACKS AND COOKING Plan and carry out cooking projects, create and test recipes, form committees to conduct taste tests and surveys, plan snacks, and make and post menus.

NEIGHBORHOOD MAPS and GUIDES Have students make a neighborhood or school map with the best places to hang out, bike, eat, play, features, etc. Create a guidebook around it.

BRING IT ON Establish a performance committee and give it a budget to produce dance, theater, music, poetry slams, raps, and other youth performances. Require planning and budget spreadsheets.

SPECIAL EVENTS Committees can plan and budget field trips, parties, and other special events. Include components such as surveying for ideas, budgeting and feasibility, presenting information, group decision-making, doing the event, and follow-up evaluation.

REACH OUT Establish a committee to plan and carry out a guest speaker, presenter, or guest staff program.

RESEARCH OR EVALUATION PROJECTS Use real-life issues to design projects that involve data collection, information presentation, results or action, and revisiting the question. Brainstorm questions such as: What activities should be offered to youth after school? What are the most important issues facing young people and what can be done? Have the group develop surveys or questionnaires, collect information, present findings to the group, and make recommendations.

COMMUNITY GUIDEBOOK OR MAP Form teams to create a guidebook, handbook, or map based on questions and information gathered through surveys, interviews, and web-based research.

- Brainstorm ideas, such as a community guidebook for teens, a school guide for newcomers, a guide for English language learners (ESL students), or a handbook for teen parents
- Identify information to include
- Lay out the steps
- Collect information, compile it, analyze it, present it
- Create guidebook, handbook, or map



BIRTHING BABY BEANS

CONTENT OBJECTIVES

Use scientific processes. Learn about characteristics of plants and growth.

Children will: Use observation skills (drawing stages of growth)
Form hypotheses (about what is required to support plant growth)
Design and conduct an experiment (testing the hypothesis)
Draw/present conclusions based on the experiment

CONTENT TEACHING STRATEGY (Form small groups)

Review/introduce: Discuss growing plants (why we grow plants, plants they see, have in their house, garden, etc.). Give bean seeds to each group. Describe seeds (observe).

Discuss in groups, “What will the seeds need to grow into plants?” (hypothesis) Each group plans an experiment to test one idea. If they want to test ‘light,’ ask how (e.g., put some beans in the dark, some in light). If ‘water,’ how? (e.g., water some, not others). Have different groups test different things.

Make Baby Bean observation notebooks with dates, drawings, and note space for each entry. Draw bean seed; write date. Plan to observe every other day for 2 weeks.

Provide materials to set up experiments (cups, water, cotton, etc.).

Record observations, draw, discuss. After several days, ask what they are finding in relation to their ideas or hypotheses. Do they want to rethink and revise their hypothesis?

As beans sprout, transplant to soil in cups and make new hypotheses and experiments; continue to the 2-leaf stage.

Each group presents Baby Bean Book of experiments and findings.

NEED Minimum 12 beans per group, cotton, cups, plant food, water, a way to make dark space and light space; paper to make Baby Bean Books.

COMPREHENSION CHECK & ASSESSMENT

Review notebooks and beans at each stage and ask for explanations.

Note questions children ask and how they think about answers.

Pose questions after presentations about what they discovered, what they still wonder about, and what it makes them think about.

FOLLOW-UP NOTES

Did this work? _____

How to improve it? _____



SAMPLE ACTIVITY PLAN

PETS AND PESTS

A CREATURE TOUR OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD

CONTENT OBJECTIVES

Examine the relationship of humans with other living things; classify living things according to characteristics; understand the role of opinion in classification. Use observation, description, classification, explanation, presentation.

CONTENT TEACHING STRATEGY

Introduce Discuss what animals or creatures are in the neighborhood, pets children have had or know, other living things around, like insects. Are they good or bad? What makes something a pet or a pest? Are there creatures that are neither? What words are used to describe creatures we like and don't like (horrible, scary, cute, etc.)?

Do Divide into groups: pets, pests, and neutral (other). Take walk, each group lists what they see in their category. Look for cute, scary, dangerous, etc.

For each pet or pest, make a sketch or write a few words to describe it.

Compare lists. Are any creatures on both? Discuss how something can be a pet and a pest at the same time.

What makes a pet or pest scary, interesting, dangerous, or boring? If they took someone on a creature tour of the neighborhood, what would they show? Which pets or pests?

Divide into two or three groups and ask each to plot out a tour area. Draw or make symbols for where the best/most interesting, most scary, dangerous, etc., creatures are found. Plan a tour route.

Have each group prepare the guide's talk, select a tour leader, plan the tour, make handouts for people on the tour

Each group conducts a tour for the other group. Invite others to join!

NEED

Paper for notes, observations, sketches, folders, prepared map (if needed) to guide mapping the tour area, large sheets of paper and markers for map making.

COMPREHENSION CHECK & ASSESSMENT

Discussion, maps (can go in portfolio), tours, questions asked during tour, participation checklists, self-evaluations.

FOLLOW-UP NOTES

Did this work? _____

How to improve it? _____



SAMPLE ACTIVITY PLAN

LOOKING AT WATER AND POLLUTION

FIELD TRIP TO TREATMENT PLANT

CONTENT OBJECTIVES

Introduce concepts of water pollution, properties of substances in water, ecosystems, using processes (settlement, filtration)

CONTENT TEACHING STRATEGY

- Introduce** Everyone gets a glass of water, looks at it, takes a drink. Pass out dirt, mix it into the glasses. Drink? Why not? What is in water? How does water get polluted? What is in the water we drink? What happens when stuff goes down a sink drain? Toilet? Shower? Street drain?
- Discuss** What's in a drain? Get a plumber if possible to explain how drains are set up in houses, buildings, where they go, what goes in them, problems. Brainstorm lists of kinds of things that go into drains from houses, factories, farms, slaughterhouses, apartment buildings, offices, grocery stores.
- Do** Create collection of 'waste'—food garbage, paper bits, sand, pebbles, soil, ink, milk, egg, flour, (if easy access to rotted manure, include, otherwise no animal or human wastes!), etc. What happens when these things mix with water? Pass out jars, fill with water, add different ingredients, shake. What looks like in first minute? After a few minutes? After five minutes? Draw, make notes. How do different things affect the look of water? Why does the look of water matter? Can light get through? What happens if light can't get through water? Pass out simple filters (screens, mesh, paper). Pour water through filter. Now how does water look? What is left on the filter? What can be done with that? How do different processes (settling, filtration) affect the look of water? What makes water OK and not OK for people to drink?

FIELD TRIP

Wastewater treatment plant

WRAP-UP, ASSESSMENT DISCUSSION

How do people now think about drinking water and keeping it drinkable?

Can move from here into water ecosystems: what lives in water, why it matters, how it's affected by pollution. Also, what happens where no treatment plants are available, world issues associated with poor water, water diseases (social studies link).



THE SKINNY ON FAST FOOD

WHERE TO EAT AFTER SCHOOL

CONTENT OBJECTIVES

Explore and explain relationships of nutrition, marketing, and culture

CONTENT TEACHING STRATEGY

Introduce Issues of health and nutrition.

Discuss Is it important for young people to eat better? Why? What's 'better'? Are there cultural differences about what counts as 'better'? What makes 'eating better' difficult after school? How can young people be encouraged to eat more healthy foods after school?

Do Prepare an awareness guide: Which places and what foods are healthier to eat after school?

In the whole group, brainstorm lists of what people eat after school, want to eat, have easy access to, etc. Divide into medium-sized groups. In each group, write each item on the list on a card. Ask groups to sort the cards into healthy and unhealthy. Have everyone walk around and look at the sorts. Are they the same or different? How did people decide which went where? Then sort by price, ease, taste preferences, etc., and share sorts. What are issues or problems in encouraging healthy eating? Create survey of places for getting food in the neighborhood—machines, stores, stands, and shops, homes, fast food places, etc.—identify what they offer, the proportion of healthy versus unhealthy, costs. Survey members of the group and others to see where they go and why. What do people want to know about the food they eat? Where can they find the information? Use libraries and Internet sites to get more information. Read or look at books like "Fast Food Nation." How can young people promote healthy eating for themselves and their friends? Continue to develop concept, and move toward young person's awareness guide.

NEED

Journals, research notebooks, cameras and tape recorders (as needed), computer access, cards.

COMPREHENSION CHECK & ASSESSMENT

Observe and note discussions around card sort activities, participation in survey development and doing survey, presentations, checklists.

What worked and didn't? _____

How to improve it? _____



DOCUMENTING AND ASSESSING LEARNING

PART III



DOCUMENTING AND ASSESSING LEARNING

Demonstrating and documenting learning is part of effective education and is a key part of effective project-based learning. All learners need a sense of accomplishment. Staff need to know how things are working and whether kids are learning and growing. And the program, funders, parents, and school administrators want evidence that goals are being met. Project assessments should be planned at the outset, aligned with the objectives of the project. Tools and techniques might include, for example:

- **Products.** Projects typically yield products: artwork, a video, a web site, written work, food, comic strips, photo journals, a play. Products themselves demonstrate and document learning.
- **Presentations.** Presentations should be commensurate with the time and effort of the project. They can range from visual displays, to presenting to a group and leading discussions, to performing skits, or showing research findings.
- **Portfolios.** Portfolios are collections of material selected by the owner that show learning or skills. Portfolios involve setting clear goals, and periodic reviews of progress.
- **Evaluation rubrics.** With students, if possible, create descriptions of what an excellent, good, fair, or poor quality product would be, or features of excellent, good, fair, or poor presentations. When created along with the project, these serve as guides to the students of how their work will be judged, and gives clear indicators to aim for.
- **Checklist.** Create checklists to guide observation, or record steps or parts of a project or activity. A checklist for a cooking project might include, for example, "read and understand instructions;" "use measurement tools accurately;" or "work with others." Checklists help staff look at everything they should, and provide the same guidelines for each participant. Checklists can also be used for self-assessments and peer evaluations. Date checklists, and use them in portfolios to document skill development.
- **Logs.** Use logs to keep track of essentials, such as the number of hours spent on something, books read, or assignments completed. They can also be used to show progress, especially when coupled with targets.

Documenting learning should be a learning experience in itself. Along with the program staff and leaders, children and young people can also use tools and systems to self-assess, as well as contribute to peer reviews. Self-evaluation systems develop critical abilities of reflection and self-directed improvement. When students are involved in developing guidelines and criteria for judging their work, they understand fully what they have to do to rate 'excellent,' and will see clearly how to improve.

Develop and use assessment tools that will show what you need and want shown. Examples follow.



PORTFOLIOS

A portfolio is a scrapbook of learning. Like a scrapbook, it contains materials selected by the owner. Portfolio contents are deliberately planned, reviewed, and evaluated to look at learning or progress over time, effort, skill levels, or other defined purposes. Share them periodically with parents and teachers.

SET-UP

Portfolios are usually kept as folders or large envelopes marked with:

- Name
- Date started and completed
- Project or purpose

Don't let it become overstuffed. Provide time for children to select, delete, and reflect upon portfolio contents.

CONTENTS

Portfolio contents should demonstrate learning based on goals and objectives. Items to put in the portfolio may be selected by the child, or by the child and teacher together.

A portfolio may contain:

- A collection of best work with a learner's self-evaluation
- Drafts, revisions, and final versions of written pieces
- Paired self-evaluation and teacher-evaluation checklists around specific skills
- Learning contracts and evaluations of progress according to the contract
- Awards, certificates, letters, news clips
- Photographs, artwork, sketches
- Journals
- Field trip notes or reports
- Other relevant documentation

Project portfolios should contain:

- Project plan
- Names of project group
- Date project started and finished
- Project goals
- Evidence of outcomes
- Reflection/evaluation



PORTFOLIO REVIEW CHECKLIST

Review date: _____ By: _____

Portfolio owner: _____

Portfolio subject area or focus: _____

Does the portfolio include:

☐ Young person's name or group names

☐ Title, purpose, subject area, or project

Required selections (list)

Included

Missing

☐
☐
☐
☐

☐
☐
☐
☐

Additional selections (list) _____

OBJECTIVES FOR THE PORTFOLIO	OBJECTIVE MET?	DEMONSTRATED BY	NOT DEMONSTRATED—NEED TO SEE MORE



PORTFOLIO PRODUCERS PLANNER AND CHECKLIST

Name: _____

Date started: _____ Completion date: _____

PORTFOLIO DESIGN PLAN

What is the purpose of my portfolio? _____

What will I include?

Required items:

Target dates:

Other: _____

I want to demonstrate the following (that I can do..., that I learned..., that I know..., that I made a...):

I hope people who look at my portfolio will: _____

How will I evaluate my portfolio? _____

How will my afterschool teacher evaluate my portfolio? _____



PORTFOLIO IN PROCESS

Before including a piece in your portfolio, ask:

- Does this piece fit with the purpose?
- Should it be attached to another piece (before/after, for example, or draft/finished)?
- Does it demonstrate what it needs to?
- Do I already have something that shows this?
- What else should I look for?

Portfolio Wrap-Up

Before submitting your portfolio, check the contents to make sure everything is there. Check for:

- ☐ Name
- ☐ Date
- ☐ Title, purpose, project, or subject area
- ☐ List of what the portfolio is supposed to show

Look at the materials.

Are all required materials there?

☐ yes

☐ no

Do they show what they are supposed to show?

☐ yes

☐ no

Are they presented neatly?

☐ yes

☐ no

Can they be easily understood?

☐ yes

☐ no

Is there anything you wanted to include but didn't?

☐ yes

☐ no

What? _____

Does your portfolio show you achieved what you planned?

☐ yes

☐ no

How would you rate the content of your portfolio?

- ☐ Excellent
- ☐ Very good
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Fair
- ☐ Weak

Comments: _____



AUDIENCE AND LISTENING SKILLS LEADER CHECKLIST

Presentation: _____

Date: _____

Number in audience: _____

Guests: _____

I WANT YOUNG PEOPLE TO:	DID THEY?		HOW CAN I HELP THEM IMPROVE FOR NEXT TIME?
	YES	NO	
Pay attention	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Stay seated	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Listen	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Be able to summarize what the presentation was about	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ask relevant questions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Ask questions respectfully	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Give feedback respectfully and thoughtfully	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Respond appropriately to action in the performance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Other _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



SERVICE LEARNING REFLECTION

Whatever the form of the reflection—journals, photos, web sites, performances, discussions, ask the What's.

What did you do? Participants explain simply and clearly what they did. This builds skills in summarizing, presenting facts and information, and explaining processes. For example, "I spent three hours on Tuesday picking up trash in the park."

So what? Participants think about what difference the service made. Add the question of what difference it made for whom: for the community, other people, oneself. This type of reflection builds skills of analysis, critical thinking, and forming opinions. For example, "The park got clean and nice. I found out that people throw away all kinds of things, and there aren't enough trash cans. I don't like picking up trash. Maybe others don't, either. If there was less garbage on the ground, we wouldn't need to clean it up."

Now what? Participants should think about changes or next steps. What might they do differently? What else should happen? This builds skills of making hypotheses, drawing conclusions from evidence, planning, and presenting ideas. For example, "I'm going to try to throw away less stuff on the street. I think we should write a letter and try to get more trash cans in the park, and get them emptied more often."

Reflection and learning is ongoing. Final reflections, presentations, and performances sum it up. Offer options that fit students' different learning styles and your own skills.

- ☐ Keep an ongoing journal like a diary, answering questions throughout project
- ☐ Create a blog
- ☐ Write a letter or e-mail
- ☐ Write a poem or a series of poems that reflect experiences
- ☐ Create a skit showing roles of different participants and perform it for the group or stage it as an event
- ☐ Make a photo journal
- ☐ Create and script a video
- ☐ Create a map with highlighted areas and issues or experiences
- ☐ Represent the experience in music or with songs
- ☐ Hold small group discussions about the project
- ☐ Hold large group discussions
- ☐ Write an article for a newsletter or paper
- ☐ Role-play something that happened during the project that was challenging
- ☐ Stage a debate with different students advocating different positions around the issue



STAFF TRAINING FOR PBL

PART IV



STAFF TRAINING FOR PBL

Developing, launching, facilitating, and assessing project-based learning are skills in themselves. Staff working with children need to feel comfortable with techniques that help project-based learning work well for everyone.

Plan trainings for staff in PBL, and devote staff meeting time to talking about how things are going, ways staff can support each other's needs—and successes!

The following staff development trainings are drawn from *Afterschool Style in Practice: 25 Skill-Building Meetings for Staff*. Develop additional trainings to extend staff skills for PBL, and to support PBL efforts.

TRAINING SESSION PLANS

- PROJECT-BASED LEARNING
- INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING
- COMMITTEES
- SERVICE LEARNING
- DOCUMENTING LEARNING



TRAINING SESSION PLAN

PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

High quality afterschool experiences challenge and engage kids over time. Projects offer the opportunity for participants to get more deeply into topics, interests, talents, and skill-building.

MEETING GOAL: Staff understand the purpose and goals of project-based learning, and learn to plan a project that encourages youth involvement and targets learning objectives.

PREP: Put assorted random items such as toys, tools, pencils, pens, paper clips, machine parts, or kitchen ware in a paper bag. Include enough to give one to each person.

MATERIALS:

- ☐ Little prizes (candy bar, pen, toy, etc.)
- ☐ Assorted random items (one per person attending) in a paper bag
- ☐ Flip chart paper, or whiteboard
- ☐ Markers
- ☐ Handout: Group Roles, page 56, one per participant
- ☐ Handout: Project Planning Guide, pages 57 – 58, one per group
- ☐ Handout: Project Planning Review, page 59

STEP-BY-STEP

OPENER

5 MINUTES

Explain: Thinking about projects means thinking creatively about programming and possibilities. Here's a creativity warm-up.

Activity

- Pass the bag of items around the room and ask each person to take the first item they touch.
- When everyone has something, tell participants to list at least ten different uses for the item—including crazy and imaginative ones! For example, if someone took a hat, they could turn it upside down and use it for a cereal bowl.
- Have fun, and give prizes to anyone who comes up with more than ten!

INTRODUCTION

Explain: Good projects offer rich learning opportunities. They let kids get involved and go deeper with things that interest them. They're intrinsically motivating and exciting. They can sustain and increase challenge over time, providing real skill-building. Project-based learning culminates with an event, a "demonstration by doing" that calls on kids to show what they've learned through a product, presentation, or performance.



GOOD PROJECTS

10 MINUTES

It takes planning to lay the groundwork for good projects. But the planning pays off because many project plans can be used over and over with different kids, at different times. Some projects are completely open-ended, so the same child can continue with the project over an extended period of time, building skills or exploring different aspects along the way. Good projects tap into kids' interests, and are—absolutely must be—real and meaningful, not make-work. Group projects also build cooperative and teamwork skills, along with leadership, and self-directed learning.

List and Discuss

Ask the group to name great projects they've done. For each, ask for two or three features that made them memorable. List answers.

PLANNING FOR PROJECTS: WEBBING

10 MINUTES

Ask: What is the difference between a project and an activity? (Possible answers: projects are longer-term, have several parts or activities within them, involve different kinds of skills, result in something concrete.)

Explain: Projects allow children to participate in different roles, matching their interests, learning styles, and skills.

Review and Discuss

Hand out Group Roles.

Ask if anyone has ideas to add.

Explain: The best projects grow from kids' interests and curiosity. Projects can be generated by almost anything. Webbing is a helpful technique.

Activity

- Form pairs or small groups.
- Give each a large sheet of paper and some markers.
- Explain that you're going to create an idea web as a technique that can help in project planning.
- Start with a small circle in the middle of the page.
- Write the word "animals" in the circle.
- Create additional bubbles connected to the circle of ideas connected to animals. For example, two branches might be "wild" and "tame." Tame might lead to pets, and pets to veterinarians. Wild might lead to zoos and zoo designers.
- Allow about 5 minutes for the webbing.
- Ask a few participants to share. Did everyone have the same paths?
- Make the point that different projects can be generated from similar starting points.



INSPIRATION

15 MINUTES

Explain: Where can ideas come from? Tell participants that you're going to use the same webbing technique using possibilities in the building.

Activity

- Form pairs or small groups.
- Invite participants to get into the mindset of children they work with.
- Tell them to go around the building or into the hallway and find something that can be the start of a project. For example, they may pass a water fountain. What could they do? Something about plumbing and trades? Water quality? The environment? Environmental justice?
- After a few minutes, come back and web ideas.

Explain: Good projects are driven by youth interests. But they should also have learning objectives, which often can be linked to school content.

Activity

- Distribute the Project Planning Guide and the Project Planning Review.
- Tell participants to look at the web they created, and flesh out a project idea using the project planner. Specifically identify school content or skills that can be brought out by the project.
- Remind participants to be clear about youth interests, choices, leadership, and skill-building. If they find their group saying things like "We could have them do" or "We could get them to," they have probably slipped back into a teacher-directed activity.
- Note opportunities for different roles.
- Ask groups to present projects. Suggest that listeners ask questions and fill in the Review as they listen.

PLANNING FOR ACTION

5 MINUTES

Which project ideas seem do-able? What supports are needed? Did this trigger any other ideas?

Plan the next steps, drawing on kids' interests to create and conduct projects.
Name at least three steps, the time frame, and help or supports you need.

Note to Facilitator: The next meeting, "Inquiry-Based Learning," provides more practice in building program experiences directly out of students' curiosity.



GROUP ROLES

Before starting an activity or project, assign roles, or have kids pick what they want to do.

- **Manager:** Keeps the group “on track” and insures that members are fulfilling their roles.
- **Timekeeper:** Watches the time and moves group along so that they complete the task on time.
- **Recorder:** Keeps a record of the group’s actions, takes notes on discussions, and prepares a written report, if needed.
- **Observer:** Uses a guide, such as a checklist, to watch the group’s activities and may offer feedback.
- **Data Collector:** Uses resources to get needed information for the group.
- **Checker:** Makes sure that everyone understands the concepts and that all group members have reached their goals.
- **Spokesperson:** Communicates with the teacher and other groups when help or information is needed. Represents the group in presentations.
- **Materials Manager:** Makes sure that everyone has the materials they need.
- **Designer:** Leads the artistic representation of the group’s work.
- **Stand-In:** Assumes role of any missing group member.



PROJECT PLANNING GUIDE

PROJECT CONCEPT

Project description (project will lead to): _____

or

Topic to investigate: _____

Questions to investigate: _____

OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

Subject-matter, academic content objective
(what specific academic learning will occur?)

Other objectives:

Supporting project component

(what part of the project fosters the learning?)

ASSESSMENT

How will outcomes be assessed? _____

Observation of working processes: _____

Observation of final product or performance: _____

Evaluation of final product against criteria: _____

Evaluation by outsiders: _____

Written evaluation by teacher: _____

Self-evaluation by participants: _____

Other: _____



INTERIM PRODUCTS OR PROGRESS DEMONSTRATIONS

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Schedules | <input type="checkbox"/> Deadlines | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work assignments | <input type="checkbox"/> Performances | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Reports | <input type="checkbox"/> Drafts | |

IMPLEMENTATION MATTERS

Number of participants: _____ Materials, supplies: _____

Amount of time needed: _____

Start date: _____

End date: _____

Storage space needed: _____

Assessment dates: _____ Interims: _____ Final: _____

PLANNING CHECK

Does the topic...

- ☐ Build on what children already know?
- ☐ Offer real-world learning opportunities?
- ☐ Encourage easy hands-on learning experiences?
- ☐ Reach a range of ages, learning styles, and levels?
- ☐ Seem interesting?
- ☐ Involve many content areas?
- ☐ Have enough to keep it going for the length of project?
- ☐ Foster independent learning?

Does the culminating project...

- ☐ Demonstrate learning?
- ☐ Demonstrate achievement?
- ☐ Permit meaningful contributions from all levels?
- ☐ Offer opportunities for interim products and markers of progress?
- ☐ Offer opportunity for pride in the work done?

Is it...

- ☐ Do-able given time, space, and materials requirement?
- ☐ Within the scope of resources available?
- ☐ Within the scope of participants' abilities?
- ☐ Within the scope of teachers' knowledge and skills?



PROJECT PLANNING REVIEW

Use this checklist to help think through project ideas with kids or with other staff.

- ☐ **What is at the heart of the project? What question or interest area?**
(For example, learning about kids' legal rights, or what it means to be a lawyer.)

- ☐ **What does it take to do the project? Is it do-able?**

- ☐ **Who needs to be involved? What are the roles or responsibilities for staff?
For participants? For community members or others?**

- ☐ **Is it driven by kids' interests? How are kids involved in setting up,
managing, or evaluating?**

- ☐ **What are the hoped-for outcomes? How will they be demonstrated?**

- ☐ **How can learning be demonstrated or shared with others?**
(For example, performances, newsletters, videos, PowerPoints®, etc.)



TRAINING SESSION PLAN

INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING

Inquiry-learning is a type of project-based learning that's driven by questions and explorations.

MEETING GOAL: Staff understand steps in setting up inquiry projects, including guiding students in forming questions, creating learning activities, and strengthening children's abilities to question, research, and discover.

PREP: Copy the Palm Reading Map, one per participant.

MATERIALS:

- ☐ Palm Reading Map, page 63
- ☐ Handout: Questions for Inquiry-Based Learning, page 64, one per participant

STEP-BY-STEP

OPENER

5 MINUTES

Explain: Inquiry-based learning starts with questions and leads to explorations. This meeting is about using inquiry as a basis for projects.

Activity

- Distribute the Palm Reading Map.
- Tell participants to find a partner, and take a few minutes to read each other's palms.
- After a few minutes, bring the group together.
- Ask whether anyone has ever had their palm read. Were they able to do this? Did people like what they heard? What questions might they—or kids—have about this?
- List answers, which might include: (What kinds of fortune telling are out there? Who believes in what? Do different cultures have different beliefs about fortune telling? What does science say about what's true?)

INTRODUCTION

Explain: In this global economy, children and young people need to learn how to learn. They need to be able to ask questions, explore, find and use resources, analyze, and think critically. Inquiry-based learning is an approach that starts with a clear question and builds on the processes of answering it. The adults are not expected to know the answer. In fact, sometimes there is no single or definitive answer. The point is to learn to explore and dig into interesting questions.



Inquiry-learning can involve kids of all ages, levels, interests, and learning styles. It can weave together different subject areas, and get kids working together. Older kids can pursue more complex, longer-term projects. Younger ones can do smaller, shorter-term activities, such as figuring out which objects float.

QUESTIONS AND TOPICS

15 MINUTES

Explain: The way we ask questions shapes the types of answers we get.

Activity

- Have participants ask the person next to them about a recent movie or TV show they saw.
- Ask a few volunteers to share the questions they asked and the answers they got.
- Does any type of question seem to lead to more questions?

Explain: Good questions for inquiry generate more questions. “What is” or “Where is” questions end once the answer is given. Inquiry questions like “What will happen if...” or “Why are ...?” call for more exploration.

Ask and List

- Think back to the palm reading.
- Ask: What questions would be good inquiry questions?
- List questions.
- Distribute Questions for Inquiry-Based Learning to each participant. Review the checklist.
- In pairs, review and evaluate the questions on the handout. (Be prepared for some disagreement. It is not necessary to reach consensus.)
- Now look at the questions based on palm reading. Create four really strong inquiry questions.

Explain: Generating topics or areas of inquiry can come from your knowledge of children’s interests, local events, things that come up spontaneously (like stains on a carpet), or topics based on school work.

Kids themselves are the best sources. Listen and watch. You can also ask. Hold brainstorming sessions. Or put up a Question Wall where kids can do their own brainstorming, adding sub-questions and twists as they come up. Post blank question walls in areas where materials are available for experimenting, such as water, miscellaneous objects, flour, salt, and food coloring.



THE INQUIRY PROCESS

10 MINUTES

Explain: Questions are the first step. Next is to use resources to explore and find answers. Looking things up in books or on the web is one strategy.

Ask and List

- Ask participants how information can be collected.
- Create a list of Resources and Information. Possibilities include interviews, surveys, films, site visits, and experiments.
- Ask the group what resources they might suggest around the palm reading questions.

Explain: The next step is answering the question. Do the “inquirers” have enough information? Is it good information? Any gaps? Finally, how can kids show their learning? Think about presentations, Power Points, Web sites, photo journals, reports, or performances.

Review: 4 Steps in the process:

- (1) Identify the question
- (2) Get resources for information to answer the questions
- (3) Assemble, analyze, and pull it together
- (4) Share the learning

Ask: What demonstration could show the learning from a palm reading inquiry project?

PLANNING FOR ACTION

10 MINUTES

Explain: As in all learning activities, planning is key. Topics need to grab kids’ interests. Staff need to be able to point to resources to answer the questions. And you need to figure out program time to do the project.

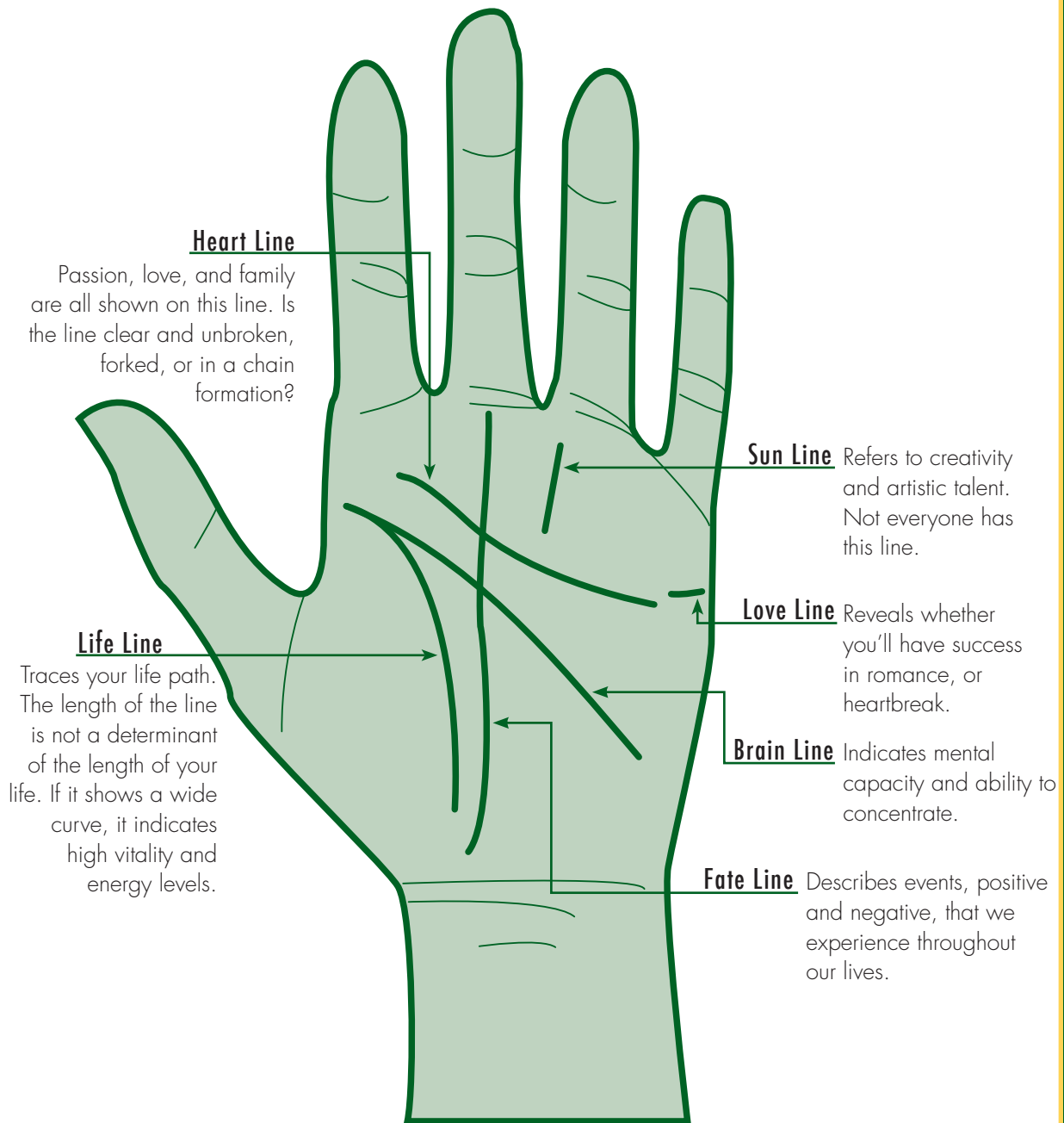
Discuss: In teaching pairs or small groups, pick two or three inquiry project ideas and run them through checklist.

- What would it take to set up and do them in terms of time, schedule, materials, and resources?
- How can kids be involved in creating inquiry projects?
- What challenges do you face in trying to do inquiry projects? What supports would you want?

* For more information on Inquiry-Based Learning, go to www.youthlearn.org



PALM READING MAP



QUESTIONS FOR INQUIRY-BASED LEARNING

CHECKLIST

	Yes	No
Is the question something kids really care about?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Does the question require more than just looking up a simple fact?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the answer something kids already know?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Is the question objective, is there more than one possible 'right' answer?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

DO THESE QUESTIONS MAKE THE CUT?

- ☐ Where is Chicago?
- ☐ How do they get the toothpaste in the tube?
- ☐ How much does a car cost in Japan?
- ☐ Why did Dr. Seuss write The Cat in the Hat?
- ☐ What is text messaging?
- ☐ Is R&B more popular than rap?
- ☐ How many people live in New York City?
- ☐ Why does the grass turn brown in the summer?
- ☐ Is the price of gas the same in Montana as it is in New Jersey?
- ☐ Should the Bible be taught in school?
- ☐ What are the arguments for and against teaching the Bible in school?

THE FOUR STEPS TO THE INQUIRY PROCESS

- (1) **Ask Question:** Probe kids to get to the "real" question they want to ask.
- (2) **Get Resources:** Help kids find resources to answer their question. Encourage kids to question whether or not the information is valid or good information.
- (3) **Apply Information:** Help kids decide if the information is useful or answers their question.
- (4) **Report Findings:** Encourage kids to create their own way to show what they learned.



TRAINING SESSION PLAN

COMMITTEES

Committees are a great way to include student voice and choice in your program. When children are working in committees to plan and carry out projects or aspects of the program, committee time itself becomes program activity time. In committees, children are learning independence, group work, and leadership, while leaving staff more time for activities that need direct support.

MEETING GOAL: Learn strategies and techniques to create, support, and get the most out of student-led committees.

PREP: On large flip chart sheets, write the following headings. Post them and place markers nearby.

- Tasks During the Program (for example, set up snack, get out art materials)
- Jobs in Preparation for the Program (for example, plan field trips, order supplies)
- Decisions that Staff Make (for example, projects to do, themes to work with)

Print out and cut up the Committee Cards, to have one card for each small group.

MATERIALS:

- ☐ Flip chart paper or whiteboard
- ☐ Handout: Committee Planning Worksheet, page 68, two per participant
- ☐ Committee Cards, page 69
- ☐ Handout: Observer Checklist, page 70, one per group of 4–5

STEP-BY-STEP

OPENER

10 MINUTES

Activity

- Post the flip charts labeled Tasks During the Program, Jobs in Preparation for the Program, and Decisions that Staff Make.
- As staff enter the room, ask them to list jobs and decisions under the headings.
- After a few minutes, ask staff to take seats and look at the lists.
- Ask if anyone wants to add anything.
- Ask: Could children's committees help or take care of any of these?
- Check or star items identified as opportunities for committees.



INTRODUCTION

Explain: Committees take skill and time to set up, but once done, they run themselves all program long, and even for years. Staff working with committees need to be open and flexible. Children’s committees can come up with great ways of doing things adults hadn’t thought of!

To be successful, committees need (1) a clear function, purpose, or task, with clear instructions; (2) time to plan and develop—children and adults need to learn how to work in and with committees; and (3) dedicated time for committees to do their work.

PLANNING FOR GOOD COMMITTEES

10 MINUTES

Activity

- Divide the group into pairs and distribute the Committee Planning Worksheet.
- Ask each pair to select from the list on the wall a committee they’d like to form.
- Using the Worksheet as a guide, ask pairs to flesh out and share their ideas.
- Talk about any stumbling blocks and discuss possible solutions.

FACILITATING EFFECTIVE COMMITTEES

25 MINUTES

Explain: Working with committees takes practice. The trick is learning how much direction to give and when to let kids lead. This activity will provide an opportunity for practice.

Role Play

- Divide into groups of up to four or five to role play a committee.
- Distribute one Committee Card and the Observer Checklist to each group.
- One person plays “Adult,” and one person, “Observer.” The rest are “Children.” Ask participants to be authentic—and not all be the kid who gives the teacher a hard time! The goal is to look at the committee process, not manage difficult behaviors.
- Allow 10 minutes for committees to plan their first steps.
- After 10 minutes, ask: In your roles as children or staff, rate the effectiveness of your committee on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 as very effective and 1 weak.



Ask and Discuss

Each committee had different levels of information, a different purpose, and different parameters. Who gave the committee a 4 or 5? Who gave it a 1 or 2?

What made one work, and the other not?

- Those playing staff members: When and how did you participate? Did you need to take charge? When were you able to give over leadership to the kids?
- Observers: What did you see?

PLANNING FOR ACTION

5 MINUTES

Ask staff which committee could be set up in the next four weeks to start doing some of the program tasks or making some program choices.

Thinking about that committee possibility, brainstorm a list of roles and committee work the kids could take on. Discuss how to involve English language learners and children with special needs in committees.

Use the *Committee Planning Worksheet* to get started. What is needed to carry it out?



COMMITTEE PLANNING WORKSHEET

Committee Name: _____

Possible Age Groups: _____

COMMITTEE PURPOSE

Example: Committee will plan monthly snack menu using a budget

GUIDELINES

Example: Committee must submit menus to director on the 15th of each month and stay within budget and nutrition guidelines

SUPPORTS NEEDED

Example:

Children: How to use a budget; how to read nutrition information

Staff: Facilitating committees

Resources: FDA guidelines, calculators, or computers

TIME

Example: Committee will meet the first two Mondays of each month during enrichment time

ADULT SUPPORT

Name a staff person who will support this committee

ROLES ON COMMITTEE

Example: Note taker, researcher, math checker, etc.



COMMITTEE CARDS

LIBRARY COMMITTEE

Purpose: To determine a system for a lending library of program books and games

Grades: 3rd–5th grade

FIELD TRIP COMMITTEE

Background: Committee was formed after complaints that the last few trips were too babyish

Purpose: To be determined by group

Grade: 5th grade

SERVICE COMMITTEE

Purpose: To plan service projects for entire multi-aged program

Grades: Kindergarten–5th grade

SNACK COMMITTEE

Purpose: To be determined by group

Grades: Kindergarten and 1st grade

HOMEWORK COMMITTEE

Background: Program is required to have 45 minutes of homework time. There are mixed opinions from the kids about how it should be structured.

Purpose: To be determined by group

Grades: 1st grade–5th grade

BEHAVIOR COMMITTEE

Background: Was suggested by a staff person who was tired of giving time outs and yelling at the kids.

Purpose: To be determined by group

Grades: Middle School



COMMITTEE OBSERVER CHECKLIST

COMMITTEE WORK

DID COMMITTEE MEMBERS...	YES	NO	SOMEWHAT	COMMENTS
Work together?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Create a plan?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Understand and follow directions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Meet the deadline?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Express opinions/ disagree respectfully?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Actively participate?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

How do committee members rate their effectiveness on a scale of 1-4? _____

(1 is "Not at All Effective" and 4 is "Completely Effective")



TRAINING SESSION PLAN

SERVICE LEARNING

When kids organize a day to collect canned goods for a local food bank, they provide an important service. When they actively reflect on why food is needed, what they learned, and what might happen next, the project becomes service learning.

MEETING GOAL: Staff understand the concept and components of service learning, and gain strategies for creating and supporting service learning projects.

PREP: Make one copy of each handout for each participant.

MATERIALS:

- ☐ Handout: Types of Community Service, page 74
- ☐ Handout: Community Service and Service Learning, page 75
- ☐ Handout: Service Learning: Steps and "What's," page 76
- ☐ Handout: Service Learning Reflection, page 77
- ☐ Handout: Service-Learning Quick Planner, page 78

STEP-BY-STEP

OPENER

5 MINUTES

Explain: When kids volunteer or work in their communities, they're providing a valuable service. They're also learning.

Ask and List

Ask participants to quickly list what kids learn and how they benefit from service to others. Allow one minute. Invite participants to read from their lists.

INTRODUCTION

Explain: Service learning takes a service and builds it into an active learning experience. It connects kids with others and with the idea of being a member of society. At its best, service learning helps young people learn from their experiences and their interactions with others in their communities. Service learning shows that learning, teaching, giving, and receiving all happen together. At this meeting, we'll take a closer look at service learning.



SERVICE AND SERVICE LEARNING

Ask and Discuss

- Distribute Types of Community Service handout.
- Ask staff to reflect on their own volunteer or service activities. Do they fit into any of these categories?
- Ask a few participants to describe the most meaningful service experience they've had, and what made it powerful for them.
- Create a list of features of meaningful service work.
- Distribute Community Service and Service Learning.
- Ask participants what they see as the most important difference between service and service learning. Looking at the features of meaningful service, what other components are added to make it service learning?

STEPS TO SERVICE LEARNING

20 MINUTES

Explain: The simplest way to think about service learning are the “What’s” —What should you do? What did you do? So what? Now what? The “What’s” form the framework for reflecting on and learning from the experience.

Activity

Step 1: Identifying the “what to do” and why

- Ask staff to brainstorm a list of possible service opportunities, for example: school clean-up, collecting supplies for a shelter, performing at a senior center, clean-up in a local park, or collecting oral histories to make a book. Other examples include tutoring, helping children or seniors learn computer skills, serving on a community board, working with a housing organization, participating in a mural arts program, organizing a food and toy drive, working at a hospital or clinic, helping immigrants learn English, or assisting with voter registration.
- As a group, go down the list and mark them with S, M, or L to specify short activities (a day or less), medium (a few days or so over time), or long (committed days over a longer stretch of time).
- Go down the list again, and star the ones that would interest—and benefit—kids the most.
- Revisit the ones with the stars and think about learning objectives. What kinds of skills can be developed through this project?

Step 2: The action, the doing

- Looking at the list, what seems most do-able? What kinds of issues need to be addressed? Are partners needed? Do you need to coordinate with other organizations?
- What about logistics and logistical considerations? Transportation? Snacks? Supervision? Liability?
- How might it fit in the schedule? When could it be done?



Step 3: Reflection

- This is the active learning piece. Service learning asks the participants to think about what they're doing, why it matters, and how it connects with larger issues.
- All service learning needs a process for learning along the way. A closing performance or presentation sums it up.

Discuss: Hand out Service Learning: Steps and "What's." Look at the Service Learning Reflection handout. Discuss what reflection is, and what it takes in terms of time and focus. What techniques can you use that fit the age group? What can children work on most independently?

Step Four: Celebration and Recognition

- How can participants recognize or celebrate their work and their work together?

PLANNING FOR ACTION

10 MINUTES

Ask participants to look at the list of possible service activities, and their ratings for interest level, length, and do-ability.

Form pairs or small groups of staff who work together with the same kids or in the same program. Pick one service activity from the list—or another they may have thought of along the way—and start to flesh it out using the Service Learning Quick Planner.

What supports are needed to make service learning work in the program?



TYPES OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

DIRECT SERVICE EXPERIENCE

Participants work with others, providing service directly

- Peer tutoring
- Buddy reading
- Working with senior citizens, animals, other kids
- Improving community appearance

Your Experiences? _____

SUPPORT OR INDIRECT SERVICE EXPERIENCE

Participants raise money or collect goods to turn over to an organization that helps others or contributes to a cause

- Car wash
- Bake sale
- Toy drive
- Sponsor a soldier

Your Experiences? _____

CIVIC ACTION OR ADVOCACY

Participants join with others to express their views and bring about change

- Demonstration
- Petition
- Letter writing campaign
- Public service announcement

Your Experiences? _____

Other _____



COMMUNITY SERVICE AND SERVICE LEARNING

COMMUNITY SERVICE

An opportunity for students to volunteer in service to others.

Focus is on the task and the benefit to the recipients

Objective is typically the provision of the service, without specific learning objectives identified

Project ends when the service is completed

Can be developed independently (for example, street clean-up), through schools, or with community organizations

Fosters civic engagement

SERVICE LEARNING

A teaching method built on students' experience of service to others

Focus is on the learning from the task and the mutual benefits for all involved

Learning objectives that include academic skills and knowledge are specifically identified

Provides structured time for participants to reflect on and identify their learning during and after the service

Typically involves partnership or coordination with schools, community organizations, or volunteer programs

Fosters civic engagement



SERVICE LEARNING STEPS AND "WHAT'S"

STEP ONE

WHAT MIGHT YOU DO?

Students and teachers together:

- Identify needs and possibilities
- Develop a plan for the service activity
- List learning objectives

STEP TWO

ACTION: WHAT DO YOU DO?

Students with guidance and structure from teachers:

- Make arrangements as needed
- Connect with community partners or other organizations
- Provide meaningful service and follow-through
- Plan for reflections and final demonstrations of learning

STEP THREE

REFLECTION: SO WHAT, NOW WHAT?

Students with guidance and structure from teachers:

- Record what they are doing
- Reflect along the way, answering questions
- Raise issues, feelings, rewards, and challenges
- Respond to the "So what?" and "Now what" questions
- Prepare a final demonstration, performance, or presentation
- Describe new understanding and the impact of the project
- Place the experience in a larger context of understanding

STEP FOUR

CELEBRATION AND RECOGNITION

Students and teachers together:

- Bring closure to the project
- Involve community partners
- Reinforce values of service



SERVICE LEARNING REFLECTION

Whatever the form of the reflection—journals, photos, Web sites, performances, discussions, ask the What's.

What did you do? Participants explain simply and clearly what they did. This builds skills in summarizing, presenting facts and information, and explaining processes. For example, "I spent three hours on Tuesday picking up trash in the park."

So what? Participants think about what difference the service made. Add the question of what difference it made for whom: for the community, other people, oneself. This type of reflection builds skills of analysis, critical thinking, and forming opinions. For example, "The park got clean and nice. I found out that people throw away all kinds of things, and there aren't enough trash cans. I don't like picking up trash. Maybe others don't, either. If there was less garbage on the ground, we wouldn't need to clean it up."

Now what? Participants should think about changes or next steps. What might they do differently? What else should happen? This builds skills of making hypotheses, drawing conclusions from evidence, planning, and presenting ideas. For example, "I'm going to try to throw away less stuff on the street. I think we should write a letter and try to get more trash cans in the park, and get them emptied more often."

Reflection and learning is ongoing. Final reflections, presentations, and performances sum it up. Offer options that fit students' different learning styles and your own skills.

- ☐ Keep an ongoing journal like a diary, answering questions throughout project
- ☐ Create a blog
- ☐ Write a letter or e-mail
- ☐ Write a poem or a series of poems that reflect experiences
- ☐ Create a skit showing roles of different participants and perform it for the group or stage it as an event
- ☐ Make a photo journal
- ☐ Create and script a video
- ☐ Create a map with highlighted areas and issues or experiences
- ☐ Represent the experience in music or with songs
- ☐ Hold small group discussions about the project
- ☐ Hold large group discussions
- ☐ Write an article for a newsletter or paper
- ☐ Role-play something that happened during the project that was challenging
- ☐ Stage a debate with different students advocating different positions around the issue



SERVICE LEARNING QUICK PLANNER

Service project or activity: _____

Date, dates, or amount of time: _____

Number of students: _____

Logistics: (Transportation, snack, liability, other issues) _____

Needs coordination with: _____

Community partners: _____

Reflections: (How, what, and when) _____

Closing events, performances, or presentations: _____

Challenges: _____

Needs for support: _____



TRAINING SESSION PLAN

DOCUMENTING LEARNING

Demonstrating and documenting learning is part of effective education. All learners need a sense of accomplishment. Staff need to know how things are working and whether kids are learning and growing. And the program, funders, parents, and school administrators want evidence that goals are being met.

MEETING GOAL: Staff understand afterschool-style methods to show learning and progress, and see how to use a portfolio process.

PREP: Copy handouts

MATERIALS:

- ☐ Flip chart paper or whiteboard
- ☐ Copies of Documenting and Assessing Learning, page 82, one per participant

STEP-BY-STEP

OPENER

10 MINUTES

Explain: Schools typically use tests to measure what children know in a particular subject. There are other ways to show learning, however, that better fit the hands-on, mixed subject, experiential learning of afterschool.

Activity

- Ask for two or three volunteers to teach the group something they can learn in a few minutes. It can be anything: a dance step, how to draw a cartoon, or how to count to five in another language.
- Have the teacher teach it to the group.
- Ask: How did the “teacher” know people were learning? How did participants know that they had learned?

INTRODUCTION

Explain: In afterschool, kids demonstrate their learning through performances, products, and demonstrations. They do whatever it is. How well they do it shows what was learned, and what still needs work.



DEMONSTRATING LEARNING, AFTERSCHOOL STYLE

25 MINUTES

Demonstrations should be aligned with objectives of the project or activity. If the objective of a project is that kids learn to represent the results of a survey, be sure the demonstration calls for that. If the objective of an activity is that children learn to create a web site, the demonstration is the web site itself.

If the project or work is complex or will be completed over an extended period of time, reward kids' efforts by taking performances or demonstrations seriously. Schedule time for presentations. Performances can involve invitees. Writings and art can be published in print or electronically. Use this as an opportunity to help children build confidence, and take pride in what they've done.

Chart and Discuss

- Create a chart with three columns.
- Ask the group to list in Column 1 different kinds of learning activities or projects children are doing. This could include homework time, special programs led by outside experts, long-term projects, or shorter-term activities.
- In Column 2, use two or three words to capture key objectives. In Column 3, note how staff know, or could know, whether children are learning.
- Distribute Documenting and Assessing Learning. Review each type of assessment. Ask: Do people have experience with any, as teacher or learner? Are staff already using some of these strategies?
- Look at the chart the group created. Which tools or techniques could be used for different activities? Add these to column 3.
- Go back to the handout. Working in pairs, fill in examples of where and how the strategy could be used. Draw examples from the chart and other ideas.
- Review the lists and examples again. In the full group, discuss where assessing and documenting can involve self-assessment or peer reviews. This builds critical thinking, and helps children take responsibility for their learning. It also helps them see their growth!

PORTFOLIOS

10 MINUTES

Explain: Documentation helps kids and staff both mark progress and share it with others. Portfolios are a system for collecting evidence of what kids did and learned. Good portfolios tie to particular goals and objectives the kids set themselves. At the beginning of the year, for example, you might set up a portfolio system with kids writing goals such as, "I want to do a lot of art and learn new techniques," or "I want to learn to make a web site." The portfolio then would be a collection of art work, work logs, presentation checklists, or products that show the learning.



Portfolios should be reviewed periodically in on-on-one sessions with each participant. Set review or conference dates that fit the goals and the age of the child. Younger children need quicker check-ins; older ones can have several check-in points months apart. Use the opportunity to build a supportive relationship that acknowledges success and growth, and inspires greater challenge and accomplishment.

The key to good portfolios is setting goals that are achievable in the time frame.

Activity

- Form pairs or small groups.
- Look at the work done so far relating activities and projects to different assessment techniques.
- Create three to five learning objectives or goal statements that could guide a portfolio.
- In the full group, share statements.
- Brainstorm the kinds of evidence or items that could go into the portfolio to demonstrate progress toward the goals.
- Ask: What evidence could go into a portfolio if a student produces a product that doesn't fit in a portfolio, like a sculpture, or a spoken presentation?

PLANNING FOR ACTION

10 MINUTES

Discuss whether portfolios would be useful in your program. What would be the goals of creating and keeping portfolios from the perspective of the program? Would it be to guide programming? To show parents? To show teachers? To celebrate kids' learning?

What do staff see as opportunities or challenges with portfolios? What supports are needed to make it work?

Identify next steps in setting up a portfolio system. Or, if you choose not to use portfolios, what kinds of demonstrations, performances, or tools fit with activities you're doing now? Pick one to try in the upcoming two weeks.



DOCUMENTING AND ASSESSING LEARNING

Documenting learning should be a learning experience in itself. Adults assess and document children's learning. Children and young people can use these tools and systems to self-assess, and also as part of peer reviews.

- ☐ **Checklist.** Create checklists to guide observation, or record steps or parts of a project or activity. A checklist for a cooking project might include "read and understand instructions," for example; "use measurement tools accurately;" or "work with others." Checklists help staff look at everything they should, and provide the same guidelines for each participant. Checklists can also be used for self-assessments and peer evaluations. Date checklists, and use them in portfolios to document skill development.

Examples of use:

- ☐ **Logs.** Use these to keep track of essentials, such as the number of hours spent on something, books read, or assignments completed. They can also be used to show progress, especially when coupled with targets.

Examples of use:

- ☐ **Presentations.** Presentations should be commensurate with the time and effort of the project or activity. They can range from visual displays, to presenting to a group and leading discussions, to performing skits, or showing research findings.

Examples of use:

- ☐ **Product.** Many projects or activities yield products: artwork, a video, a Web site, written work, food, comic strips, photo journals, a play. Products themselves demonstrate and document learning.

Examples of use:

- ☐ **Portfolios.** Portfolios are collections of material selected by the owner that show learning or skills. Portfolios involve setting clear goals, and periodic reviews of progress.

Examples of use:



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