

APPENDIX

B

Critical Elements Work Group Report

A team of 5 evaluators from the National 4-H Impact Design Implementation Team met in St. Louis. The Critical Elements Work Group emerged from the National 4-H Impact Assessment Project. The group's task was framed in the research question "What positive outcomes in youth, adults, and communities result from the presence of critical elements in a 4-H experience." The group reviewed the basic and applied research on characteristics of effective programs for youth development. Emphasis was placed on using existing empirical research on what impacts positive youth development. Another criterion used by the group was relevancy to 4-H that could be communicated to colleagues, researchers and volunteers. From this process, eight elements critical to youth development emerged. These are not presented in ranked order. The following are the identified critical elements of the 4-H experience:

[Please note that some elements are followed by key words that describe sub-concepts of the element.]

The critical element in the 4-H is:

a positive relationship with a caring adult

A caring adult acts as an advisor, guide and mentor. The adult helps set boundaries and expectations for young people. The caring adult could be called supporter, friend and advocate.

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a safe environment – physically and emotionally

Youth should not fear physical or emotional harm while participating in the 4-H experience whether from the learning environment itself, adults, other participants or spectators.

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opportunity for mastery

competence

Mastery is the building of knowledge, skills and attitudes and then demonstrating the competent use of this knowledge and skills in the manner of the proficient practitioner. The level of mastery is dependent on the developmental ability of the individual child or youth. The development of mastery is a process over time and is increased with repetition.

References:

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the opportunity to value and practice service to others

Finding one self begins with losing yourself in the service of others. Service is a way for members to gain exposure to the larger community, indeed the world itself. It is necessary to actively practice and treasure service.

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opportunity for self-determination

self-directing

autonomous

empowerment

self-worth

Believing that you have impact over life's events rather than passively submitting to the will and whims of others is self-determination. Young people must foster a personal sense of influence over their own lives, exercising their potential to become self-directing, autonomous adults.

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an inclusive environment

encouragement
affirming
feedback
belonging

An inclusive environment is one that allows a sense of belonging to develop, encourages and supports its members and offers encouragement with positive and specific feedback. Healthy groups celebrate the success of all members – taking pride in the collective efforts of all.

References::

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*opportunity to see one-self as an active
participant in the future*

The ability to see one-self in the future is to harness the hope and optimism to shape life choices to facilitate the transition into participating in the perceived future.

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engagement in learning

An engaged youth is one who is mindful of the subject area, building relationships and connections in order to develop understanding. Through self-reflection, the brain has the ability to self-correct and learn from the experience. The engaged learner has a higher degree of self-motivation and an inexhaustible capacity to create.

References:

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APPENDIX

C

Outcomes Work Group Report

The Youth Outcomes Work Group met in Tucson, Arizona to review the Critical Elements and recommend what outcomes should be measured. The group reviewed relevant research and work done by the following groups: CYFAR National Youth Outcomes Work Group, Youth Outcomes Task Force, and the Targeting Life Skills Model developed by Pat Hendricks. The group felt that if all of the critical elements were present in a 4-H program setting, the environment would be conducive to mastering the following competencies identified by Pittman & Fleming (1991) as necessary for preparation for adulthood. No studies to date have been conducted to measure these elements against mastery of a specific competence. neither has a study been conducted to determine whether or not one element is more significant than another. At this time we assume that the combined synergy at these critical elements is the determining factor in effective programming. Some life skills outcomes that could be expected from mastering these competencies are:

NOTE: Some definitions were adapted from work done by the CYFAR National Youth Outcomes Work Group.

communication skills

Communication is a process of creating and sharing meanings. It is an interactive process which involves the sending and receiving of messages (verbal and non-verbal) in some meaningful way. Certain skills have been associate with positive, effective communication. These skills include appropriate non-verbal posture and tone of voice; asking/answering questions; self-disclosing thoughts and feeling; empathy or "other perspective"; reflective listening; and acknowledgement through supportive comments. Two aspects of this outcome need to be measure: communication with peers and other youth; and communication with caring adults.

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conflict resolution skills

Interpersonal conflict is characterized by opposition and disagreement. Conflict can be either constructive or destructive. Destructive conflicts tend to focus on the person and escalate beyond the immediate issue. Constructive conflicts focus on the issue not the person and are associated with conflict resolution strategies such as negotiation and compromise. Conflict resolution strategies fall into three basic categories: power assertion, negotiation and disengagement. Interpersonal conflict resolution strategies have been found to be a function of factors such as age, cognitive development, gender, culture, relationship type, contextual setting and personality. Effective conflict resolution involves managing the emotion evoked in a conflictual situation by attacking the problem not the person and using a negotiation or problem-solving process to determine a mutually acceptable solution. Communications skills (non-verbal posture and tone of voice; asking/answering questions; self-disclosing thoughts and feeling; empathy or "other perspective"; reflective listening; and acknowledgement through supportive comments) are closely related to conflict resolution.

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critical thinking skills

Most researchers agree that the basic cognitive operations involved in critical-thinking are: recall and comprehension; analysis; comparison; inference and application and synthesis and evaluation. These skills are not characterized as a rigid hierarchy, because there may be a wide range of difficulty within each skill. Analysis can be simple or complex, depending upon the scope and the complexity of the problem; similarly, evaluation can be easy or difficult. Generally speaking, evaluation and inference draw upon the other reasoning operations as well. The primary distinction among the five categories of thinking skills lies in the different ways in which youth relate and use information.

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decision making skills

The process of making choices among possible alternatives. Most models include the following skills important to effective decision making are: gathering information and facts, identifying possible options, identifying the possible consequences for each options, evaluating the desirability and likelihood of each consequences, making a choice. These models address goal-directed, plan decision making. Although cognitive aspects of decision making are considered important to adolescent risk-taking, risk-related decisions require additional considerations.

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goal setting and planning skills

A goal is defined as an end toward which you direct some specific effort. The purpose of goal setting is to identify tasks in order to achieve personal accomplishments. Four tasks in goal setting are identifying opportunities, writing goal statement, development goals, and formulating action plans. There is a gap in youth research pertaining to key issues outside the traditional youth audience. This gap appears to be in youth employment, education and training.

References:

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social/environmental navigation skills

Social/Environmental navigation is having the required skills or knowledge and a sense of efficacy to apply those skills to met the daily challenges of life. Appropriate skills for managing one's life include learning resourcefulness, problem-focused coping to modify particular stressors, social networking, help-seeking, and the ability to use strategies to access resources of information (interpersonally or electronically). A further successful navigation in the environment is self monitoring. Self-monitoring includes responsiveness to social and interpersonal cues regarding appropriate behavior, and the ability to regulate one's verbal and nonverbal emotional displays to be perceived in a socially approved manner.

Resources:

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personal safety skills

Taking care of yourself to avoid danger, risk, or harm both physically and emotionally. It's the ability to use vital knowledge to develop personal attitudes and behaviors to prevent self injury or harm. Personal safety includes behaviors related to weapons and violence, sexual activity, suicide, vehicle safety, tobacco, alcohol, and other drug use and nutrition and physical exercise.

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Teaching Personal Safety for Potential Prevention of Sexual Abuse: A Comparison of Treatments. *Journal of Consulting & Clinical Psychology*, 54(5) p. 688-692.

problem solving skills

The process of finding a solution to a situation or problem. Problem solving skills include the ability to recognize and define problems, invent and implement solutions, and track and evaluate results. Most models suggest that successful problem solving requires intellectual skills, verbal knowledge, and cognitive strategies. Cognitive skills, group interaction skills, and problem-processing skills are all crucial to successful problem solving. It has been suggested that these capabilities can be improved with proper instruction. Ronning, McCurdy, & Ballinger argue that research concerned primarily with methods and knowledge acquisition is incomplete because the processes used when solving a problem can depend both on the characteristics of the problem and on the knowledge possessed by the problem-solver.

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relationship skills

Relationships involve connection between two or more people in both personal and social settings which contributes to their mutual well-being. It's paying attention and caring about the other person. Relationship can be with parents, step-parents, siblings, peers, relatives, and other significant adults. Relationships fundamentally influence not only how one perceives one's self, but also perceptions of one's value or worthwhileness to society. No relationship occurs in a vacuum, therefore relationships can become very complex and convoluted. In addition, researchers agree that adolescents and younger children differs in their needs with respect to adults. As a child grows older, he/she tends to be more influenced by peers needs less direction from adults. Two aspects of this outcome need to be measure: relationship with peers and other youth, and relationship with caring adults.

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- Jackson, S. & Rodriquez-Tome, H., (1993). *Adolescence: Expanding social worlds*. In S. Jackson and H. Rodriquez-Tome (eds.), Adolescence and Its Social Worlds, Hillsdale: Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc.

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behaviors that demonstrate an ability to be socially responsible

Social responsibility has emerged over the last decade as an expansion of the field of study previously labeled citizenship or civic education. The concept of social responsibility is broader in that it encompasses the development of social skills while enabling youth to be active and responsible member of their larger social and political community. Social responsibility is multi- dimensional in that being responsible goes beyond just being respectful of others; it means experiencing as well as appreciating our interdependence and connectedness with others and our environment. The ability of the youth to identify and define social responsibility is important in defining who they are, where they fit in the social world, and building confidence in their sense of agency. The current definition of social responsibility is marked by the youth's need for experiencing generativity, casting ones' mark as an individual, and clarifying ones' role in an ever-widening social context. The construct of social responsibly has been conceptualized in a variety of ways including leadership and volunteerism, community service, and human rights and civic activity.

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subject matter knowledge & skills mastery

Subject matter knowledge and skills mastery of subject matter involves the building of knowledge and skills in order use them in a competent manner. The level of mastery is dependent on the developmental ability of the individual and increases with repetition. Success and mastery produced social recognition as well as inner satisfaction. This should include a sampling of the project subject areas in the 4-H program (i.e. animal sciences, clothing, foods, horticulture, environmental sciences, mechanical sciences, etc.). May want to look at recognition model in relationship to subject matter knowledge and skills.

References:

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behaviors that demonstrate a value for diversity

Diversity is defined as the "condition of being different." Diversity extends far beyond race and culture to include a number of dimensions of

differences. Researchers have described two major dimension of diversity: primary and secondary. Primary dimensions are things that we can not change. They include age, race, ethnicity, gender, physical qualities and sexual orientation. Secondary dimensions include income, education, religious beliefs, military experience, geographic location, parental status and marital status. Valuing diversity recognizes difference between people and acknowledges that these differences are a valued asset. Valuing diversity can be measured at three levels: cognitive, affective, behavioral. Cognitive is the knowledge and understanding of the concepts and issues related to diversity. Affective is the appreciation and respect of the similarities and difference among people. Behavioral is building positive relationships with "different people".

References:

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