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Feature Articles

Envisioning and Implementing a Whole-School Youth Development Approach

[Article 100503FA001]

Geiser, Kristin; O'Guinn, Christina

Middle schools have the opportunity to positively impact the full development of young adolescents. Yet, initiatives that promote schools' rigorous attention to specific academic outcomes can make it difficult to attend to other important and interconnected domains of adolescent development. How might middle schools intentionally situate academics within the broader frame of youth development? Youth in the Middle (YiM), a partnership between John W. Gardner Center for Youth and Their Communities (JGC) at Stanford University and Kennedy Middle School in Redwood City, California, has pursued four areas of work that are central to developing a whole-school youth development approach. This article describes these work areas and offers preliminary evidence of progress.

Preparing the Next Generation of After-School Educators: College Students' Perceived Learning and Civic Engagement Associated with the CASE Program

[Article 100503FA002]

Hinga, Briana M.; Mahoney, Joseph L.

First-year evaluation findings from the University of California, Irvine Department of Education's Certificate in After-School Education (CASE) program are reported in this paper. The goal of CASE is to promote positive youth development in diverse learners through education and training of the after-school workforce. CASE blends instruction across five, 10-week long courses with 70+ hours of fieldwork in local after-school programs (ASPs). CASE course and fieldwork enrollment, perceived understanding of course material, multicultural education, and civic interests and engagement were measured through student surveys. Students in CASE courses report higher levels of perceived course understanding ($p < .01$), civic responsibility ($p < .01$) and empowerment ($p < .05$) than students in the non-CASE courses. Students enrolled in CASE courses requiring fieldwork report greater perceived course understanding ($p < .01$) and academic engagement ($p < .01$) than CASE students without fieldwork. The findings suggest the program is achieving several of its early goals.

Weaving Evaluation into the Fabric of Youth Development [Article 100503FA003]

Silliman, Ben; Shutt, Gene

An Empowerment Evaluation process served to engage staff and campers and foster integration of authentic assessment methods into youth camp programming over a three-year period. Key elements to the process included program planning, staff training, timing and balance of action and reflection activities, data collection and management. Camp staff involved for 2-3 years reported improved focus and staff who served in the third year achieved mastery in communication, leadership, teaching, and management skills. A purposive sample of three different camp venues evaluated in Year 3 indicated that campers improved significantly in outdoor

and life skills. Over 70% felt safe, supported, and enabled to build skills. Implications for practice, research, and policy are discussed.

Positive Youth Development in the Midst of Coping with Parental Cancer: Implications for Youth Development Research and Practice [Article 100503FA004]

Ashurst, Kerri L.; Hans, Jason D.; Smith, Donna R.; Jones, Kenneth R.

Four implications for youth development research and practice resulted from a qualitative study on psychosocial developmental experiences of late adolescents coping with parental cancer during late adolescence. The study employed a developmental systems framework and grounded theory methods. Results suggest three primary psychosocial developmental influences, including multilevel influences (individual, familial, and extrafamilial risk and protective factors), coping strategies to maintain control, and responses to uncertainty and anticipatory grief. The particular combination of risk and protective factors present in participants' lives resulted in positive outcomes; resilience was the central unifying concept that characterized the primary psychosocial developmental outcomes of each participant. This finding illuminates the need to expand our focus in youth development research and practice to include positive developmental outcomes that can result from coping with life crises during adolescence.

"Push" and "Pull" A Qualitative Study of Factors that Contribute to Older Youth Leaving the 4-H Program [Article 100503FA005]

Albright, Mary Beth; Ferrari, Theresa M.

For years, 4-H has struggled with the complex issue of membership retention, especially among older youth. However, little research has been done concerning why 4-H members choose to leave the program. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the reasons for leaving 4-H with the ultimate goal of improving retention of older members. Specific objectives of the study were to (a) explore reasons why youth chose not to re-enroll in the program, (b) identify barriers to participation, and (c) determine what conditions would facilitate participation.

Focus group participants consisted of older youth ($n=16$) who were enrolled in 4-H in a community club in 2007 in Erie County (Ohio), but who did not re-enroll in 2008. Significant findings from the study concerning the retention of older 4-H youth were related to (a) experiences with adult leaders, (b) experiences with competition, and (c) conflicts with other activities. Recommendations for theory, research, and practice are offered.

The Impact of a Youth Development Program on Secondary Students' Career Aspirations [Article 100503FA006]

Williams, Bonita; Thompson, Jody; Taylor, Tonya; Sanders, Karen Eley

This study's purpose determined the extent to which adolescents' participation in a youth development program may be linked to the participants' post-secondary education and career aspirations. One hundred and seven adolescents, ages 14-19 in grades 8-12 completed Holland's Vocational Interest Survey and the 4-H Career Decision Survey. Ordinal regression analysis indicated participation in 4-H had a positive impact on career decisions for students who participated in 4-H for two years ($p < .038$) and six years ($p < .001$). Significant differences were apparent with 80% of the racial/ethnic groups surveyed concerning a college fair's impact on career choice and college major determination.

Program Articles

Addressing Criteria in the Development of a New 4-H Foods Project [Article 100503PA001]

McConnell, Susan; Scholl, Jan

As youth and society changes, 4-H projects must change and adapt. *Make it with Mixes*, a 4-H curriculum, provides a new way of looking at food preparation. It may be one of the first state

foods projects created without an emphasis on “from scratch” cooking or baking. Aimed at beginning 4-H members, ages 9 to 13, the project teaches cooking skills with the aid of commercial mixes. However, the main focus of the project is on making comparisons between food labels, costs per serving, and recognizing quality food products. Science and mathematics activities are also incorporated into the curriculum. This article discusses the organization, criteria and strategies used to create this new foods project.

Planting the Seed: An Evaluation of a Community Youth Summit

[Article 100503PA002]

Outley, Corliss; McKyer, E. Lisako J.; Smith, Matthew Lee

Meaningful youth engagement produces benefits both to youth and to the community in which they live. This paper discusses a day-long youth summit held for 289 middle school students. Youth attended a combination of mass and break-out sessions based on America’s Promise Five Promises. Planners and evaluators assessed proximal student outcomes throughout the day. A two question visual analog scale was developed and utilized to assess students’ perceptions of learning and enjoyment.

Research and Evaluation Strategies

Using Community-Based Programming to Increase Family Social Support for Healthy Eating among African American Adolescents [Article 100503RS001]

Williams, Joel E.; Griffin, Sarah F.; McCune, Amy S.; Linke, Gregory H.

Little is known about emotional and instrumental social support for nutrition behaviors among African-American adolescents. In this paper, we specifically examine intervention effects on emotional, instrumental and total (composite) social support for fruit/vegetable and low-fat dairy intake. Data from a larger intervention, based on Social Cognitive Theory, which was implemented with 38 African-American adolescents and their families to increase fruit/vegetable intake, low-fat dairy intake and physical activity behaviors are presented. One-way ANOVA analyses revealed that intervention participants had positive and significant increases in emotional social support for low-fat dairy intake ($P=0.01$), total social support for fruit/vegetable intake ($P=0.05$), and total social support for low-fat dairy intake ($P=0.02$). Specific recommendations addressing family social support for healthy eating through youth development programming are discussed.

Resource Review

Good Intentions: The Beliefs and Values of Teens and Tweens Today

[Article 100503RR001]

Dawson, Patricia

Understanding the values of today’s teens and tweens and how they make decisions is crucial for all youth professionals. An excellent resource to assist youth professionals has been developed by the Girl Scout Research Institute and Harris Interactive. *Good Intentions: The Beliefs and Values of Teens and Tweens* highlights a national research study which explored the values of today’s youth as well as how they make decisions. The 52 page document shares significant findings from the research utilizing youth quotes, tables and diagrams. The work builds on a similar study commissioned by Girl Scouts USA in 1989 and shares an encouraging picture of today’s youth. Readers will find the results from this research to be of great value when developing youth programs.