



# **ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH TO PURSUE THEIR INTERESTS**

## **Enrichment**

Part of enrichment is the opportunity for youth to explore new and different things of interest to them in a safe and supportive environment. It is an opportunity for youth to explore both their gifts and talents.



**Enrichment  
Overview**

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# Enrichment

## Key Points

After reading this e-Book you will have an understanding of the different ways enrichment activities can be incorporated into your program—be that academic enrichment, visual and performing arts enrichment, competitive sport including cheerleading, or youth choice enrichment.

## Terms/Glossary

- **Enrichment:** Experiences that allow youth to expand their horizons and stretch beyond what they currently know and understand
- **Multiple Intelligences:** Howard Gardner has done a great deal of research about the different ways that people are intelligent. Each of the nine identified areas can be traced to a section of the brain that will figuratively “light up” when stimulated. These 9 intelligences help us to understand youth and the way they learn, better.
- **Student interest:** This refers to polling and soliciting feedback from youth so we can identify what they are interested in learning more about. Student interest is fickle and transient, so we need to check in with them often.
- **Culminating Event:** After participating in enrichment, it is important that youth are given the opportunity to share their new skills, talents, and interests with others. They will do this at a culminating event. These events can take many forms: a gala, a gallery, a showcase, a video, or any number of other ways, but it is important that we begin with the end in mind and then plan backwards from the culminating event.



## Prior Knowledge

Do you have a memory of participating in the science fair, a play, a special sporting event, singing or dancing at a school program? As you recall those experiences ask yourself how you felt about participating in that activity. Did you experience enough rigor that you knew you needed to practice and be prepared? Did you enjoy working with others as they helped you get ready or as you prepared as a team? Did you participate in something you were interested in? Enrichment activities are a perfect venue for promoting the 3 R's of after-school—relationships, relevance, and

rigor. Consider how your experience did that and how you might provide that same or similar experience for youth.

## Brain Power

“I didn’t know that I was a dancer!” This is a direct quote from a middle school girl who had just participated in an after-school dance recital. Think about how important that experience was to this young lady. Think about how her life—her self-esteem, her motivation, was changed because of the experience. Think about how her life was enriched.

## Introduction

Providing enrichment opportunities for youth is a goal of after-school programs. Each young person is full of possibilities, gifts and talents. Enrichment opportunities provide these youth with a chance to explore those interests and hone their skills and talents. Enrichment activities that are relevant vary from youth to youth. Our job as after-school professionals is to provide opportunities for youth to explore a wide variety of hands-on experiences and then determine what they are most interested in.

## Debrief

What is your understanding of enrichment and its importance in after-school? What gifts, talents, and interests do you have that you can share with youth in your program?



## Knowledge and Information

Enrichment activities provide children and youth with opportunities to expand “their understanding and knowledge of themselves and the world in which they live and to master specific new concepts and skills. These experiences are challenging when they require young people to stretch beyond their current range of knowledge and skills and offer opportunities to test and master their skills in the real world.” This explanation of enrichment can be found in the CNYD Youth Development Guide first published in 2001. This explanation remains on point today.

Enrichment activities that we offer in our programs must represent something that the young people are interested in and that they have chosen to participate in. This is the importance of voice and choice. Plan to ask youth regularly about what they are interested in. When you first ask this question, you may discover that your students aren’t able to consider something that they would like to do. They aren’t used to being asked and enrichment can be easily confused with entertainment. If this is the case, offer some suggestions of things you have observed that they might want to do and then ask them to flesh out what each of those activities or units might include. Talk about how they see sharing what they have learned with others. Beginning with this end in mind will help you determine the scope of the enrichment opportunity.



Enrichment activities should allow young people to explore multiple intelligences that have been identified by Howard Gardner:

- Verbal/linguistic: thinks and learns through written and spoken words
- Logical/mathematical: thinks deductively, deals with numbers and recognizes abstract patterns
- Visual/Spatial: thinks in and visualizes images and pictures, communicates with diagrams and graphics
- Body/Kinesthetic: learns through physical movement and body memory
- Musical/Rhythmic: recognizes tonal patterns and environmental sounds, learns through rhyme, rhythm and repetition

- Interpersonal: learns and operates 1:1, through group relationships and communication
- Intrapersonal: enjoys and learns through self-reflection, metacognition, working alone
- Existential: is concerned with ultimate life issues, love, death, philosophy
- Naturalist: loves nature and the out-of-doors

Enrichment activities often take the form of cooperative learning and require the young people to develop cooperation as well as leadership skills. In cooperative learning young people learn to participate actively, to be both a teacher and a learner, respect one another, celebrate the contributions that each team member makes, resolve conflict, and learn how to invest in their own learning. More information on cooperative learning can be found at

<http://www.thirteen.org/wnetschool/concept2class/month5/index.html> .

Enrichment activities integrate academic learning into all aspects of the after-school program. Academic learning often provides skills in isolation, while enrichment opportunities provide a space to practice those skills by applying them. For example, if my interests are in social justice, my enrichment opportunity could include the development and implementation of a service learning. To be successful I certainly need to know how to access information, talk and communicate clearly with others, project, and perhaps apply math and engineering skills. If my interest is in dance, my enrichment opportunity might be learning the choreography for a group dance number that will be showcased at the end of the program in a gala celebrating the arts. If my interest is science, then helping prepare for a science fair could be the perfect enrichment for me. No matter what the students' interests, enrichment will help them to think more deeply about the interest and determine how they would like to be involved.



While enrichment activities can take a variety of forms we often consider the visual and performing arts as enrichment. If this is one of the opportunities that you will explore in your program, consider reviewing your state standards pertaining to dance, music, theater, visual arts, and media arts. In California, these standards are available from the California Department of Education at [www.cde.ca.gov](http://www.cde.ca.gov). The standards are written in five sections that include:



- Artistic Perception: Processing, analyzing, and responding to sensory information through the language and skills unique to ....
- Creative Expression: Students apply principles, processes, and skills to create and communicate meaning through the ....
- Historical and Cultural Context: Students analyze the function and development of the ... in past and present cultures throughout the world, noting human diversity as it relates to ...
- Aesthetic Valuing: Responding to, analyzing, and making judgments about . . .
- Connections, Relationship, Applications: Connecting and applying what is learned in ... in other art forms and subject areas and to careers.

Whether you plug into the California standards or not, considering the five sections above can ensure that your visual and performing arts program can appeal to youth who want to be on stage as well as in the background providing support.

As mentioned above, enrichment activities can also include service learning and project-based learning activities. Service Learning occurs when students select a project to address a student-identified, unmet need. For example, if first grade students become aware that the lost and found clothing box is overflowing and decide that they would like to help the school out by either getting



the clothing items back to the children they belong to or given to a homeless center, this can be the beginning of a terrific service learning project. Students will learn about notice or memo writing as they send a note home to parents. Should they decide to launder the lost and found items, they will learn about sorting, how to measure detergent, how to count money so that they can utilize the washers and dryers at the local Laundromat, and so on. They could also research and listen to

presentations from local charities to determine who should get the clothing that is not claimed. After students complete this project, then they would reflect on the project, their learning, how they felt about the work that they had done, and how this project might be stretched into another meaningful project. Service learning is a wonderful blending of both academic learning and community service.

Project-based learning is similar to service learning but differs in that it usually ends in an exhibit or performance that will showcase the learning. Project-based learning can be about academic content areas or other areas of interest and should be selected by the students. An example of project-based learning would be a project to create a “peace garden” complete with mural, plants in honorarium of a person or event, that would be dedicated at the end of the project. Students would

then work on the project, applying academic learning (proportion and ratio, research skills, writing, etc.) and then showcase their work at the dedication ceremony. Project-based learning requires young people to develop strong communication and teamwork skills. They must be able to consider information from different points of view and to come to decisions without conflict. Often times the ideas for projects come from a brainstorming session in which student identify those areas of interest they would like to learn more about. These identified areas are then explored for common interests among the group and then projects are defined. Having a student create a portfolio to record information and deepening understandings is also helpful. Accomplishments of students should be celebrated and acknowledged.



There is a difference between recreation and enrichment. Recreation activities are defined by offering activities that entertain, give pleasure and enjoyment to the youth. Recreation activities will build the youth's social, emotional, and physical skills and mainly focus on activity. Enrichment activities open new doors for children by immersing them in activities that explore knowledge and information that is not available to youth in most school day classrooms. Enrichment activities promote well-rounded development including academic, social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development. Enrichment is relevant to youth and it is the youth's perspective that is enhanced.

Enrichment activities must be fun and engaging and encourage youth to learn new things that can be applied both immediately and in the future. Enrichment often includes cooperative or group work and youth must be engaged in the choices and decisions around the enrichment activities. This commitment promotes youth voice and choice which will lead to authentic learning. As with everything you do in after-school, begin with the end in mind and consider how you want to showcase the learning so you can successfully plan for activities to result in that showcase.

Here are some tips you can implement to ensure a successful implementation component of your program:

**Tip #1:** Capitalize on the interests, skills and talents of your staff.

**Tip #2:** Check out the resources that are available for you to use. Look everywhere for these resources.

**Tip #3:** Determine your objectives and plan, plan, plan. Work your plan all the way through, creating an example of what might be an end result.

**Tip #4:** Preview the enrichment choices with youth so they can make an informed choice of what interests them.

**Tip #5:** Implement the project and debrief with youth often. Be prepared to change things up if you need to.

**Tip #6:** End with a culminating activity of some sort. You can have a gala, performance, gallery, fair, showcase, or any number of other ways to share what students have learned.



Work to enrich the lives of the youth in your program. As a general rule of thumb, if the activity can be done outside of your program, work to replace it with an activity that can only be accomplished with the support of your after-school program.

### Bullet Points

- Enrichment activities must reflect the interests of youth and be focused on broadening their learning and understanding, as well as their experiences.
- Multiple Intelligences should be considered when you are designing your enrichment component. Youth learn in different ways.
- Enrichment activities promote learning and can strengthen students' academic abilities and communication skills.



- Enrichment programs contribute to building self-esteem, confidence, and enthusiasm for learning.
- Enrichment programs provide youth with positive experience and build relationships that foster a sense of community, usefulness, influence, and competence.
- Consciously associate enrichment activities to academic, cognitive, social and emotional outcomes that will make a difference for youth

### **C4K Minute—Making It Real**

Have a conversation with the youth in your program. Ask them to talk about what they are interested in, what is appealing to them and to identify what they want to learn. Make a list of all of the suggestions and then give each youth 3 dots (sticky circles). Ask them to put the dots by the items on the list they are most interested in. If a youth wants to use all three dots on one item, that's fine. Encourage them to vote from their independent interest rather than how a friend is voting.

### **Debrief**

What is your key learning about enrichment programming? How might you apply that learning to your programming? What do you commit to do within the next 72 hours to strengthen the enrichment component of your program?



## Review

### Tricks of the Trade

As part of your interview for prospective staff ask them to complete an interest survey. Part of your selection process can be based on the skills and interests of the staff you are hiring. Check in with youth each time you have a staff opening so you will have an idea of what the youth are interested in and what you are looking for.

### Gem of the Day

Too often we simply teach students things but they never get to share what they have learned. If we are teaching fashion design, let's have students put on a fashion show of the clothing they have designed. If they have created a movie, then let them show the movie. Sharing what they have learned in a concrete and tangible way, and being able to celebrate their success with others, will help young people to develop self-confidence and self-esteem.



### Important Take-Aways

It is important to talk with the young person and ask what she has learned about herself, and whether or not this is an area of talent or interest for the future. For one youth the experience has been life changing and they realize that they are very interested in learning more. By the same token, another participant might have learned that they don't want to pursue the interest any more that what they thought and what they experienced are two different things. Either way students have a clearer indication of what they enjoyed and should pursue.

### Troubleshooting

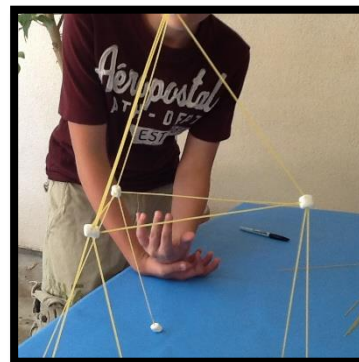
I'm interested in music but I don't have an idea of how I would go about teaching youth to sing. How can I pursue my interest if the kids are interested too?

There are several things you can do to help you think about how to orchestrate an enrichment club around music. If you ever participated in music class during your tenure in school, think back on what your instructor did. How did they warm up the class? How did they select the music? How did they determine which part you should sign? How did they start the instruction? How did they help the group practice? When you think this through also ask yourself if it was effective and how you might adjust something to be more effective. Secondly, most high schools (sometimes middle schools, too) have a music department. Make an appointment with the music teacher and ask

them to give you some tips and advice. If possible, visit the class that he/she teaches so you can see things in action. Just as a postscript, probably watching something like Glee is not all that helpful because all of those “students” are highly talented and of course, they are just following a script.

### Best Practices

- Enrichment activities should be challenging, relevant, and creative.
- Enrichment activities should include “doing” not just “understanding” or “building knowledge.”
- Throughout the enrichment activity, and especially at the end when the students’ work is completed, showcase what the youth have learned.



### FAQ's

What do we do if the youth are REALLY interested in something, say dance, and there is no one on staff that can teach this class?

This becomes a concern especially as youth get older and you want to move past formulaic dance routines that can be taught via DVD. Consider looking for a volunteer from the local high school, community college, or university. You could also look for local businesses, but usually they will expect to be paid for their support. If you can find a volunteer (remember you can advertise on Craig's List) be sure that you have them fingerprinted and cleared of TB, and then have them work with youth ONLY when your paid staff is there to provide continuity and oversight. If all else fails you can employ a DVD as a last ditch effort. Ask the youth which DVD they are willing to work with.

### Universal

Pursuing your interests is an essential part of living a well-balanced life. When you pursue an interest you may discover that you are no longer interested or you may discover that your interest is heightened. This is true for young people as well. When you pursue an interest you develop self-confidence and efficacy, even if you decide to move on.

### After-School

Imagine a multi-purpose room full of doors that completely make up the walls of the facility. Each of these doors leads to a difference learning opportunity for youth. As an after-school professional consider it your challenge to open as many of these doors as you can so youth have the opportunity to make effective choices.

## Positional

As a program leader be willing to share your talents and skills with youth—even if you don't think you are perfect. Youth can learn from you the importance of practice and perseverance. You will be an outstanding role model for youth when you allow them to see you struggle.

## Review

In your journal, write about the information that you are taking away from this content. Highlight your key learnings.

## Key Learning

Since you have reviewed the material, ask yourself how you can translate the information into a learning for you, and then how will you practice that learning by implementing it or executing on a specific action. Think in terms of your personal and professional life. For example:

**Personal:** I have learned that it is important for me to pursue my interests so I can find out more about myself.

**Professional:** It is important that I share my gifts and talents with youth to the best of my ability.

## Journal Entry



I did this well and celebrated by \_\_\_\_\_.

I did not do so well at \_\_\_\_\_, and I will strengthen my performance in the future by doing \_\_\_\_\_.

## Debrief

What new interest will you investigate in the next two weeks? How will doing this prepare you to be a more effective role model for youth?



## Walk Through the Day

### The Openings

**Pre-Pre-Opening:** Before you go into work go through a checklist in your mind or on paper to be certain that you have everything you need for your enrichment club. Do you have the music you needs, the right shoes, the gloves you said you would bring, a boom box, a science board, etc.. Taking the time to prepare BEFORE you go to work will help you be ready to focus on student learning.

**Practical Application:** I know that I am going to share the dance video from High School Musical III. I pack the DVD and the right shoes in my bag the night before so I will have it when I most need it.

**Pre-Opening:** Check out the equipment and the space that you will need for your enrichment club. If you need a boom box, a DVD player, an extension cord, a microphone or something else, check to be sure that is it is accessible and available to you. Do your planning during the Pre-Opening before youth have arrived.

**Practical Application:** All too often you need something and can't find it or it really isn't what is needed. Make a list on a Post-It of everything you will need for your lessons on this day, and mark them off the list as you find what you need.

**Opening:** During the Opening share with youth what you know will be happening during the enrichment time. Help to build the anticipation for participation in the enrichment opportunity.

**Practical Application:** Give youth a "sneak preview" of the enrichment activity by showing them a sample of the day's activity. If you are working on a performance, practice a small piece during Opening if it seems appropriate.

**Rotations:** Enrichment will be one of the rotations of your program. It is as important as any other rotation. Sometimes because of the pressure we feel to have youth complete homework correctly, we will hold enrichment as a carrot and also use it as a sword. Enrichment is essential to all youth, and maybe even more critical for youth who do not excel in other areas. Make a space for enrichment activities and avoid using it as a reward or punishment.

**Practical Application:** Organize your schedule so enrichment follows some of the activities that youth find less interesting. One program likened it to a rocket launch. Countdown was the homework period and the launch was the activity the youth had chosen for enrichment.

**Closing:** Use the closing as a time for youth to share with you about the enrichment component. Help them to think through how they will share this interest with their parents or caregivers.

Remember, youth will be asked what they did today, and without your support, will respond, "Nothing."

**Practical Application:** Have a Message Board created out of a display board. Have pictures of each of the enrichment opportunities on the Message Board. On a Post-It ask the youth to write down what they liked about today's enrichment class and post it by the correct picture during closing.

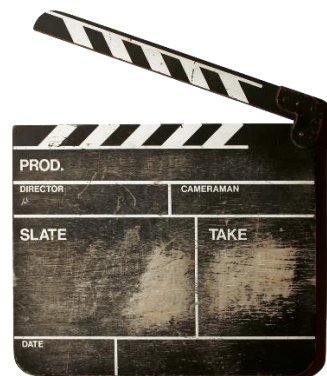


## Connection to Online Instruction

### Program Leader Supports

#### Club/Enrichment

#### ➤ KEY INDICATOR: Selection of Activities



- **Evidence of Disguised Learning**
  - Mini #26      Engaging Activities
  - Mini #62      Engaging the Maverick
  - Mini #75      Disguised Learning
- **Student Input on Activity Content and Delivery Evident**
  - Mini #32      Class Meetings
  - Mini #65      Getting Student Input
  - Mini #76      Giving Kids Choice
  - Mini #77      Planning a Club
  - Mini #86      Forced Choice
  - Mini #88      Involving Students in Decision Making
  - Module #14   Planning an Event
  - Module #13   Middle School Team Challenge
  - Module #28   Exploring Student Interests
  - Lesson #7     Fun Friday
  - Lesson #15   Middle School Academic Clubs
  - Class #11     Strong Clubs
- **Varied Schedule (As Appropriate)**
  - Mini #78      Service Projects
  - Mini #80      Centers
- **Culminating Events Showcase Student Work**
  - Module #24   Student Showcase
- **Students Demonstrate Leadership**
  - Mini #30      Debriefing
  - Mini #65      Getting Student Input

Module #4	Activity to a Learning Opportunity
Module #5	Effective Input from Students
Module #6	Effective Feedback from Students

- **Visible Signs of Fun and Engagement**

Mini #79	Interactive Activities
Mini #138	Working as Partners and in Small Groups
Mini #145	Art Appreciation
Mini #146	Reader's Theater
Mini #150	Fun Friday Themes
Class #20	Exploring Careers in After-School
Class #21	Service Learning
Class #22	Community Service
Class #23	How to Use Technology to Support Learning

- **Visual and Performing Arts**

Lesson #20	Visual and Performing Arts in After-School
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## **Site Coordinator Supports**

### **Enrichment**

Mini #68	Varying Schedules
Mini #81	Student Interest Surveys
Mini #120	Middle School Advisory Board
Mini #136	Planning a Career Fair
Module #24	Student Showcases
Lesson #18	Showcasing Students
Lesson #23	Importance of Visual and Performing Arts in Your Program
Class #5	Recruiting Students for Middle School
Class #8	Strong Clubs
Class #9	Project Based Learning
Class #16	Successful Team Challenges
Class #23	Career Clusters/Exploration