

Foundational Youth Engagement Resources

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RESEARCH ARTICLES AND PUBLICATIONS

Benson, P., Scales, P. (2007). **Search Institute's Ongoing Development of the Theory of Thriving**, a presentation at the Healthy Communities Healthy Youth Conference in Rochester, NY, November, 2007. *The authors' research associates young people finding "sparks" (talents and interests that give them energy and purpose) with positive youth development outcomes (e.g. life satisfaction, contribution to the social good and academic achievement). A new book, entitled Sparks: How Parents Can Ignite the Hidden Strengths of Teenagers, will be released by Jossey-Bass in October.*

Blyth, D. (2006). **Toward a new paradigm for youth development**, in *New Directions for Youth Development*, 2006 (112), pp. 25-43. Blythe uses a diet-and-exercise analogy to describe what a community needs to offer if all young people are to have an opportunity to thrive. It includes ample opportunities for young people to get a well-balanced "diet" that includes experiences that provide basic developmental "nutrients", as well as opportunities to build skills (exercise "developmental muscles") to grow up healthy and strong.

Hart, Roger (1992). **Children's Participation: From Tokenism to Citizenship**. New Florence, Italy: UNICEF. This piece defines "participation" as the process of "sharing decisions which affect one's life and the life of the community in which one lives," and purports that such participation is a fundamental right of citizenship. Hart introduces a ladder of participation, including what he calls: degrees of non-participation (manipulation, decoration and tokenism); and degrees of participation (assigned but informed, consulted and informed, adult-initiated, shared decisions with children, child initiated and directed, child-initiated, shared decisions with adults).

Nakamura, J. (2001). The Nature of Vital Engagement in Adulthood. In M. Michaelson & J. Nakamura (Eds.), **Supportive Frameworks for Youth Engagement**, *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*, Number 93, Fall 2001. New York: Jossey-Bass. *Nakamura uses the term "vital engagement" to describe experiences in which one feels "vital and fully alive because he is wholly absorbed in the experience." She describes many experiential elements of vital engagement, based on a thorough review of the youth development literature in this area. She offers creative work and service work as examples of experiences that can promote vital engagement.* <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/91015297/issue>

O'Donoghue, J., Kirshner, B., & McLaughlin, M.W. (2003). **Moving youth participation forward**. *New Directions for Youth Development: Theory, Practice and Research*, No. 96. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass (Wiley Periodicals, Inc.) *The authors discuss four myths that are barriers to the full participation and engagement of young people in programs and partnerships.* <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/102524608/issue>

Pittman, K., Martin, S., Williams, A. (2007, July). **Core Principles for Engaging Young People in Community Change**. Washington, D.C.: The Forum for Youth Investment, Impact Strategies, Inc. The authors discuss youth engagement as a strategy for community and organizational change, along with eight principles for youth engagement. <http://www.extension.umn.edu/youth/00013.pdf>

Saito, Rebecca N. (2006). Beyond access and supply: Youth-led strategies to captivate young people's interest in and demand for youth programs and opportunities. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass (Wiley Periodicals, Inc.) *Working on supply and access are necessary but not sufficient for the task of increasing young people's engagement in positive youth programs, activities, and informal opportunities. Youth are the marketing experts in this endeavor to increase participation in youth programs particularly by those who typically do not participate.* <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/114099083/abstract>

Search Institute (2005). **The Power of Youth and Adult Partnerships and Change Pathways for Youth Work**. MI: WK Kellogg Foundation. *This piece describes six activities through which youth and adults partner to impact organizations and communities: youth service, youth leadership, youth in decision-making, youth philanthropy, youth civic and political engagement, youth organizing and youth research and evaluation. The authors discuss what it takes to create youth/adult partnerships that lead to positive outcomes for organizations, communities and the youth involved. They also discuss common barriers to effective youth/adult partnerships.*

Serido, J., Borden, L.M. and Perkins, D. (2006). **Moving Beyond Youth Voice**. Unpublished manuscript. The authors present research findings that suggest a connection between positive youth/adult relationships and youth voice in promoting positive youth development outcomes. Young people who have positive relationships with adults in a program perceive they have more voice in that program and, in turn, perceive more benefits to program participation.

Walker, J. (2006). *Intentional youth programs: Taking theory to practice.* in *New Directions for Youth Development*, 2006 (112), pp. 75-92. The author puts forth a theory of developmental intentionality, proposing that "when there is a good fit between young people and the intentional supports and opportunities they take part in, engagement is high, and the chances of positive outcomes for learning and development are greatly improved."

Watts, R. & Flanagan, C. (2007). **Pushing the Envelope on Youth Civic Engagement: A Developmental and Liberation Psychology Perspective**, *Journal of Community Psychology*, 35(6), pp. 779-792. *The authors present a typology of civic engagement that includes 1) community service; 2) work within organizations; and 3) sociopolitical activism aimed at changing organizations and society. They assert that sociopolitical activism provides opportunities for young people to build a capacity for social analysis that is critical to their development as active members of a community, citizens of a democracy and members of a global society.*

Weiss, H.B., Little, P.M., Bouffard, S.M. (2005). **More than just being there: Balancing the participation equation.** *New Directions for Youth Development*, No. 105, Spring, 2005. *Weiss purports that “enrollment and attendance without engagement do not reflect true participation” in youth programs. While providing a safe haven for youth in non-school hours is “a concern first and foremost for many families . . . “Merely being there is not what make real improvements in youth outcomes.” She defines engagement as “not only motivation to be there; it is also being actively involved in cognitive and social endeavors that promote growth.” She sites core program features that have been identified as key to youth engagement in out of school programs: A sense of personal safety, relationships with caring adults, opportunities for leadership, opportunities for socializing with peers, and engagement in high quality learning experiences. She asserts that more research is needed to understand what it takes to achieve meaningful participation as young people grow and mature through childhood and adolescence.*

<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/110434956/issue>

Wheeler, W. (2007). **Framing the Issue, in Youth Engagement: A Celebration Across Time and Culture.** MI: W.K. Kellogg Foundation. *The author discusses what it takes for youth and adults to “learn, listen, dream and work together as they unleash their collective potential to build the common good”; and to “advocate, in the community, for the needs of both young and old, as defined by themselves, and address root causes through policy change.” She calls for reframing “the public perception of the role of young people in community leadership”; and reframing issues of youth engagement to “include cross-cultural collaboration and youth-adult partnership.”*

<http://www.wkcf.org/default.aspx?tabid=134&CatID=2&NID=212&LanguageID=0&Letter=Y>

Wheeler, W. Youth Engagement Discussion Brief, The Innovation Center Discusses why youth engagement is important as a social change strategy and the many outcomes or reasons for incorporating youth engagement.

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/youth/00012.pdf>

Youniss, J., Bales, S., Chirstmas-Best, V., Diversi, M., McLaughlin, M., Sibereisen, R. (2001). **Youth Civic Engagement in the 21st Century.** *Journal of Research on Adolescence*, Vol 12, Issue 1. *The authors outline social and political dynamics of the 21st century that necessitate a redefinition of civic competence, asserting that youth must be prepared to collaborate with adults in new ways to identify and address social and political issues within ever-changing realities. They suggest a range of policies to ensure that youth are prepared to “become partners in the political evolution that is already underway.”* <http://www.blackwell-synergy.com/doi/abs/10.1111/1532-7795.00027>

Zeldin, S., Camino, L., Calvert, M. (2007). Toward an understanding of youth in community governance: Policy priorities and research directions *Análise Psicológica* (2007), 1 (XXV): 77-95. *Reviews the context, rationale and research related to youth in decision-making positions and provides recommendations for changes in adult expectations and support.*

