



QUALITY MATTERS TOOLKIT

# Reflection

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# Quality Matters Toolkit

## YPQA ITEMS: ENGAGEMENT

University of Minnesota Extension Center for Youth Development delivers education, training, and professional development for adults who work with and on behalf of young people. Since 2000, the Extension Center for Youth Development has provided the latest youth development research and taught youth workers throughout Minnesota how to apply it in their work. The Extension Center for Youth Development is committed to expanding the knowledge and strengthening the practices of staff and volunteers who are committed to high quality youth development experiences for young people.

## ATTACHMENTS AND RESOURCES

In addition to the staff meeting/training activities included in the Reflection Toolkit, the Extension Center for Youth Development has provided the following attachments and resources:

- “Landing and Closing Activities” and “The Experiential Learning Model” excerpts from High/Scope’s Curriculum for Youth Workers 2001.

### CREDIT AND THANKS:

The Reflection Toolkit was created and adapted by Deborah Moore as a part of the resources available through the Quality Matters project. Some source materials were drawn from High/Scope’s Curriculum for Youth Workers, 2001.

Out thanks to High/Scope for their permission and continued partnership and support.

Quality Matters is a technical assistance and training project of the Extension Center for Youth Development focused on improving youth program quality. Our thanks to the QM coach/consultants and youth programs who participated in Quality Matters. In very important ways, the development of all related Quality Matters toolkits were based on spoken needs, and wise advice learned in practice and training. Our thanks as well to the McKnight Foundation and the Minnesota Department of Education for continued financial support.

For more information on the Extension Center for Youth Development go to:

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

For more information on High Scope go to:

[www.youth.highscope.org](http://www.youth.highscope.org)

# Reflection

## Staff Meeting and Training Activities

### YPQA Items: Engagement

#### What is it?

Reflection is a review of what has happened, how young people feel and what it all means. Reflection typically occurs after an activity and it allows youth to make sense and learn from experiences.

#### What does it do for youth?

- Recaptures experiences
- Considers how their feelings connect to experiences
- Evaluates experiences
- Connects experiences to their ideas about how the world works
- Refines their understanding
- Provides learning
- Engages in critical thinking
- Recognizes accomplishments
- Allows new plans to emerge

#### Why is it so hard to do inside programs?

The end of a program session is usually chaotic with cleaning up, getting youth on buses, collecting backpacks, etc. Time constraints often do not allow youth to complete a planned activity, let alone a reflection.

#### Why build in reflection?

In spite of the challenges, building in regular (daily) reflection is one of the easiest (and cheapest) actions staff and volunteers can take to improve program quality.

Even better, with some session redesign and at no cost, staff can foster reflection into daily program rituals. That results in learning opportunities that help youth build important thinking skills and seek out relevance to their lives. Reflection will help your program “make it real.”

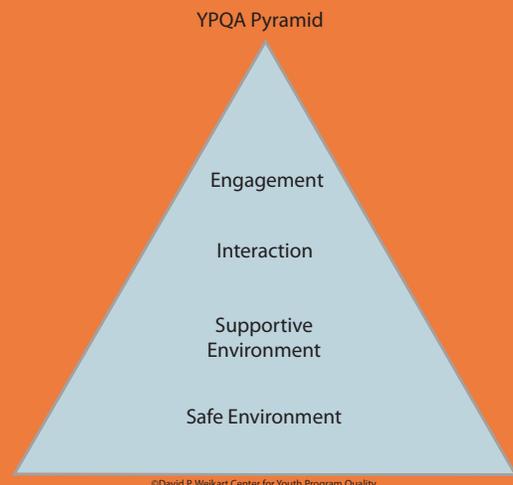
#### YPQA Related Indicator: Engagement

All youth are engaged in an intentional process of reflecting on what they are doing or have done (e.g. writing in journals, reviewing minutes, sharing progress, accomplishments or feelings about the experience).

All youth are given the opportunity to reflect on their activities in 2 or more ways (e.g., writing, role playing, using media or technology, drawing).

In the course of program offering, all youth have structured opportunities to make presentations to the whole.

Staff initiate structured opportunities for youth to give feedback on the activities (e.g. staff ask feedback questions, provide session evaluations).



## Session Set-Up and Materials

Tables for small group work and conversation are set up with an open area towards the front of the room.

The workshop title and agenda are posted with the facilitator name on an easel pad.

### Set-Up Includes:

- An easel page posted with a hand mirror drawn on it.
- An easel page with the YPQA Items related to reflection
- Copies of the toolkit for participants
- Your completed YPQA (later)
- Post-it® notes

### Agenda includes:

- Welcome and Intro Activity
- Simple Analysis Activity
- Reinforce and Check the Learning
- Tools/Resources/Handouts
- Next discussion time

## Introduction Activity—20 minutes

### Welcome

Ask participants to hold their palm in front of their face so it is touching their nose. Direct participants to move it slowly out until they can see the lines in their palm clearly. Hold it there for a moment when it is in the right spot and look around the room.

Note that reflection is a way of slowly moving your hand out from your nose until you can see more clearly. These activities will give staff and volunteers some basic techniques to reflect with youth in daily sessions and also uncover some areas of your program

day to build them in.

### The “Why” of Reflection Brainstorm

Begin the session by drawing a large hand mirror on a piece of easel paper.

Ask participants to brainstorm as many reasons as they can for why it is important to reflect after an experience. As participants are calling out ideas, write them on your hand mirror. When all ideas are out, supplement with those captured on page 1 of the toolkit.

### General Overview:

Start discussion by reviewing the Introduction information on page 1 of the toolkit.

**Next**, review the quality indicators from the YPQA that are related to reflection. These are also on Page 1 of the toolkit. (You may want to post these on the wall as a visual guide).

Remind participants that reflection is one of the key indicators to youth engagement in the YPQA tool. Because engagement is at the top of the pyramid, it is often an area that programs need to improve.

The key to making improvements “stick” is to make those behaviors described in the YPQA occur every day. These activities will assist staff and volunteers in learning and practice techniques for regular reflection.

**Finish** by acknowledging that some barriers may exist to building in regular reflection time. Ask participants to jot down some of their own notes about what gets in the way of using reflection regularly.

Ask participants to share some of their ideas and make note of common issues to use later.

**“Take time to deliberate. but when the time for action arrives, stop thinking and go in.”**

**Andrew Jackson**

## Simple Analysis Activity —45 minutes

### INSTRUCTIONS:

#### Reflection—How are we using it?

Draw a picture of your daily program schedule on 2-3 large sheets of easel paper (or make a copy for each participant to write on). It might look something like this:

Gathering and gym time	Small Group Time	Dismissal
Snack time	Daily activity/ lessons	Special Events
Homework time		

#### Directions:

Give participants sticky notes. Ask them to write down where and what they do to help youth reflect in the program. Place the sticky notes under the appropriate area of the daily program schedule.

#### Process:

Ask participants about what they notice from this simple analysis. Pay attention to where and how often youth are given opportunities to reflect. It would not be uncommon to have reflection occurring 1-2 times a year during a written program evaluation process as the primary method of reflection.

#### Action:

Break participants into small groups. Using the attached list of reflection techniques at the end of this toolkit, ask the groups to select 2-3 techniques that could be used in each segment of your program schedule. Share ideas with the full group.

#### Finish:

Ask participants to try one technique in the coming week. Let them know that the group will check in to share and reflect on what happened.

Use the Head, Heart and Feet Activity to close.

#### Head, Heard and Feet

Draw an outline of a person with a heart in his/her chest. Ask participants to write down three things and place them on the head, heart or feet of your drawing.

For the head, write down one new thought you had during the session or a new thing you learned.

For the heart, write down an emotion you experienced and why.

For the feet, write down one thing you will take away and act on in the coming week.

Ask participants to share what they wrote and then place on your drawing.

#### Follow-up:

At your next staff meeting (or after staff have had some time to try out a technique) use the Rose and Thorn reflection technique to review how they worked at your next staff meeting.

#### A Rose and a Thorn

Participants are asked to share one "rose" or good thing that happened to them when trying a reflection technique and one "thorn."

Make sure to find a way to thank and celebrate all efforts to try something new.

**"By three methods we may learn wisdom; first, by reflection which is noblest; second, by imitation which is easiest; and third, by experience which is most bitter."**

#### Confucius

## Reinforce and check the learning

### REFLECTION: USING PARALLEL PROCESS TO CHANGE DAILY PRACTICE

**Definition:** Parallel process is an idea that comes out of the field of social work. When using parallel process, practitioners use the same strategies or behaviors in their own work that they foster in their clients. For example, if you are fostering peaceful conflict resolution with young people, you are using the same techniques when a staff conflict occurs.

**Application Idea:** Taking the concept of parallel process and apply it to our use in youth programs. Start by building in reflection time to regular training and staff meeting times. To begin, model one reflection technique included in the attachment at the end of this toolkit. Each week, ask one staff member to volunteer to practice a reflection activity at the next meeting. Finish each use by giving feedback on the staff members use of the technique and a brief discussion of where other could try it out.

By using parallel process for reflection, you are encouraging staff to begin practicing reflection activities in a safe space. It will also foster both the expectation and regular routine for using it as a part of your program culture.

**Start a Program Memory Book:** Want to take it one step further? Start a binder or notebook of all the reflection techniques used by staff over time. Make sure this notebook is accessible or copied for shared use across all staff and volunteers who lead activities with youth. With staff turnover issues and volunteers inside our programs, we often lose valuable practice ideas from great workers because they leave with them. Begin building “program memory” by capturing those good practices and giving new staff and volunteers a head start.

### Additional resources you already have...

#### Mini YPQA

A few weeks after using these activities, find the YPQA completed by your QM coach/consultant.

Using the items noted on page 1 of this toolkit, ask one staff member to observe (or pair staff to co-observe) the program and score on those items.

Bring the scores back to a staff meeting to compare to the full YPQA and share how things have changed since the original observation.

#### Raise your engagement bar...

Why not ask youth or a youth advisory group to observe and score the YPQA?

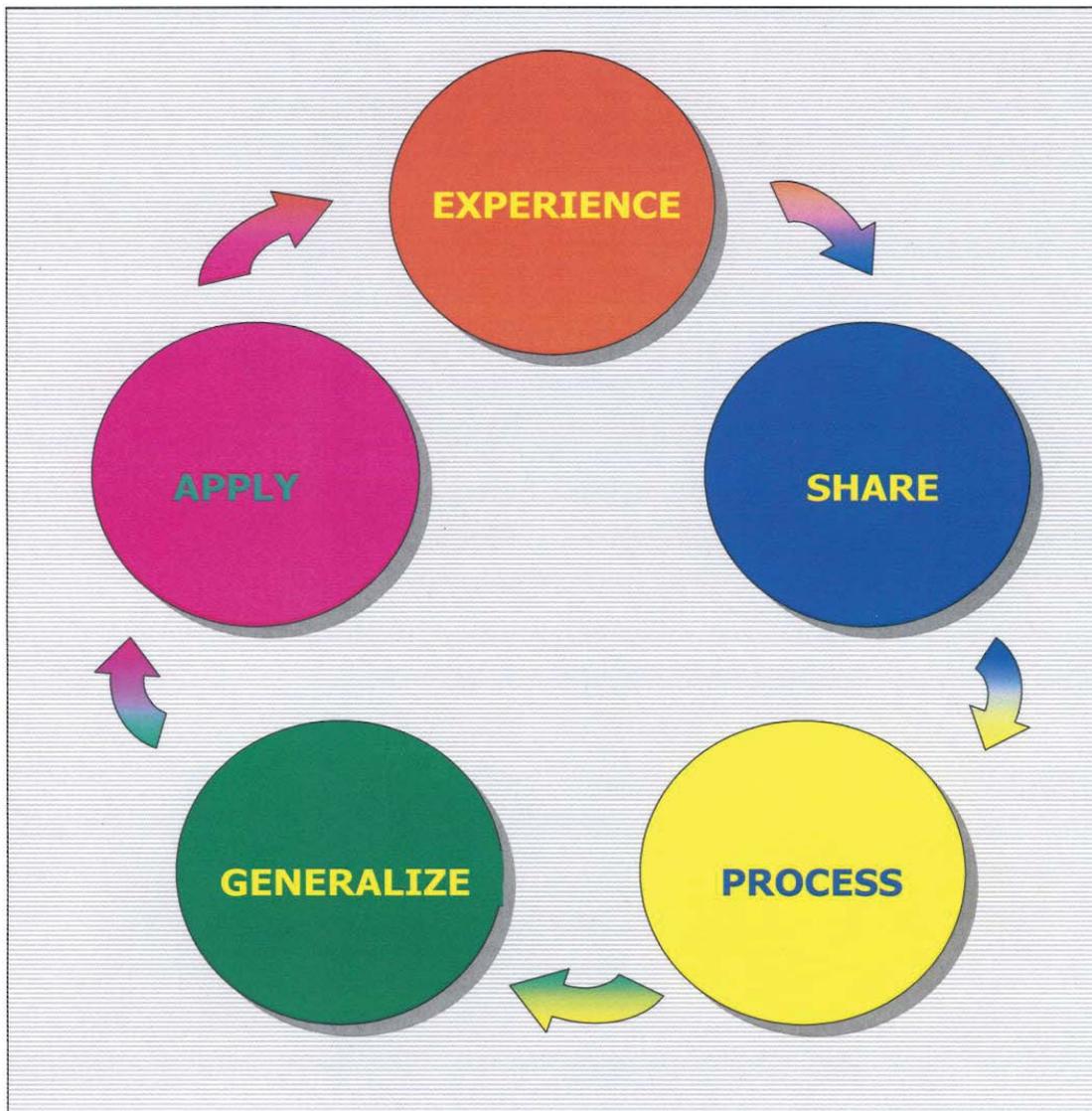
If you want to engage youth, ask them to observe and score alongside a staff member. This may take some preparation and review with youth on how to be accurate, neutral observers. It is, however, a great way to involve youth in the program.

Refer to the Quality Matters Weekly YPQA Reflection Guide for a simplified version of the YPQA tool. The tool is also available on the Extension Center for Youth Development website or by contacting Deborah Moore at: [ddm2@umn.edu](mailto:ddm2@umn.edu)

**“We worry about what a child will become tomorrow, yet we forget that he is someone today.” Stacia Tauscher**

# THE EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING CYCLE

(Adapted from Pfeiffer & Jones, 1981.)



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## Training and Supporting Adults

### MODULE: PLANNING AND PRESENTING WORKSHOPS-RESOURCES FOR TRAINERS

#### Landing and Closing Activities

When working with training groups, particularly groups that meet together over time, it is important to consider the beginnings and endings of any particular training experience or set of training experiences. Beginnings set the tone for the group and mark a direction (psycho-social, task-related or both) in which the group may proceed. Endings allow for groups to collectively acknowledge, summarize, and/or celebrate what has occurred in training. This resource provides trainers with ideas for the beginnings and endings of the training sessions that they may conduct on a variety of different topics and for a variety of different purposes.

Activities intended for the beginning of a training are called landing activities. Activities designed for the end of a training are called closing activities. Landing activities are designed to get participants ready to move forward on the training issues for that particular session. Landing activities typically have a more specific purpose than name games or general icebreakers. They flow directly into the purposes of the session and usually are used as a way to bring participants back together after they have been apart. Landing activities can be used to tie unfinished business to the current session's agenda, review concepts, gauge opinions/motivations, and generally check-in with the group as it moved on to its next set of steps.

Closing activities allow for individuals to bring closure to their experiences as they move out of the training into application of the training or related tasks. Good closing activities allow individuals to reflect and make a personalized assessment of where they have been. Neither landing nor closing activities need be long. Often the same activity can be used as a landing or closing, as long as it is applied to a different purpose and related to a different point in the group's common history together. A listing and description of landing/closing activities follows below.

**Hopes and Fears**—Participants are given two different colored note cards. On one note card, they are asked to write down the hopes that they have for the session/training experience. On the other note card, they are asked to write down the fears that they have for the session/training experience. All cards are collected, then redistributed so that each participant now has the cards of another participant. This is done so that specific hopes and fears are not attached to a particular person. Each participant reads aloud the hopes and fears written on his or her cards. The group selects the themes heard among the hopes and fears expressed and discussed. Often, this activity is followed with the setting of group norms or guidelines. This activity can be a landing or closing. (If this is used as a closing, special care must be made to resolve the fears expressed in the group or to create a plan for follow-up in the near future.

**Milling to Music**—Participants are asked to stand up. The facilitator explains that music will be played. While the music is playing, participants are asked to “mill” to the music. When the music stops, participants are given a question to share with the person that is closest to them. Pairs take a few minutes to ask and answer the question. When the music starts the second time, participants “mill” again. The activity is repeated through several rounds. Questions should connect to the social or task-related purposes of the training. Upbeat music is recommended. This is usually used as a landing.

Excerpts from High/Scope's Curriculum for Youth Workers

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## Training and Supporting Adults

### MODULE: PLANNING AND PRESENTING WORKSHOPS-RESOURCES FOR TRAINERS (CONT.)

**A Rose and a Thorn**—Participants are asked to state one “rose” or good thing that has happened for them and one “thorn” or challenge that has arisen during the training. The activity can be used as a landing by asking about a rose and a thorn that occurred since the last meeting. It can also be used at the end of a session to gauge high and low points over the course of a training.

**Standing in the Shadow of Our Success**—This activity is used to review and celebrate personal and group sense of accomplishment. Individually, each participant considers their role in contributing towards the group’s progress. Participants are asked, one by one, to physically “stand in the shadow” (the place in the room) where they felt most successful in moving the group towards its goals. For example, someone who worked well in a small group may sit in the corner where the small group met. Someone who facilitated a large-group discussion may stand by the flip chart. Participants are invited to say a sentence or two about their contribution. This is typically used as a closing.

**Crossing the Line**—All participants are asked to stand on one side of the room. They are told that the facilitator will read a series of statements. Once a statement is read, all participants for whom that statement is true personally walk to the other side of the room. The facilitator uses a reflective prompt such as “Notice who is on one side of the room and notice who is not.” Participants silently acknowledge the configuration of the room’s participants. Participants are asked to rejoin the individuals who did not move. The exercise is often used to bring the group to awareness of minority viewpoints and/or power dynamics that either exist in the room or generally influence training.

**Index Cards**—Participants are given two different colored index cards. On one card they are asked to write one thing they’ve learned. On the other card they are asked to write one question they (still) have. This can be used as a landing as a review of the previous session or as a closing for the current session.

**Circle Game**—Each participant is given an index card and is asked to write down a question they still have about the session or training. Cards are collected and placed in a pile. Participants are seated in a circle. One person volunteers to be first to draw a card. The volunteer reads aloud the question on the card and answers it. After he or she has given an answer, the question is opened up to others in the group to answer. This can be used as a landing or closing.

**What Would You Do?/How Would You Describe It?**—In this variation of the circle game, the facilitator prepares scenario or concept cards beforehand, or participants are given index cards and asked to write down a scenario or concept that relates to the training. Cards are placed in a pile. The facilitator asks one participant to volunteer to leave the room. Once the volunteer has left the room, a card is selected. The remaining participants are shown or told the scenario or concept on the card and asked to think about their answer to it. The volunteer is asked to come back in. Everyone in the room knows the scenario or concept on the card except the volunteer. The volunteer steps in the middle of the circle and asks one person, (if it is a scenario) “What would you do?” or (if it is a concept) “How would you describe/define it?” The participant either guesses the concept or scenario or asks another person the same question. To save time with large groups, you may limit the number of persons asked the question to three to five people. This activity can be used to review content, gauge comfort with the material, or generate solutions to potentially challenging situations.

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