The Art of Social Emotional Learning
Developing SEL through the creative arts

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Introduction

**Creative Action** sparks and supports the academic, social and emotional development of young people. Through school-based, out of school time, and community-based programs, Creative Action’s team of professional teaching artists inspire youth to be Creative Artists, Courageous Allies, Critical Thinkers, and Confident Leaders in their community.

We believe that when youth develop their creativity, compassion, confidence and critical thinking skills, and build meaningful connections with peer and positive role models, they become **successful adults who contribute to their communities and thrive in their careers and relationships.**

We serve 20,000 youth and the adults who care for them in 100+ locations in the greater Austin area each year, delivering 35,000 hours of programming annually.

- 82% of participants feel they can use art to express themselves
- 93% say they stood up for people who were being treated unfairly
- 95% believe they can make a difference in the world
Workshop Objectives

Participants will:

• Learn about creative youth development and how it connects to SEL competencies

• Experience three creative activities that illustrate those connections

• Reflect on how their organization’s SEL approaches may be complimented by creative arts strategies
Workshop Agenda

• Welcome!
• Introductions
• Share our understanding of SEL
• Overview of Creative Youth Development
• Creative Activity #1: Snowball Fight
• Creative Activity #2: Metaphor Mural
• Creative Activity #3: Tableau
• Reflection
• Q & A
Partner Share

Is there an area within the SEL domains where your organization could improve its work or that you would like to strengthen?
Creative Youth Development

Creative youth development (CYD) is a new term that unifies a longstanding community of practice that intentionally integrates the arts, humanities, and sciences with youth development principles, sparking young people’s creativity and building critical learning and life skills. These out-of-school time programs emphasize both discipline mastery and the acquisition of the personal and social assets young people need to thrive.

Six Qualities of CYD
1. Safety: create safe and healthy spaces for young people
2. Asset Based: focus on the strengths of young people
3. Artistic Excellence: maintain the highest standards of artistic excellence
4. Social Capital: focus on developing positive relationships with peers and adults
5. Youth Voice: incorporate the voices of young people
6. Social Justice: link young people to the communities they live/work in
History of CYD

Creative youth development has grown from its grassroots inception to **an empirically supported field with hundreds of organizations and programs**.

Key moments and publications that have helped define the field:

- 1995, Americans for the Arts’ YouthArts Development Project,
- 1996, the President’s Committee for the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) Coming Up Taller: Arts and Humanities for Children and Youth At Risk
- 1998, PCAH launched the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Awards
- 2009, Doing Good by Doing Art: The Effects of Education in the Visual and Performing Arts on the Achievements and Values of Young Adults
- 2009, Qualities of Quality: Understanding Excellence in Arts Education
- 2011, The Guild’s Engaging Adolescents Guidebook: Building Youth Participation in the Arts
- 2013, Something to Say: Success Principles for Afterschool Arts Programs from Urban Youth and Other Experts
- 2014 National Summit on Creative Youth Development
CYD Qualities

**Artistic Excellence**: maintain the highest standards of artistic excellence

**Youth Voice**: incorporate the voices of young people

**Social Justice**: link young people to the communities they live/work in
Creative Activity #1

Snowball Fight!

What are you doing in your work that is helping youth to live ethically, effectively, and with meaning?
Youth Voice:

Speaks to the ways in which youth have autonomy and agency in their own learning, decisions, and meaning-making. When given opportunities to provide feedback and direct discussions and subject exploration, there is more youth buy-in and positive relationships are cultivated between the youth and their environment.

The youth voice principle provides youth with opportunities to clarify their own values and ideas (self-awareness), to balance those concepts within the framework of the group (self-management), to respectfully disagree and dialogue with others (social awareness, relationship skills), and to make decisions in consideration of these contrasts.
Creative Activity #2

Metaphor Mural
Artistic Excellence:

Even non-arts organizations can benefit by the mere presence of artistic activities and creative processes.

By engaging in the arts, youth have an opportunity to tell their stories, express their emotions, explore their dreams, memories, and motivations, which in of itself is a form of **self-management** and cultivates **self-awareness**. By collaborating with others and viewing the works of others, they are engaged in dialogue and **decision-making** toward the cultivation of useful work and **relationship skills**. Creative thinking is recognized by neuroscience as a successful way of engaging the brain in cognitive flexibility, divergent thinking, emotional regulation and resiliency, attention, and the experience of insight (to name a few).
Creative Activity #3

Tableau/Imagework
Social Justice:

One of the greatest gifts youth can offer us is a passionate concern for fairness and commitment to improving their world.

Social justice gives youth the opportunity to explore the ways in which prejudice and oppression affect them and those around them internally (self-awareness), interpersonally (relationship skills), and institutionally (social awareness) and empowers youth to be courageous advocates and leaders in their community. As many youth feel disenfranchised or hopeless in affecting their environmental conditions, social justice consciousness restores their own sense of promise and engages them in both advocacy and outside-the-box solutions (creative thinking).
Reflection

During our activities, when were you more self-aware? When were you working on relationships with people in this room?

CYD Qualities:

- **Artistic Excellence**, maintain the highest standards of artistic excellence
- **Youth Voice**, incorporate the voices of young people
- **Social Justice**, link young people to the communities they live/work in
Take a few minutes to write down something that is interesting or inspiring about our work together today that you want to take back to your organization. You may want to jot down any facilitation notes if you intend to try out any of these activities with your youth or colleagues.
Resources

National Guild for Community Arts Education
  www.nationalguild.org/creativeyouthdevelopment

National Creative Youth Development Initiative
  www.creativeyouthdevelopment.org

Creative Action
  www.creativeaction.org

Preparing Youth to Thrive: Promising Practices in SEL
  Center for Youth Program Quality (partnership w/Susan Crown Exchange)
  www.selpractices.org
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