Professional Development Situation: Training

Skill Focus: Giving Youth Control

Time Required: 90 minutes

GIVING YOUTH A ROLE

Participants will do the "Make your Own Rules" activity to learn how to support giving youth more control over their learning.

Agenda

Welcome - 5 minutes

Introduction - 15 minutes

- Introduction Activity: Giving Youth Control

See the Skill in Action - 15 minutes

- I Can't Get it to Work video-based learning module

Hands-on Learning and Practice - 40 minutes

- Make Your Own Rules

Conclusions - 15 minutes

Materials

- Computer with Internet connection
- Projector and speakers
- Flip chart paper and markers
- Pens for participants
- One copy for each participant:
  - Introduction Activity: Giving Youth Control
  - Make Your Own Rules Activity
  - Make Your Own Rules Game Pieces
  - Action Plan: Giving Youth Control

Before the Session

- **Read this training guide** to familiarize yourself with the content and to personalize the activities to best suit your presentation style. Watch all videos and read informational materials.
    - *Italics indicate text that can be read aloud or emailed to participants.*
- Send reminder email about the training. Determine if any participants require accommodations (sight; hearing; etc.).
    - *The next professional development opportunity to enhance our STEM skills will be on DATE at TIME at LOCATION. Our focus for this session will be "Giving Youth Control". Let me know if you require any accommodations to participate in the training. I am happy to answer any questions you have and look forward to seeing you at the workshop. I can be reached at CONTACT INFO.*
- Gather all materials needed for the training.
- Develop a list of possible questions participants might have during the training. Create potential responses to be explored through informal conversation. Review any key terms or ideas that may be unclear.
- On the day of the training, test the audio and video equipment.

Training Outline

Welcome (5 min)

- Greet participants as they arrive. Make sure everyone feels welcome and comfortable.
- Introduce yourself and the focus of the session: "Giving Youth Control".
- Ensure participants are aware of the locations of restrooms facilities, refreshments, etc.
- If participants don't know each other, do introductions at tables or in the room and distribute nametags.

Introduction (15 min)

- Distribute 3-4 pieces of paper to each participant (for creating a name tent or taking notes).
- Distribute a copy of the Introduction Activity to each participant. Ask them to complete the activity to think about what "Giving Youth Control" means to them.
- Attach a piece of chart paper to a wall (with tape) so it can easily be seen by all participants.

- When everyone has finished, facilitate a **large-group discussion** about what it means to "give youth control." This might be a tense discussion as adults are often uneasy letting youth have control of their learning.
- Here are some possible responses to the questions:
    - **Question 1:** Affirm answers that might indicate negative behavior, but also reassure that setting the stage for youth to take control includes identifying parameters that everyone can agree to.
    - **Question 2**: Affirm or acknowledge uneasy or negative feelings, but also reassure participants that giving youth control does not mean adults relinquish all responsibility—ask follow-up questions to the group of how to address concerns—emphasize positive interactions and relationships built on trust between adults and children.
    - **Question 3**: Emphasize self-determination; confidence; perseverance; modeling the work of STEM professionals; inquiry; and less overall need for social control, specifically, negative behaviors tend to be reduced because students are now engaged in inquiry and self- monitoring based on agreed-upon rules for the setting.
    - **Question 4:** Emphasize monitoring; balancing between stepping in to help or push thinking forward but not directing the outcome; supporting learning; brainstorming next steps; gathering materials; ensuring all children have opportunities to participate, etc.
- Use the chart paper to record high points of the discussion. At the end of the session, you will review these questions/answers and determine if anything has changed as a result of the day's training.
- Transition to watching the video:
    - *With all of the ideas shared, we can see there are far more benefits to giving youth control than there are negatives. Most of this is determined by how the adult sets the stage for giving youth control. Today, we'll look at an actual setting to see what it looks like to give youth control and participate in an activity we could easily simulate in our own settings.*
    - *Hopefully, by the end of today's session, you will have some new insights to what it means to offer youth control during STEM experiences and gain some strategies to implement in your setting. At any time, please feel free to ask questions or, if you have new insights or ideas, please share them!*

See the Skill in Action (15 min)

- Introduce the video in step 3 of the I Can't Get it to Work video-based learning module
    - *In the video you will see youth facilitating a STEM experience with wooden cars.*

- *As you watch the video, take note of:*
  - *What the facilitator says/does*
  - *What the youth say and do*

- After the video, ask questions to help participants gain a deeper understanding of what was happening in the video. You may record the responses on a piece of chart paper or just have a conversation as a whole group.
  - *What types of things did you notice the facilitator saying and asking to give the youth autonomy in his learning?*
  - *What choices do youth get to make in this activity? How could you give them more voice and choice?*
  - *Giving youth control also requires organization on the part of the adult—one way to give youth more control is to organize the group into facilitators and participants to give each youth an active role. How would that have worked with this activity? What are considerations you need to make before you use this strategy?*

Hands-on Learning (40 min)

- Participants will try an active STEM experience that gives the learner control.
- Pass out:
  - Make Your Own Rules Activity
  - Make Your Own Rules Game Pieces
  - Extra paper
  - Extra game pieces or objects
- Introduce Make Your Own Rules. Explain that groups should make a game with the following parameters:
  1. *There needs to be a Start and a Finish.*
  2. *All group members need to contribute at least one idea/rule for the game.*
  3. *The group determines the layout and design of the game board, but it must include at least one task related to each area: Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (could be trivia questions, equations, design problems, etc.).*
  4. *A minimum of 20 spaces need to be used to complete the game.*
  5. *Group members determine the name of the game and write out the rules for play.*
- This should be very open-ended, but if participants are frustrated, here are some things you can offer as guides.
  - *It could be a board game with spaces and dice (like Candyland or Chutes and Ladders).*
  - *It could be a trivia game.*

- *It could be a role-playing game (like Clue).*
- *It could be a card game (like poker).*

- Allow approximately 15-20 minutes for them to design their game. As groups begin to finish their games, have them trade games with another group and spend the next 5-10 minutes playing the group's game. Allow time for groups to ask each other questions and add suggestions for changes to improve/enhance the game.
- Debrief the game-building experience.
  - *In what ways does this simulate giving youth control? (Open-ended; inquiry based; gives each person an opportunity to participate; allows participants to design and implement their own plan for learning) Emphasize that rules or parameters were in place —ask if everyone followed them!*
  - *How might giving youth control benefit you as an adult in your setting? (Less focus on negative behaviors and more engagement in learning activities with students)*

Conclusion (15 min)

- Review the chart paper you held up at the beginning of the session. Ask participants what they would like to add that they hadn't thought of before.
  - *Is there anything from "Make Your Own Rules" that was helpful? That made you think?*
- Distribute Giving Youth Control Goal Setting and Action Plan to each participant..
  - *To end our time together today, I would like to review our thoughts from the beginning of our session about giving youth control and see if additional thoughts (or changes) occurred to you as a result of today's session. Also, consider what you saw in the video and what you experienced in the Make Your Own Rules game. What might you use from today's session in your own setting? When we attend trainings like this it is best to try to incorporate something from it right away if you want it to stick.*
- Refer to the chart paper from the Introduction Activity. Review the questions and responses as a group and make any adjustments based on the experiences of participants. Emphasize to them how these benefit the entire setting (adults and children), and encourage them to find ways to simulate these experiences in their own settings.
- If time allows, watch the video in Step 3 of Learning Through Group Projects to compare and contrast any ideas that you have about today's videos and what happened during the activity.

After the Session

- From notes you took on the pieces of chart paper, compile a list of strategies from organizing, recording and documenting experiments/experiences shared by the group. Share this in your follow-up email to participants.
- Within 2-3 weeks of the training, email participants:
    - *Thank you for your participation in the recent "Giving Youth Control" training. I hope you found it useful. Attached are some strategies the group discussed during the training. Consider meeting with a co-worker, supervisor, or friend to share the goals you are working on. I look forward to continuing our learning at the next session on SKILL/FOCUS on DATE at TIME at LOCATION. Please let me know if you have any questions. I can be reached at CONTACT INFO.*
- Attach documents that participants requested to have copies of, such as the Make your Own Rules game.

Want to Earn Credit? Click2Science has teamed up with Better Kid Care to provide continuing education units. Check it out at: http://www.click2sciencepd.org/web-lessons/about

Introduction Activity: Giving Youth Control

Please consider the following questions. Once you have answered each of them, please share your responses with your elbow partner (someone sitting next to you) and then your table. What similarities and differences were there between your answers?

1) When thinking about 'Giving Youth Control," what comes to mind? How would you define 'Giving Youth Control?'

2) What concerns do you have about giving youth control in your setting?

3) What benefits come from giving youth control during planning and implementing STEM experiences?

4) What does the adult do when youth are given control?

STOP here. Now share your responses with your elbow partner before you answer question 5.

5) *After sharing with your elbow partner and table*—what other thoughts do you have about giving youth control?

Make Your Own Rules Activity

Giving Youth Control Make Your Own Rules Activity

A large part of Giving Youth Control is allowing students to experience planning and implementation of their interests and ideas. The adult facilitates this by structuring planning times with group collaboration; gathering needed materials; and following through on plans made.

Adults must recognize and appreciate there are many ways to accomplish a desired goal.

Allowing children to collaborate with each other and their ideas about how to achieve a goal accomplishes several things: fosters self-determination; confidence; inquiry; goal setting; etc. Often, adults' ideas are quite different than those of the children. Taking risks (allowing something to happen the adult thinks will fail) is part of the role the adult plays in the interaction.

The overall goal is to have the adult experience taking 'control' of developing a game. Minimal parameters (expectations) are given at the outset with participants creating the rules and outcome of the game. This should serve to help adults understand how similar experiences can take place in their setting and how it benefits learning.

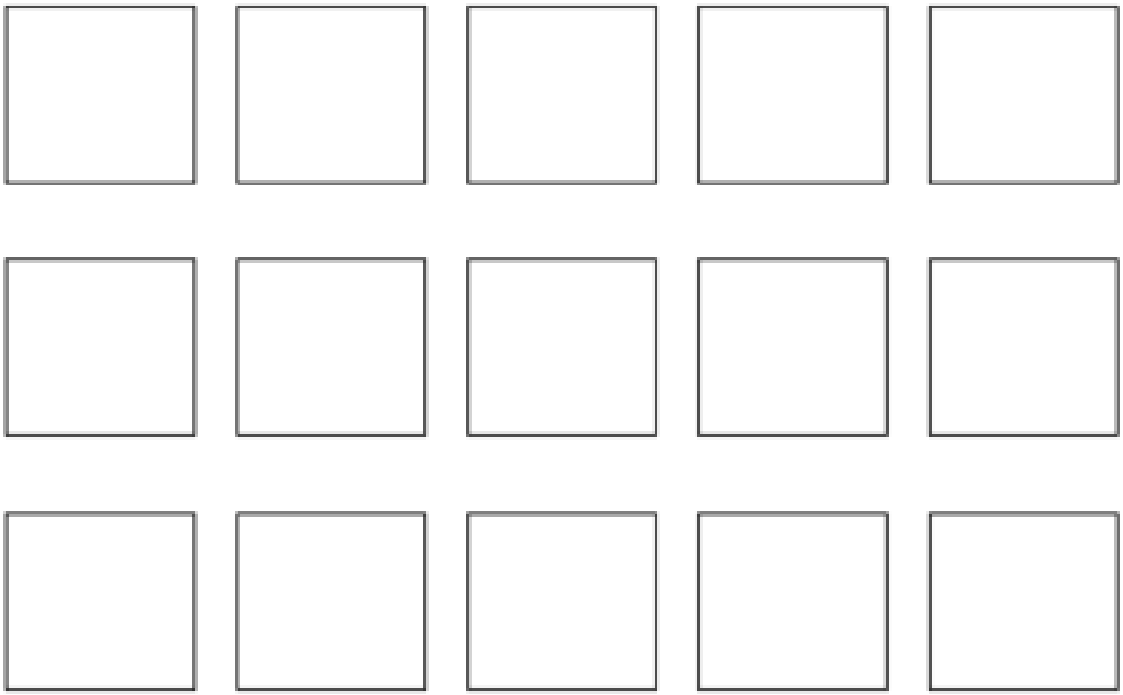
1) Divide participants into equal groups of 3-4 (2 would work, but try not to go over 4).
2) Distribute a 'game template' to each group (choice of circles; triangles; squares; or they can create their own space design).
3) Have available materials for game pieces (game markers—rocks, colored chips, colored paper clips; etc.).
4) Distribute instructions.

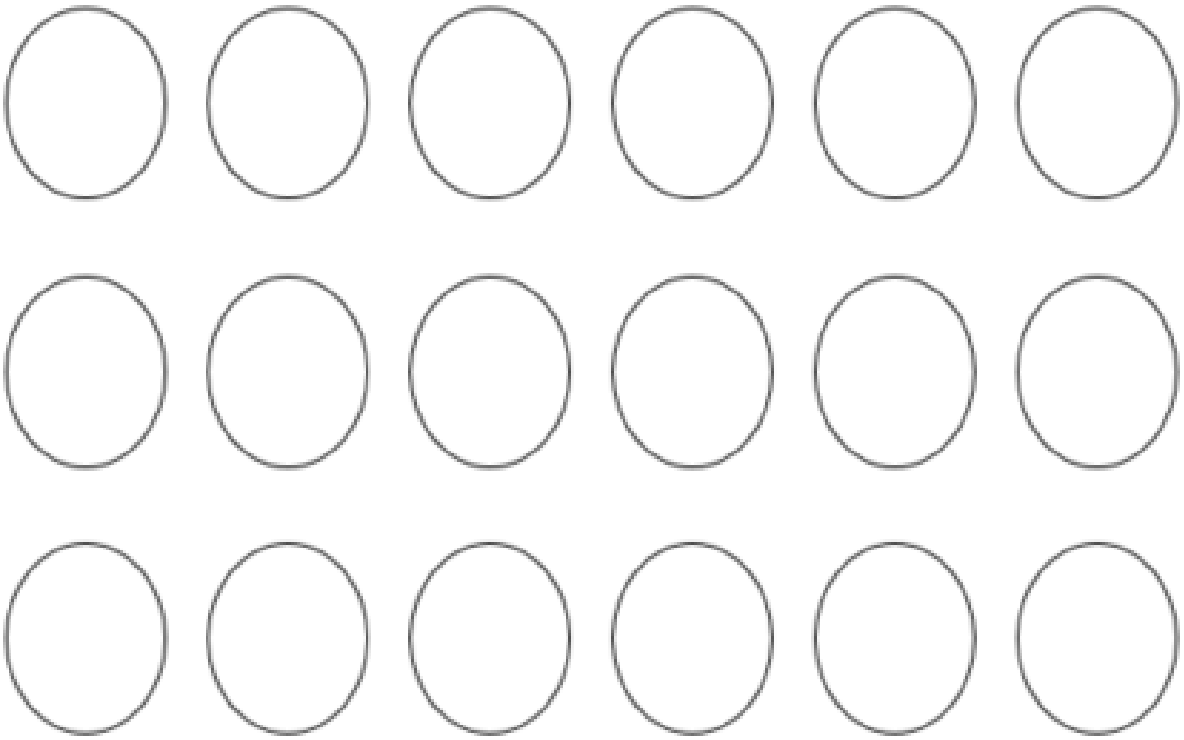
Instructions

1) Groups create a game with the following parameters:
2) There needs to be a 'start' and a 'finish'
3) All group members need to contribute at least 1 idea/rule for the game
4) The group determines the layout and design of the game board, but it must include at least 1 task of each: Science; Technology; Engineering; and Math (could be trivia questions; equations; design problems; etc.)
5) A minimum of 20 spaces need to be used to complete the game
6) Group members determine the name of the game and write out the rules for play.

After group members have created their game, trade games with other groups and give 5-10 minutes to 'play' another group's game.

Make Your Own Rules Game Pieces





Action Plan: Giving Youth Control

Giving youth control requires:

Time and Trust—for children to explore materials alone, with partners, in whole groups, with adults; to document what they have learned; to share with others and develop deeper understandings; to make connections with relatable content

Space—enough space to experiment with materials and collaborate with others

Materials—to organize thoughts; to record/document results; to discover next steps in project work; to write about experiences

Questions—open-ended questions and statements that require children to consider other options and to push thinking to a next level (questions to each other and from adults)

Think of ways you can offer Time, Trust, Space, Materials and Questions to help give youth control in your setting.

Develop 1-2 goals to focus on within the areas of Giving Youth Control.

Time and Trust:

I want to focus on _____

I will _____

Space:

I want to focus on _____

I will _____

Materials:

I want to focus on _____

I will offer_____ to give youth control of their STEM experiences

Questions:

2 questions/statements I will use to help give youth control of their learning:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Resources: Giving Youth Control

Tzuo, P. W. (2007). The tension between teacher control and children's freedom in a child-centered classroom: Resolving the practical dilemma through a closer look at related theories. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, *35* (1), p. 33-39.

Miller, S. A. (June/July 2010). Decisions, decisions. *Scholastic Parent and Child*, p. 90.

Hagekull, B., & Hammarberg, A. (2004). The role of teachers' perceived control and children's characteristics in interactions between 6 year olds and their teachers. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, *45*, p. 301-312.

Rydell, A., & Henricsson, L. (2004). Elementary school teachers' strategies to handle externalizing classroom behavior: A study of relations between perceived control, teacher orientation and strategy preferences. *Scandinavian Journal of Psychology*, *45*, p. 93-102.

Larson, R. W., & Angus, R. M. (2011). Adolescents' development of skills for agency in youth programs: Learning to think strategically. *Child Development*, *82* (1), p. 227-294.

Golding, C. (2013). The teacher as guide: A conception of the inquiry teacher. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, *45* (1), p. 91-110.

Following children's interests (child-led vs. adult-led interactions):

Freeman, C., & Schiller, N. A. (2013). Case studies and the flipped classroom. *Journal of College Science* Teaching, *42*(5), p. 62-66.

Branch, J. J. (2012). *Scaffolding: A close examination of "support" in the inquiry process*, *The Constructivist, 21*(1), 1-26. (online journal: https://sites.google.com/site/assocforconstructteaching/)

Rushton, S. (2011). Neuroscience, early childhood education and play: We are doing it right! *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 39, p. 89-94.

TedTalk on child-centered classrooms:

https://www.ted.com/talks/sugata_mitra_the_child_driven_education