ASSOCIATION FOR LIBR

Created by the ALSC Summer-Out of School Time Task Force

provide access to programs and content that build critical skills for youth success in school, the workforce, and life. Like reading, these skills are essential for a well-equipped developing work force. These skills include adoption of the IMLS standards for 21st century learning such as digital literacy, critical thinking skills, collaboration skills, and growth mindset (being able to learn from failure and persist with grit and stamina). Libraries help children deepen their engagement and learning experience when we deepen our summer experiences and offerings.

## TAKING IT DEEPER

Summer and out-of-school time offers tremendous opportunity for youth in the US. It is also the time of immense inequity leading to learning loss for children who lack access to high-quality programs and services, traditionally children of color and those living in poverty. The public library can play an important role in stanching the summer slide when we align to 21st century learning skills. Libraries have traditionally offered a recreational reading-based summer program that is augmented with programs and prizes. But to really help children bridge the divide between the

**4** **STEM/STEAM LEARNING IS FUN!** When youth are having fun, they are more relaxed and willing to take risks, more willing to participate, and are more likely to retain what they learn. Relaxed brains provide greater neuroplasticity, allowing us to learn and retain new knowledge. Make STEM/STEAM learning a fun way to engage multiple learning styles and encourage youth to work together effectively while not being judged or tested.

**5** **STEM/STEAM IS AN EQUITY ISSUE.** It is well documented that children from historically excluded communities are traditionally left out of the STEM/STEAM pipeline. This means that millions of US youth do not have the same access to the tools, learning, and skills to be successful in a rapidly changing work environment. Intentionally positioning STEM/STEAM programming to meet communities of color and those in poverty helps to build equity. Additionally, STEM/STEAM programming opens access to library programming for those with learning styles not drawn to 20th century learning.

## CASE STUDY

In 2012, Chicago Public Library (CPL) undertook a massive overhaul of the Summer Reading Program after holding focus groups of family members and with children across the city. STEAM learning and academic success were goals for family members across the diverse city, and by adding STEAM learning and art/maker activities to the program, CPL increased academic gains and stopped the summer slide in participating youth as documented through rigorous research with the Chicago Public Schools and the University of Chicago. This was deftly accomplished by partnering with Chicago's preeminent science museum, the Museum of Science and Industry. Museum educators helped train, build hands-on experiences, offered programming, and provided support through evaluation of the revamped program. The Summer Learning Challenge became a nationally recognized model of moving summer reading to learning and increasing STEM/STEAM implementation paired with stories and books.

learning disabilities, celebrates and incorporates diverse stories and inclusive experiences, and ultimately shares power with the youth we serve. Effective summer learning in libraries delivers more than a prescribed reading list because it builds on youth experience and culture to make learning relevant, contextual, and essential. For libraries to provide equitable summer learning experiences, we must also reach into our communities in new ways that allow us to serve children who may not have access to programs in our buildings.

## FIVE THINGS TO KNOW

There are many ways inequity affects our patrons. The Glossary of Education Reform (2016) outlines several ways inequity can affect children, which we can apply to summer learning:

▼ "For everyone to have a true opportunity to succeed, we need to acknowledge that we are all starting from different points on the track. From there, we need to recognize that those 'different starting points' are not solely individual, but are related to categories of privilege and marginalization based on race, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and other aspects of identity. Only then can we begin to question and disrupt the systems that are responsible for creating and maintaining these differences, and in so doing work for equity."

— Project READY n.d.

1  **SOCIETAL (IN)EQUITY.** How does implicit bias affect how children and teens are treated by staff at your library? What can you do to make sure you are welcoming to all people?

2  **SOCIOECONOMIC (IN)EQUITY.** How are children with limited financial resources affected by fines, fees, or program costs at your summer learning program? What can you do to remove financial barriers so children can participate fully?

3  **CULTURAL (IN)EQUITY.** Are children seeing themselves reflected in the books and programs your summer learning program offers? Are you willing to leave "classics" or problematic best-sellers behind to create an inclusive program and collection to celebrate your diverse communities?

4  **FAMILIAL (IN)EQUITY.** How easy is it for families to participate in your summer learning program? Are your scheduled programs flexible to be considerate of busy parents' work schedules? What accommodations do you make for parents for whom English isn't their first language and who want to help their child participate? How do you reach children who are typically unable to access the library due to systemic racism and poverty and its many barriers?

# CO-DESIGNING EFFECTIVE PROGRAMS WITH YOUR COMMUNITY

**Contributor: Hennie Vaandrager, Kent District Library, Kent County, Michigan**

Ideally, co-design should play an important part in the formation of your summer and out-of-school-time programs. Co-design means collaborating and constructing with the stakeholders in your community. Co-design insists on truly getting to know your community by asking questions and listening, and then sharing the power you have to design programs and services with your community. This requires humility and hard work. Your stakeholders are just as invested in the questions you are raising as you are: they impact their families. So, instead of traditionally designing a program *fo* your patron/customer/community, you are designing your program *i h* these individuals.

## TAKING IT DEEPER

Co-design is key to a thoughtful, well-planned program because it uses collaboration and creativity to make a program that actually serves the needs of your community. Too often we make assumptions about what our community wants or needs. Not only can these assumptions be wrong, but they can be complicit in failing to achieve the participation and interest level you had hoped for. We all want to see that the people who participate in our programs are representative of our community. By using the co-design philosophy to create your program, you guarantee that it is genuinely responsive to your community's needs.

# FIVE THINGS TO KNOW

**1** **KNOW YOUR COMMUNITY.** Be involved in outside groups, participate in events, and do outreach to really get to know your community.

**2** **THROW ASSUMPTIONS OUT THE WINDOW.** Do not presume to know what your community needs.

**3** **WELCOME STAKEHOLDERS TO THE TABLE.** Involve local stakeholders in the designing of your program. Stakeholders are just as invested in the succ(t)12.3 (e)f 13.8 (o)1.4 (u)5.6 (r pr)12.-3.7 (s)7.22 (s)7.22 9 (S13.3 (e)-3.7 (s)-24.7

Co-designing with these community stakeholders meant that the team were often challenged on their presumptions about the local community. Additionally, valuable insight was given on facets of the community that the team knew little about. There were some significant "aha moments." For instance, at one point, the early childhood resource liaison flat out said that there are many families that will NEVER come to the library because of lack of trust and economic stressors; it is n● and will n●
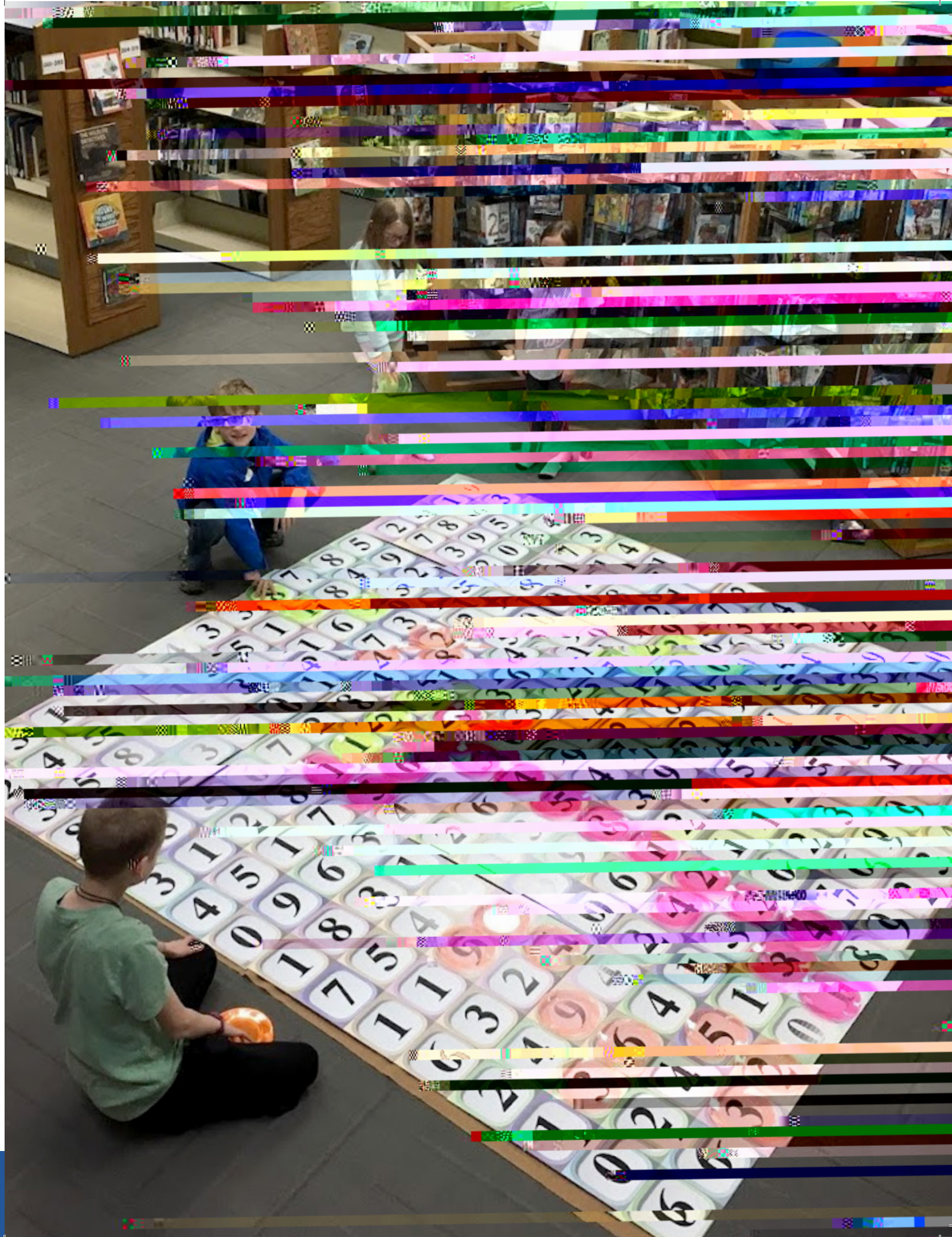
- Museums, zoos, and planetariums

- Camps and outdoor recreation sites

- Houses of wor512.3 (e)-3.7 (s)TJ0.19 0.14 0.10.9 (r.125 Tm(Tf691.1252Tw /SpaM)-4.7 (u)70 Tc 0l0.1s)d8.5 (m)

# CASE STUDY

Where do kids congregate in the summer? Camp! In 2013, the King County (WA) Library System

# EVALUATING SUCCESS

**Contributor: Denise Lyons, Deputy Director of Statewide Development, South Carolina State Library**

**F**or years, libraries have collected statistics and counted what is commonly called

extent to which a program has achieved its intended result. The results can help to communicate the true value of the work. Did participants report the desired change after the implementation of the program? What are the short- or long-term results reported by participants? The acts of reviewing inputs, outputs, outcomes, and impact are all part of evaluation and can help you determine if your program has met your strategic goals.

Effective evaluation can help to identify needs, define and measure program activities, and inform program improvement. This information can and should be used to plan for the future. Becoming more skilled at measuring outcomes rather than simply just counting the activities or items can demonstrate to community stakeholders how the library is helping to achieve community goals and objectives.

So how do you measure outcomes? There are several ways, and many are simple. One way is to conduct a survey. To help libraries become more comfortable with evaluation, the Public

## THEORY OF CHANGE

| WE PROVIDE THIS... | SO PATRONS CAN DO THIS... | SO PATRONS CAN KNOW THIS... | SO PATRONS CAN HAVE THIS... | SO PATRONS CAN BECOME... |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **INPUTS** | | | | |

SOURCE: TASCHA/US IMPACT

Library Association launched Project Outcome, a free toolkit designed to help public libraries understand and share the impact of essential library services and programs by providing simple surveys and an easy-to-use process for measuring and analyzing outcomes. There are many resources and trainings (a few links are provided in the "Resources" section below) offered on outcome-based evaluation to help make your evaluation successful. The most important thing to remember is that your numbers are important, but they do not convey the impact of your library's programs and services on your community, which ultimately may help you to apply for grants or advocate for local library support.

## FIVE THINGS TO KNOW

1   **NUMBERS ALONE WON'T TELL YOUR STORY.** It is important to continue to keep your counts (outputs) but if you want to know about changes or impact, library staff need to shift to an outcome-based evaluation.

2   **OBE CAN HELP YOU SHARE A COMPELLING STORY TO YOUR STAKEHOLDERS.** When you are able to talk about the impact that your services have in the community, you are more likely to make a convincing case for support. Funders want to know how their investment benefitted the target audience. Service counts alone do not provide this information.

3   **OBE CAN ANSWER QUESTIONS THAT CAN BE VERY BENEFICIAL TO YOU AND YOUR COMMUNITIES.** As you plan a summer learning program, OBE can answer questions such as "Who is being served?" and "Who is not?" If your service goals are to align your services to the needs of your community, this type of evaluation will help you be successful.

4   **THERE ARE EASY WAYS TO CONDUCT EVALUATION.** These include surveys, focus groups, and observation with resources available from the IMLS, PLA, RIPL (the Research Institute for Public Libraries) and state libraries that can assist you.

5   **YOUR SUMMER PROGRAMS ARE A KEY COMPONENT IN LIBRARY SERVICES.** You can use easy methods of evaluation that will help you showcase the benefit that these programs provide. Discuss outcome goals prior to launching your program so you can see what impact you have achieved by the end.

- My class learned something by using the materials in the Read, Learn, Grow box.

- The box is easy to use.

- I used the box materials in my classroom.

- I know I can request needed resources for my classroom from the library.

- I am more likely to use other library resources and services.

- I am likely to participate in another library activity or program.

SECTION 6

# REFLECTION—

experience by adding variants to the activity. Allowing time for "what if" thinking in library programs helps enrich the new experience. Older children may be able to utilize learning journals or visual representations to help them with the reflection process.

Waupaca Lego Robotics Camp teammates spend the last 15 minutes of each camp day discussing their frustrations and successes, making plans for the next session.

In the same way children use reflection as a learning tool, librarians can utilize the same model in assessing the impact of their work. By building in intentional time for reflection in planning and implementing a library program, library staff can ensure the program matches the desired outcomes and can help measure impact for advocacy purposes. This could look as simple as a short post-program quiz: Did this program meet the desired outcome? If not, what could be done differently to achieve that goal?

> "The material of thinking is not thoughts, but actions, facts, events, and the relations of things. In other words, to think effectively one must have had, or now have experiences which will furnish . . . resources for coping with the difficulty at hand."
>
> — J. Dewey, American philosopher, 1916

## FIVE THINGS TO KNOW

**1** **REFLECTION ALLOWS FOR KEY LEARNING TO HAPPEN AND FOR LESSONS TO BE APPLIED.** It closes the learning cycle. Children can clearly describe a concept and the context for using it.

**2** **REFLECTION CAN TAKE MANY SHAPES.** from video productions to peer sharing to oral book reporting, make reflection shine back on individual learner strengths. Providing a variety of ways to reflect builds confidence in children (oral, written, graphic, etc.) and gives them choice and voice.

**3** **REFLECTION IS AN IMPORTANT TIME TO BUILD TRUST WITH YOUTH IN PROGRAMS.** It requires vulnerability by both the child and facilitator. By admitting we don't have all the answers, reflection allows us to all learn together, eases anxiety, and models a growth mindset.

**4** **REFLECTION DEEPENS LEARNING.** Strong reflection helps youth to understand key

concepts and experiences. Learners can reflect *in* action and *on* action, both in decision-making while engaged in the activity and after the learning event.

**5 READING REFLECTION ALLOWS YOUTH TO ANALYZE TEXT CLOSELY AND USE METACOGNITION SKILLS TO DEVELOP DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF TEXTS.** Children who reflect on what they read are building vocabulary and critical thinking skills so they can better express themselves.

## CASE STUDY

The Waupaca Area Public Library held a three-day Lego Robotic Summer Camp with the desired outcome of introducing and demonstrating the "4 C's" of 21st century learning (Collaboration, Communication, Creativity, and Critical Thinking) and promote STEM learning outside the school setting. The project centered around team building, engineering design challenges, and highlighted time for reflection each day. Teams of children age 8 to 11 answered daily prompts and wrote in team journals to help them understand both their successes and failures and articulate their challenges and how they learned how to overcome those challenges. Additional reflection time came from the facilitators, who were able to note such specific program elements as participants struggling with varying degrees of prior knowledge and how to address this, time management, and strategies to engage every member of the team.

Findings from this were valuable for participants and the facilitator, and it takes intentional time to reflect for it to become a part of practice. Dedicating time for journaling helps build writing skills as well as critical reflection, and staff modeling reflection leads to continuous improvement and adaptation. Reflection is critical for understanding our successes and failures and learning from them in the library setting.

### RESOURCES

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# ONLINE AND DIGITAL PROGRAMMING

**Contributor: Liesl Jacobson, Assistant Director of Community Engagement, Salt Lake City (UT) Public Library**

**A**n inclusion of online summer learning as part of your summer program plan can help extend learning opportunities for families who may not be able to typically participate. Online summer learning can make libraries accessible to those who live too far away to frequent a library branch or who are vacationing away from their local library, or it may be the only option for continued summer learning during a pandemic quarantine. Virtual programs are more accessible to working parents, who can view them with their children during nontraditional programming hours.

## TAKING IT DEEPER

Before COVID-19, 92 percent of young teens were online everyday (Collins and Halverson 2018, 75). Post COVID-19, that number is bound to be higher, although we know that systemic racism and poverty will continue to impact access, a human rights issue of the 21st century. Research about youth and digital learning shows that youth use the internet to access information, for communicating with peers, for recreation, and certainly for informal learning. In this process they move from learners to co-creators of their experience and actually contribute content, which is a seismic shift from earlier generations.

The diverse digital world has been a transformation that has taken hold in less than one generation of youth (Collins and Halverson 2018). Children move through what Mimi Ito (2009) in her foundational model of HOMAGO calls Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out. Essentially, youth work through consuming digital learning and move from learning to contributing or actually creating their own content. This is a significant shift in how youth experience informal

learning and is an important model for how libraries can develop future online learning experiences in the summer and out-of-school time.

## FIVE THINGS TO KNOW

**1** **VIRTUAL SUMMER LEARNING EXPANDS LEARNING OPTIONSVARNING**

**4** **KEEP COPYRIGHT IN MIND AS YOU PROGRAM PLAN.** ALSC (n.d.) has developed an in-depth guide to navigating copyright for virtual programs in four key areas: public

**What could have been better:** Online-only summer learning was inaccessible to a large portion of the community. It was inherently inequitable to those who lacked access to devices or the internet. Participation dropped, especially by children, who rely on caregivers to provide access to participation.

## SALT LAKE COUNTY LIBRARY SERVICES

Pivoting to online summer learning also proved challenging to Salt Lake County (SLCO) Library

# POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

**Contributor: Liz McChesney, Senior Advisor in Youth Services, Chicago, IL**

Positive youth development is a holistic approach that engages communities to ensure youth in programs have positive outcomes that are developmentally appropriate. Youth are offered ways to be both constructive and productive and have a meaningful voice in the work that is created. The overarching concept behind this framework is services, opportunities, and programs all align to help support youth and help them reach their full potential.

## TAKING IT DEEPER

Positive youth development comprises an entire system of support from school, home, and community agencies, including the public library. This system builds on the strengths of youth and recognizes risks to community youth. This approach has been deeply studied and researched and involves youth as active participants working in partnership with adults/library staff. Civic engagement and providing youth a forum for expression, creation, and solution development is critical to successful implementation.

Positive youth development includes the development of skills, opportunities, and authentic relationships with youth. This model asks us to take a prosocial (denotes behavior that is friendly and helpful) approach and promotes positive outcomes aligned to life success. While various frameworks exist to understand the components of this, the "5 C's" of positive youth development are widely agreed upon:

- Competence: youth are able to take on tasks that build and practice skills and knowledge.

- Confidence: youth are able to successfully develop agency and solve problems so they grow in confidence and self-assuredness.

- Connection: youth see themselves and their relationships in their community.

- Caring/Compassion: adults understand and empathize with youths' concerns, issues, and trauma and likewise help youth develop these skills and attributes

- Character: positive character development is modeled, and the traits and values of positive character are described and built.

# FIVE THINGS TO KNOW

Positive youth development is guided by the following 5 principles.

**1** **STRENGTHS-BASED.** We take a holistic approach by focusing on the inherent strengths of an individual, family, and community and build on them.

**2** **INCLUSIVE.** We address the needs of all youth by ensuring that our approach is culturally responsive and centered in healing engagement.

**3** **ENGAGES YOUTH AS PARTNERS.** Participation is meaningful and sustained and so are the practices and policies that support them.

**4** **COLLRLerTeE.**

# CASE STUDY

Beginning in 2014, The Seattle Public Library (SPL) redesigned their summer offerings and launched the Summer of Learning. This program involves community partners, youth, and families in the development and design of many aspects the program. Through strategic listening sessions with the Somali community, led by Seattle Housing Authority, Seattle Public Schools, and Somali Family Safety Task Force (SFSTF), new library programs were developed to extend the reach and effectiveness of the SPL Summer of Learning. By partnering directly with community agencies, particularly those led by Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) individuals, the library is better positioned to collaboratively create and implement programs *i h* and *fo* the many communities they serve.

This current iteration of the SPL's Summer of Learning is now an assets-based model that celebrates what youth, families, and communities bring to the table instead of the old deficits-based model that served to solve a problem (summer slide) without much input from those served by the program. This approach is based on positive youth development principles and power sharing with community organizations, youth, and families. This project has led to the creation of three published board books created by and with families from the community. From the book topics (alphabet, counting, animals) to the creation of the artwork, to the rough layout and editing, these books are a community-led process from start to finish. Each published book has been accompanied by an author reading from the youth and family authors. Published by the Seattle Public Library Foundation by Commonwealth Editions, the titles include *Ba ● Af-S●●maali*, *Ba ● Ti in a Af S●●maaliga*, and *Ba ● Magac ada Xa a aanada ● ●af S●●maali*.

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