Planning for Positive Youth Development through Garden-Based Learning: Generosity, Belonging, Power, and Mastery

Use this tool to dig deeper into your program activities and support the growth of collaborative, committed, reflective, and caring young people. Consider an activity: planting pumpkins, planning a new garden, or hosting a harvest festival. How might you build in opportunities for generosity, belonging, power, and mastery?

**GENEROSITY ::: “I can make a difference.”**

**Strategies:**
- Show how garden skills can be used in positive ways.
- Respect and encourage friendships.
- Encourage compassion for others, and concern for the earth.
- Reinforce gestures of caring, and ask young people to take responsibility for helping others.
- Share the harvest—consider all the ways to extend what you are learning and growing to improve the lives of others.
- Establish a mentoring component to link older students with younger students.

**BELONGING ::: “I belong here.”**

**Strategies:**
- Encourage students work together to complete tasks.
- Spend time gardening with students, and take your time!
- Think of ways to involve families and community.
- Work in small groups to encourage close relationships.
- Promote collaborative and cooperative learning.
- Show respect for the value of diverse cultures.

**POWER ::: “I matter.”**

**Strategies:**
- Ask yourself: “Is there something I am doing that a young person could be learning by doing?”
- Include children in discussions and encourage their input.
- Ask children to do something instead of telling them to do it.
- Give children responsibility with a minimum of reminders.
- Commend children who recognize the limits of their independence and seek counsel.
- Allow children the thrill of overcoming an obstacle.
- Maintain a close link between independence and responsibility. Share decision-making with young people by involving them in running the garden program.

**MASTERY ::: “I can.”**

**Strategies:**
- Include hands-on activities, projects or exhibits.
- Think of ways to show how gardening relates to workplace-related challenges and activities that apply to daily life.
- Include different ways to investigate and discover.
- Think of multiple outcomes.
- Focus on the long-term goals of learning.
- Provide prompt feedback.
- Model and teach that failure and frustration are learning experiences.

Adapted from “Youth Development Learning Design Walkaround” by Cathann Kress, Ph.D.
Cornell Cooperative Extension, 4-H Youth Development

http://blogs.cornell.edu/garden