



EVALUATING LIBRARY PROGRAMMING

A practical guide to collecting and analyzing data to improve or evaluate connected learning programs for youth in libraries



The Connected Learning Alliance Report Series
on Connected Learning in Practice



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INTRODUCTION: WHAT THIS GUIDE IS AND HOW TO USE IT



This guide can help support your work at the intersection of connected learning and program evaluation. Connected learning is a way of thinking about and designing learning that includes the many aspects of a learner's life: the interests, relationships, and opportunities that together shape how a learner engages with the world. Program evaluation is about understanding the effectiveness of your designs for achieving your goals. This guide focuses specifically on connected learning programs for youth in libraries.

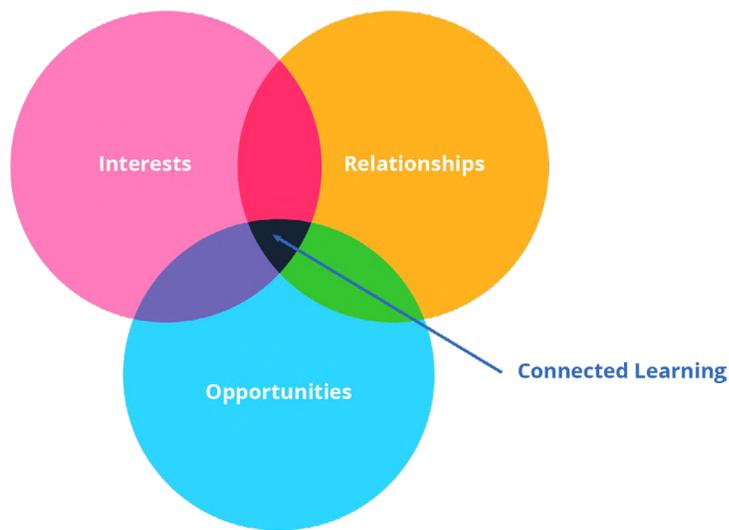
Whether your goal is to collect community feedback to inform the design of your program, reflect on your own practices as a library staff member, mentor, and broker, or assess youth experiences and outcomes, this guide can help you through the process. Our aim is to use a *connected learning* lens to help you:

- Consider how data collection and analysis could inform the design and improvement of your library program(s).
- Think through your goals for program design, assessment, and evaluation.
- Select the right tools for your needs.
- Create an evaluation plan.

This guide is designed to get you started with some effective, easy to use, and accessible tools and strategies. If you'd like to take a deeper dive into assessment, evaluation, and connected learning, we offer some Additional Resources to explore at the end. There are also workbook prompts throughout to support the development of an evaluation plan for your program, and to help you decide which tools are best to answer your questions.

WHAT IS CONNECTED LEARNING?¹

Connected learning for youth happens when young people participate in activities that connect personal interests, supportive relationships, and new opportunities. It is an ecological perspective on learning that considers the importance of making links between the learning that happens at home, at school, and in informal community settings, both in-person and online. Across these different settings, peers, teachers, family members, and adult mentors can help youth build connections that broaden and deepen their learning. With connected learning, mentors play an important role, acting as “brokers” to connect youth to useful resources and opportunities.



Source:
<https://clalliance.org/about-connected-learning/>

Connected learning is reflected in four core principles:

- **Connections Across Settings**—As connected learners develop, they access varied programs, communities, and opportunities. To support diverse learner pathways, organizations and caring adults can form partnerships, broker connections across settings, and share on openly networked platforms and portfolios.
- **Shared Purpose**—Learners need to feel a sense of belonging and be able to make meaningful contributions to a community in order to experience connected learning. Groups that foster connected learning have shared culture and values, are welcoming to newcomers, and encourage sharing, feedback, and learning among all participants.
- **Shared Practices**—Ongoing shared activities are the backbone of connected learning. Through collaborative production, friendly competition, civic action, and joint research, youth and adults make things, have fun, learn, and make a difference together.
- **Sponsorship of Youth Interests**—Organizations and adults must meet youth where they are in order to foster connected learning. They do this by sponsoring and recognizing youth’s genuine and diverse interests and providing mentorship, space, and other resources for these interests.

¹ This section has been excerpted from the following article, written by the authors for YALS: Widman, Sari, Josie Chang-Order, William R. Penuel, and Amanda Wortman. 2019. “Using Evaluation Tools Toward More Equitable Youth Engagement in Libraries: Measuring Connected Learning and Beyond.” *Young Adult Library Services* 17(4), 36–44.

Connected learning also emphasizes learning in social settings. Ito et al.'s *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out* (**HOMAGO framework**) identifies three types of youth engagement in informal learning spaces: hanging out, messing around, and geeking out. “Hanging out” is when youth’s engagement is driven by spending time with friends, while “messing around” indicates experimentation with tools and materials, and “geeking out” is deeper engagement and exploration.

Connected learning’s focus on interest-driven activities invites youth agency, and, when supported well, creates space for youth to express more of their whole identities, including cultural identities and practices. Connected learning also seeks to address issues of equity, particularly learning with and about technology, by encouraging educators to understand the communities they serve and remove barriers to participation. Increasing participation can be accomplished by collaboratively working with community members to design learning tools and programs.

Libraries are ideal environments to support connected learning. They are especially well positioned to broker opportunities across school, home, and community, particularly for historically marginalized and nondominant communities. Drop-in and informal learning opportunities in libraries have the potential to create spaces where youth who are marginalized in school can engage in a different sort of learning and access positive, supportive relationships with adult mentors and community members.

Design Principles

Design principles are the *core assumptions* designers (including educators, librarians, and library staff) make about how youth learn, what supports engagement, and what features of programming are most important for participants. Making these assumptions and commitments explicit, and prioritizing which principles are most important, can guide or anchor decisions about how to plan and implement programs.

Stakeholders

Stakeholders are groups or individuals who are impacted by or have an interest in the values, functions, processes, and outcomes of a program or organization.

Assets (Community/Youth)

Assets are strengths and supports that help young people thrive. Assets are the variety of relationships with peers and adults, social-emotional strengths and values, knowledge and skills, and community supports and networks that support resiliency in youth.

Brokering

Brokering is a way of supporting youth's interests, relationships, and opportunities across settings like schools, libraries, and the community. Brokering is an important way to help youth access expertise and opportunities and can promote equity. Brokering looks like a librarian telling a young person about an opportunity and encouraging them to sign up, or helping youth deepen their interests by connecting them to related programs or community experts to support exploring an interest.

Assessment

Assessment refers to the process of collecting and analyzing data to answer a question about what participants are getting or not getting from a program. Assessment typically refers to measuring outcomes, but any effort to collect data directly from participants that helps answer questions about their needs, activities, and experience is an assessment.

Evaluation

Evaluation is the use of evidence to make judgments about a program's design, implementation, and impacts. Evaluations can be *formative*, used to improve a program, or *summative*, used to make claims about whether a given program has achieved its intended aims, including the desired outcomes for its participants. An *evaluation plan* identifies questions and outcomes of interest related to a particular program, a list of what data collection methods will be used, how data will be analyzed, and the purposes of the stakeholders/audiences who will learn from the evaluation.

Outcomes

An outcome is a desired result of a program, activity, lesson, intervention, or experience that can be observed or measured in participants. Short-term outcomes of a connected learning program for youth might include increased feelings of connection to others, increased motivation to seek related programs or activities in which to engage, or increased interest in civic engagement. Long-term outcomes might include persistence in an interest, or pursuing it as a school or career pathway.

DESIGNING CONNECTED LEARNING PROGRAMMING IN LIBRARIES

Libraries support connected learning in several key ways, as past President of YALSA, Crystle Martin, notes:

If libraries create programs that focus on the things about which youth are passionate—their interests, cultures, identities, and social relationships—the relevance and impact of learning is magnified. In previous research, when asked, highly resourceful problem solvers and successful, engaged learners almost always point to a connected learning experience supported by a caring adult or peer. This mentorship role is one that librarians are uniquely situated to fill and one where youth need them the most.²

To design connected learning programs and spaces in your library, think first about the core guiding principle of connected learning: Young people learn best when learning is tied to their interests, passions, and purposes.³ The sweet spot occurs when a young person can focus on an interest they are passionate about, engage with peers who share it, and then connect what they are working on or producing to an opportunity. Opportunities can include something like library staff sharing a young person's project (with permission) with a local company that is so impressed they offer them an internship, or something as simple as posting youth projects to the libraries' Instagram or Facebook (with permission). Libraries serve as a “third place,” not home and not school, that allows youth's interests, relationships, and opportunities to come together.⁴

Here, we differentiate between connected learning **spaces**, which are youth and teen spaces in libraries specifically designed to promote connected learning experiences, and connected learning **programs**, which can operate in a wide range of settings with different levels of staffing, space, and resources.

When designing library *spaces* conducive to connected learning, consider:

- Allowing *movement* across the three types of engagement in the HOMAGO framework.
- Allowing fluid and flexible *roles* for youth and mentors. Youth are often the experts in a space!
- Ensuring a *diversity of interests* can be explored across the space.
- Matching programs and activities to youth's *expressed interests and needs*.
- Matching programming to the *affordances of virtual spaces*.
 - For example, can the library support deepening interests by connecting youth to virtual activities outside the library?

² Martin 2015: http://www.yalsa.ala.org/jrlya/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Martin_Connected_LearningandLibraries.FINAL_PDF.pdf

³ See Ito et al. 2013: <https://clalliance.org/publications/connected-learning-an-agenda-for-research-and-design/>; and Ito et al. 2020: <https://clalliance.org/publications/the-connected-learning-research-network-reflections-on-a-decade-of-engaged-scholarship/>

⁴ See Ito and Martin 2013: http://leonline.com/yals/12n1_fall2013.pdf; and Braun et al. 2014: http://www.ala.org/yaforum/sites/ala.org.yaforum/files/content/YALSA_nationalforum_final.pdf

Connected learning *programs* in libraries can incorporate some or all of the following:

- Individual teen passions and interests
- Content creation
- Problem solving
- Discovery
- Collaboration
- Multiple literacies⁵

For a step-by-step guide on the connected learning program design process, please see the Additional Resources section below.

Youth and teen programming in libraries can take many forms, including regular weekly clubs, drop-in programs, and one-off events. We have provided some examples of successful connected learning programs in libraries to help get you thinking about youth interests and what could work in your space.

⁵ Worl, Jody. 2014. "Connected Learning and the Library: An Interview with Kristy Gale," *Young Adult Library Services* 12(4):19.

Library	Program description	Program type
<p>Hennepin County Public Library; Minneapolis, Minnesota</p>	<p>Web Show/Video Blog Workshop With the local organization, Reel Grrls, the library hosted a two-day workshop for teen girls and focused on how women are portrayed in the media. Media literacy was a key component of the workshop. The participating teens analyzed everything from yogurt commercials and how they target women, to a short video that focused on gender stereotypes, to Ill Doctrine’s <i>How to Tell Someone They Sound Racist</i>. After learning camera angles, shots, and scriptwriting, the girls formed groups and created their own video for a vlog/web show. Their topics included gender roles in commercials, how female characters are portrayed in anime, profiting on the predicted 2012 apocalypse, and how the beauty industry preys on women’s insecurities to sell products by using sex and pushing stereotypes.</p>	<p>Two-day workshop</p>
<p>Evanston Public Library; Evanston, Illinois</p>	<p>Teen Advisory Board The board, a mix of middle school and high school students, holds regular meetings and gives feedback on the types of programming they would like to see. Sometimes youth volunteer to lead their own program. For example, a couple of teen advisory board members led writing programs over the summer. Library staff also support teens on the committee when designing or redesigning a teen space because their opinions are invaluable and it gives teens more ownership over the space.</p>	<p>Long-term volunteer program</p>
<p>YOUmedia Chicago, Harold Washington branch of Chicago Public Library; Chicago, Illinois⁶</p>	<p>Library of Games Library of Games engages a small group of teens in the art of game criticism. The students meet weekly to produce 45- to 60-minute podcast critiques of new, popular, or noteworthy video games. Library staff guide the teens as they select games to critique, and help them to think more deeply about the elements of good video game design and play. Staff also introduce them to audio production and blogging, as well as work with them to improve their writing and performance skills. The students record the podcasts using an Apple laptop and two USB microphones. The program was conceived of as a way to encourage a group of youth who were “hanging out” at the library playing video games to deepen their interest by thinking critically and to learn to express their ideas about video games.</p>	<p>Weekly</p>
<p>Cleveland and Los Angeles Public Libraries; Ohio & California</p>	<p>Scratch Hip-Hop Workshops Library staff and researchers co-created workshops for youth with interest in hip-hop dance to explore computational literacy through learning to code with Scratch. Exploring the connections between hip-hop and computer programming opened up learning pathways in which the cultural interests of minoritized and diverse youth intersected with computational thinking.</p>	<p>Weekly workshops for 4 to 6 weeks</p>
<p>Simla Library; Simla, Colorado</p>	<p>This one-room public library provides low-tech options⁷, like simple Makey Makey kits for exploration and messing around. More sophisticated tools like Arduino boards help create opportunities for geeking out. Such tools provide options for patrons of all experience and interest levels, even within a small space.</p>	<p>Drop-in</p>
<p>Los Angeles Public Library, Pio Pico branch; Los Angeles, California</p>	<p>Curiosity Machine Library staff hold once-a-month, science-related, kit-based programming. Youth drop in, join the program if they are interested, and have something to take home with them at the end of the hour. Topics range from “tornado in a bottle” to “fizz inflators” to “owl pellet dissection.” The topics introduce youth to science concepts, allow for interest discovery, and encourage sharing between youth and their parents.</p>	<p>Drop-in</p>

⁶ More examples of connected learning (CL) programs at YOUmedia Chicago can be found in the appendix here: <https://clalliance.org/publications/safe-space-and-shared-interests-youmedia-chicago-as-a-laboratory-for-connected-learning/>

⁷ More examples of CL programs can be found in the ConnectedLib report here: <https://connectedlib.ischool.uw.edu/>

THINKING THROUGH YOUR PROGRAM DESIGN



Evaluations are about helping you understand whether your program is working as you would like—especially for the sake of improving it or sharing your understanding of its effectiveness with others (e.g., funders, parents, other libraries). The basis for any evaluation is evidence or data you collect—whether it comes from your careful observations, patrons’ expressed viewpoints, or other sources that contribute to insights about your programming. You’ll use this evidence to challenge and deepen your thinking about what makes for good and effective programming and whether or not you’re achieving your aims.

When developing an evaluation plan, it’s important to lay out the elements of your program, as well as your goals and those of different stakeholders (like funders and program participants). You can use the Workbook below to help you start thinking through a new program design by considering your current programming, data you are already collecting, your goals, and the stakeholders and audiences involved.

After finishing the exercises in this guide, you’ll be prepared to use the following template to tell the story of your library programming evaluation:

- Specify what the program was designed to do.
- Explain to your audience what you wanted to find out about your program.
- Describe how you collected and interpreted data.
- Share how the data helped assess if the program is working well and how it could be improved.
- Provide forward-thinking next steps for your evaluation.

Workbook: Thinking Through Your Program Design

Reflecting on Your Current Programs: Considering the programming your library already offers can help you think through how the new program you're designing will fit, and what gaps might need to be filled.

Which types of programming does your library already offer (e.g., topics or purposes)? What structures or scheduling do you have for these programs (e.g., drop-in versus multiweek classes)? What roles do youth play in your programs (e.g., teacher, learner, peer support, other)?

What do you know about these programs, and where do you get this information from? Is it reliable? Do you trust it? Is it easy to get?

Thinking About New Programs: Based on your reflections on your current programming, think about the new program you're considering adding. What will it contribute? How will it build on current efforts or meet community needs that aren't currently being filled?

Program Staff: Describe the skills that library staff and partners/volunteers will bring to the activity. This will help you identify staff assets and think through capacity.

Key Stakeholders: It's important to consider different stakeholders, such as participants, library staff, community partners, caregivers, board members, and funders. Who are the stakeholders in your community?

WHEN SHOULD I COLLECT DATA?

Considering What Program(s) to Evaluate

Library staff often run many programs, and it's likely not possible or desirable to attempt to collect data for them all. How might you decide which to prioritize? A good way to start is with a single youth program or a set of related workshops. Whether you're considering creating an evaluation plan for existing programs or one you're currently designing, it's important to determine whether (and in what ways) evaluation or any other type of data collection and analysis is actually necessary or useful. The Workbook below features some questions to consider when choosing which program(s) to evaluate.

Workbook: Considering What Program(s) to Evaluate

Consider your own interests and questions as library staff: What programs do you have questions about in terms of your own practices? Do you want to know more about how a particular program or set of programs impact(s) the youth who participate? What do you want to know?

Consider big-picture questions and long-term goals for your library. How can this inform your priorities for gathering and analyzing data?

Consider funding needs and opportunities: Which programs have funders or stakeholders that you are accountable to? What types of programs do you want to apply for funding in the future? What information or evidence do you need to make a case for why you should be funded?

Improving or expanding existing programs: Which programs do you want to expand or further develop? Do you want to extend program participation to a broader range of youth or a particular group?

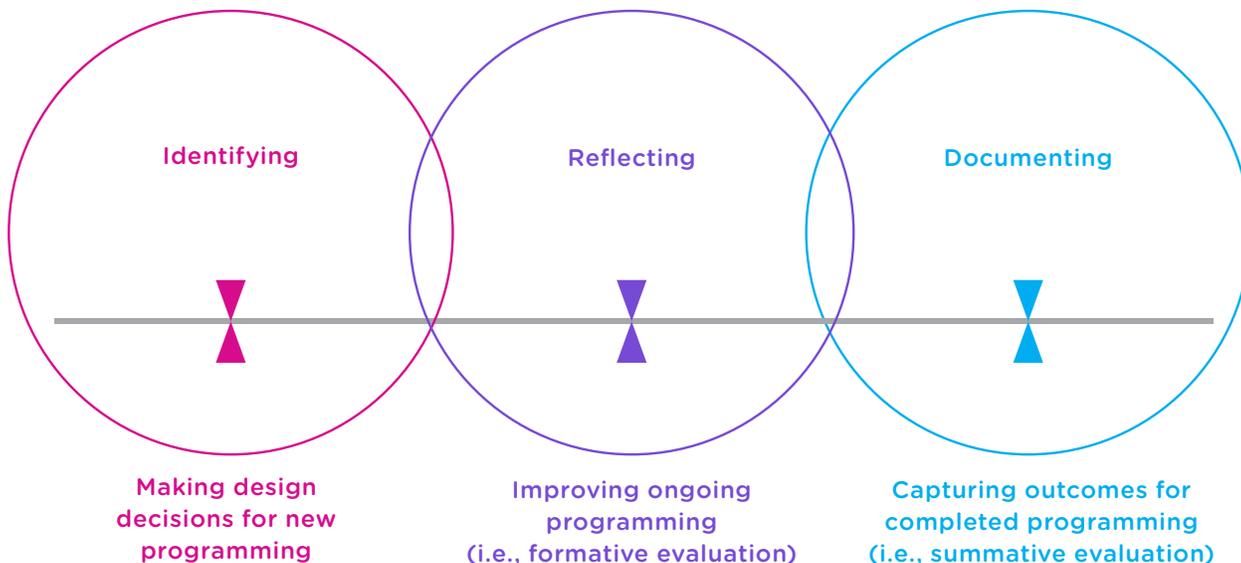
Is there a component of an existing program you want to improve or develop, in which data about youth and community needs would help you? Are there local organizations you would consider working with to support or expand a given program?

Are you concerned whether particular programs are equitably meeting the needs and interests of youth in your community? Have you noticed you're not getting the engagement you were hoping for and you're wondering why?

Considering Program Trajectory

While evaluation involves a summative assessment of outcomes for a learning program, it's important to remember that data collection or assessment efforts can serve different purposes at different stages of your library program. It may be helpful to think of the trajectory of your program as having 3 stages in relation to data collection and analysis: identifying, reflecting, and documenting.

Three Stages of Program Trajectory



At the *Identifying* stage, data collection is exploratory. It can help you identify things like youth needs and interests, or potential partners, that can inform your program design. At the *Reflecting* stage, data is used for formative evaluation. It can help you understand and reflect on your staff's practices, the learning environment, and youth engagement, so you can make your program better. At the *Documenting* stage, data is used to capture (document evidence of) learning or engagement outcomes at the close of a program, or at a particular interval in a program cycle (for example, annually). Keep in mind that these stages are relative, especially when iterating on designs for improving ongoing programming. For example, you might discover through *reflection* that an ongoing program isn't addressing youth's interests. You could then decide to go about *identifying* youth's interests in order to adapt the program to better incorporate those interests.

OVERVIEW OF TOOLS FOR DATA COLLECTION AND ASSESSMENT

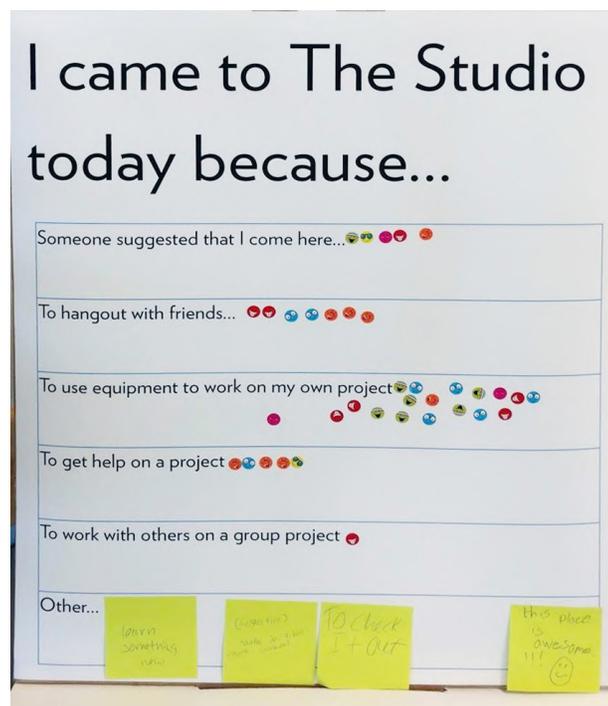
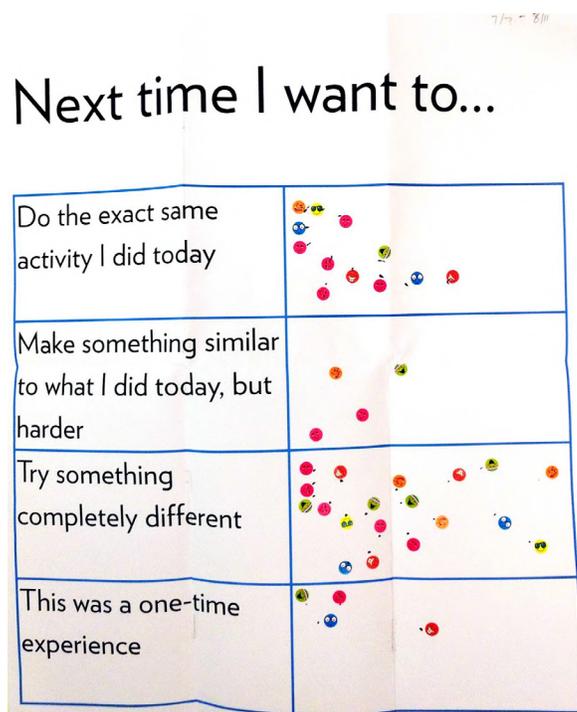
There are many tools and methods out there for data collection and assessment. Assessment is the process of documenting and analyzing data to answer a question about what youth are doing, experiencing, or needing in a program. Below we offer a few recommendations for tools we believe may be useful to you in your library context. For a deeper dive into different tools and how you might use them, please see the Additional Resources section.

Tool: Talkback Boards

Talkback boards are an easy-to-use method for soliciting (requesting) feedback from youth before, during, or after a program or experience. Talkback boards, which were developed by Mo Yang for use at Anythink Library in Thornton, Colorado, present questions or prompts for participants to respond to by selecting from several possible choices or by writing short responses. Prompts represent possible attitudes and behaviors that youth might have or do, and in this type of talkback board they leave a sticky dot to indicate which of the prompts reflect their experience.

Talkback boards have been popular with library staff because they are:

- Quick and engaging for youth.
- Helpful for educators to make changes and improvements quickly based on participant feedback.
- A flexible tool that can be used for different purposes, including in programs and drop-in spaces, with a range of age groups.



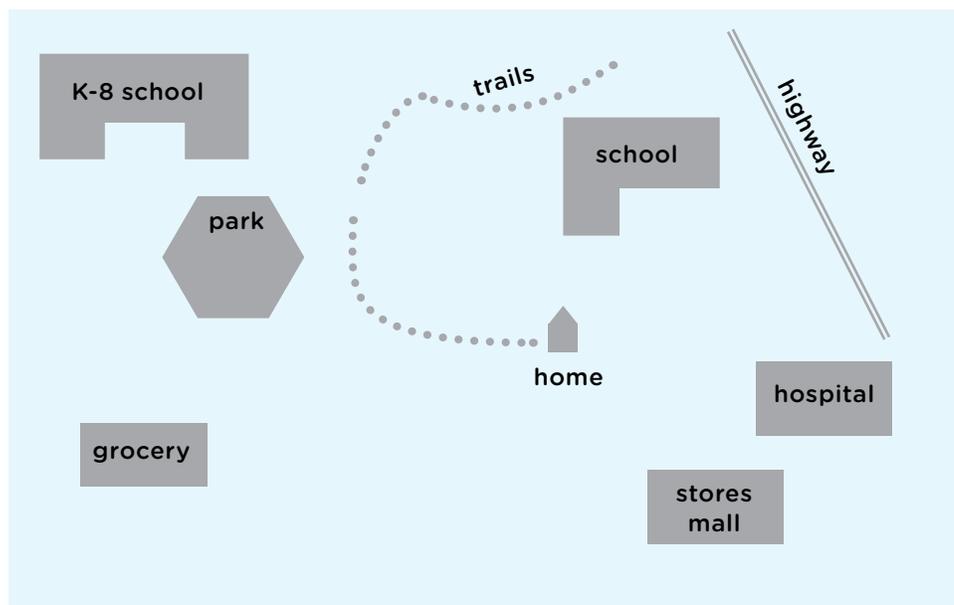
Two examples of Talkback boards used in library spaces.

Talkback boards can also be used to capture youth’s questions, attitudes, and perceptions *going into* a program or workshop, as compared to *after*. For example, Future Ready 2 cohort member Allison Shimek, Director of the Fayette Public Library and Fayette Heritage Museum and Archives in La Grange, Texas, had youth respond to the following prompts before and after participating in one of her *Career Cruising* events at a local bank, where youth learned about different jobs and career paths:

- Pre-event questions:
 - What types of jobs are available at a bank?
 - What is something you hope to learn today?
 - Do you need a college degree to work at a bank?
- Post event questions:
 - What types of jobs are available at a bank?
 - Tell us something you learned today.
 - What was your favorite and least favorite part of the day?

Tool: Asset and Relationship Mapping

This type of mapping can help you understand the places in your community that youth or adult patrons see as assets or important to their daily lives, as well as things they wish they had in their community. This can help you understand what community members value, any gaps in services the library might be able to fill, and potential community partners to seek out. One example of a simple exercise is to ask participants to draw a map with their favorite places, those they visit most often with their families, or the places that are most important to them. Then ask them to draw in something they don’t have in their neighborhood or town, but wish they did. The **Family Creative Learning** team did this during focus groups with neighborhood families to better understand what they valued in their community, and what they felt was lacking. You may also use mapping as a way of looking at your own relationships in the community.



An example of a community asset map from a Family Creative Learning focus group.

Tool: Documentation

Documentation of what people are doing and making in a program can help you share with others the variety of products that can be produced by participants. When documentation includes annotations or reflections from participants about the creative process, these can sometimes give insight into the process of learning. Documentation can also entail screen captures and recordings of youth work, or having youth keep a digital portfolio such as a blog. The [Open Portfolios](#) project has guidance for how to create portfolios as part of documenting learning.

There are many different forms of documentation, such as:

- Photographs of activities or artifacts
- Written reflections and observations
- Video or audio recording of program activities
- Screen captures of gaming or creative coding activities

Documentation often involves jotting down some notes about what you observe, including how youth engage with the program, adult facilitators, and each other. Body language and how participants move around the space can be telling. You can also reflect on your own facilitation practices, how you felt the program went, if it seemed like the day's activities met your goals, and then connect what you observed with your perception of whether learning goals were met. This could even be a regular journaling activity for you to reflect on the programming.

Though many libraries have gotten excited about documentation, in practice it is hard to do. For example, taking notes while facilitating is challenging. You can enlist youth to be your photographer or videographer to help document learning, especially if you have teens who are interested in media. However, this requires making a plan to support youth in this activity.

Programs can also struggle with what to do with all the documentation. One thing that's key to documentation of any kind is having a system for organizing and storing notes, reflections, or images, and keeping a record that allows you to trace the "when" and the "what" of the program being documented. For example, staff in a makerspace in an urban library upload photos to a folder in their Google Drive and add a description to a new image by clicking on "Details" in the sidebar, scrolling down to "Add a description" and noting relevant details about the image. This included who's in the photo, when it was taken, and what's happening in the photo.

Keep in mind that you should always have a conversation with youth about documenting their activities and their work, and get their consent. Your library may have other privacy considerations as well that prohibit photography, audio, or video recording, or require a consent form from parents.

Tool: Surveys

Surveys are a common and flexible method of gathering responses from participants, but as library staff know, surveys can be unpopular with young people! They are, however, customizable and provide systematic and quantifiable data tailored to your assessment and evaluation goals. The [Longitudinal Survey of Connected Learning](#) has survey items that are designed with connected learning principles in mind.

Tool: Self-Assessment or Reflective Survey

For program leaders or educators, self-assessments can help you reflect on your overall practice and prompt you to ask yourself specific questions, such as, “How are youth interests being incorporated into current programming?” It’s important to step back to reflect on your goals, whether those goals align with youth’s goals or community needs, and the ways your programming currently does or does not support those goals. This can be valuable in designing new programs, reviewing current programming, and learning from completed programs.

Methods for self-assessment vary. Program staff might respond to simple written prompts or complete surveys at regular intervals to identify patterns that illuminate areas in need of improvement. The important element of a self-assessment is to take the time to reflect, consider, and document the successes and challenges of current programming and possibilities for the next best steps.

There are many useful topics and questions for self-reflections, including:

- What do I wish went better this week? What am I most proud of?
- What opportunities do I wish I could provide youth, but currently can’t? What are the obstacles to this? Are there any workarounds or creative solutions I haven’t tried yet?
- Were there any occasions this week when someone asked me a question and I was unable to assist or connect them with the resource they were looking for? What were they asking, and what factors made it difficult to help?
- Were there any patron or participant questions or requests I dismissed as silly or outside of the scope of my job? If so, what made me feel this way?
- Reflecting on ways I was able to support youth in the space, what was I most frequently able to assist with, and what type of support did I feel most confident to provide? Why do I think this?
- When I encountered a challenge recently, did I feel supported? What would help me feel better equipped to take on this challenge in the future?

DETERMINING YOUR CAPACITY AND THE BEST TOOL FOR THE JOB

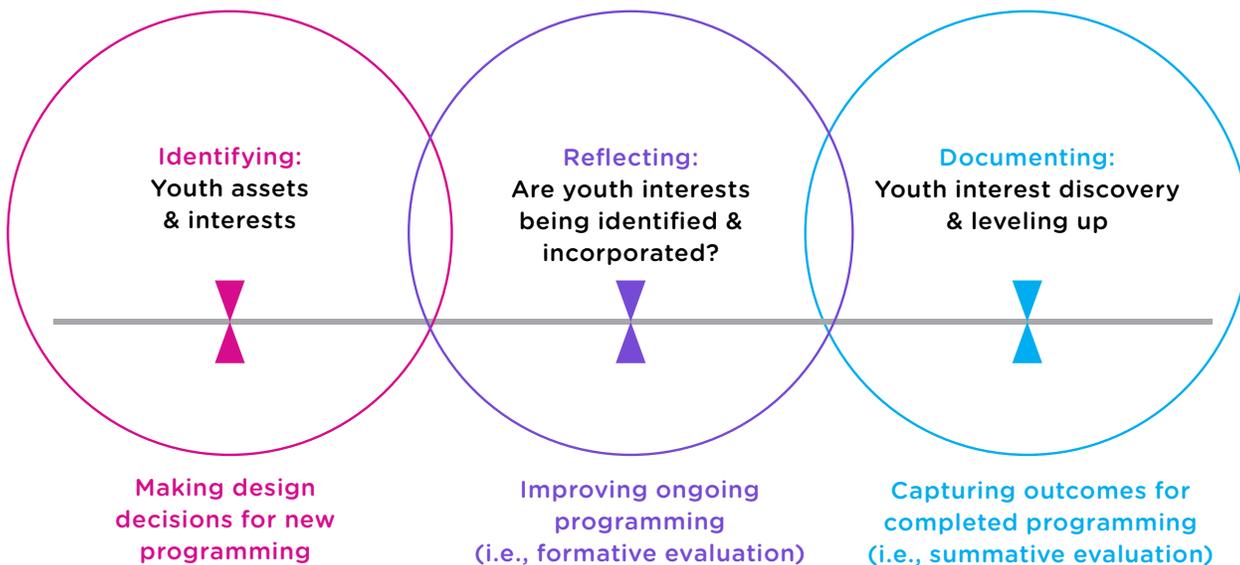
Depending on your goals, capacity, and program trajectory, different data collection tools will serve your purposes best. The chart below can help you identify which tool may be a good fit for your program by type and staff capacity. Each tool or method is described above or below. Keep in mind that the “level of difficulty” of these tools is relative to staff’s skill sets, interests, and proficiencies, and the nature of how they’re carried out. For example, documentation has been categorized as “hard” because of the difficulty for a single person to actively observe and document a program while facilitating it, as well as the work necessary to digitally catalogue and organize the documentation over time. However, it may feel very doable for a single practitioner to regularly photograph youth’s work during or after a program to catalogue what has been made and the creative work being carried out.

Level of Capacity	Open Drop-In Programming	Single-Session Workshop or Program	Multi-Session Workshop or Program
Limited	Talkback boards	Talkback boards	Post-survey
		Post-survey	Self-assessment survey
Medium	Interviews	Interviews	Interviews
		Community asset maps	Community asset maps
			Pre/post-survey
High	Documentation (observations, video, photography)	Documentation (observations, video, photography)	Documentation (observations, video, photography), following the same participants over multiple time points
		Open portfolios	Open portfolios

CAPTURING EVIDENCE ABOUT KEY ASPECTS OF YOUR PROGRAMMING

In this section, we outline some possibilities for what you might want to capture about your connected learning library program, including the youth and community it serves and your own practices. For each, we give some examples of how you might use the tools discussed in the previous section to meet your goals.

You Want to Capture: Youth Assets and Interests



We know that youth programming is strongest when young people’s assets and interests are acknowledged and reflected in programs. Youth will be coming to programs with a wealth of knowledge, past experiences, and supportive relationships. Understanding those experiences and the constellation of support systems young people bring will help you design programs that build on youth’s assets. Valuing these assets will help you avoid taking a deficit perspective (i.e., seeing youth as lacking skills or capacities). Youth will benefit more from programming that respects and builds on the interests and relationships they already have in place, as you and the program bring new resources and opportunities to help them go deeper to make new discoveries and connections.

Identifying: Youth assets and interests

Examples of tools and prompts you could use to identify youth assets and interests are below. (*While we offer some supplementary data collection tools, the most important way to learn about youth's interests and strengths is to talk to them! Take an interest in their lives, and listen to what they have to say.*)

Talkback Board Prompts

Consider that you are offering your youth patrons a chance to engage in design activities and you want to know if you targeted the activities at the right level of difficulty. You might post a talkback board with the following prompt:

Today I:

- Got better at something I enjoy doing.
- Discovered a skill I didn't know I had.
- Helped someone else do something they couldn't do on their own.

At a time when the library is trying to design new programs to better meet the needs of more youth, you may want to post a talkback board with space for free responses such as in the following example:

Open-ended prompts (fill in answer):

- Something I wished I could do in the library but couldn't was ...
- I would come to the library more if ...
- I will come to the library again because ...
- My favorite thing to do at the library is

Asset Mapping

This activity will help you see the community assets available to youth, and what places and people are important to them in their daily lives.

Instructions for *Mapping Your Community*:

- “Use these markers and paper to create a map of your community. We'd especially like you to highlight what features and places are important to you. Don't worry about being accurate. For example, you might start by marking the general area of where you live and go from there. If you'd like to see a map of [our town/area], I can show it to you too.”
 - Questions you can ask about maps:
 - Why did you choose these features/places?
- “Now on the same map, add in features or places that you wish you had in your community.”
 - Why did you add in these features/places?
- “Do you experience any obstacles to accessing any of these features or opportunities?”
- “When you are looking for resources or opportunities for you and your family, how do you typically do this?”

Funds of Identity Portraits

Funds of Identity Portraits can help you understand how youth see themselves (their identities), what they take pride in, and what’s important to them, as well as their interests, knowledge, and experiences. Youth draw a “self-portrait” that reflects who they see themselves as, including the people and things that are important to them and inform their identity.

Instructions for *Funds of Identity Portrait*⁸: Instructions for Funds of Identity Portrait can be found in the article “Funds of Identity: A new concept based on the Funds of Knowledge approach,” by Moisés Esteban-Guitart and Luis C. Moll.

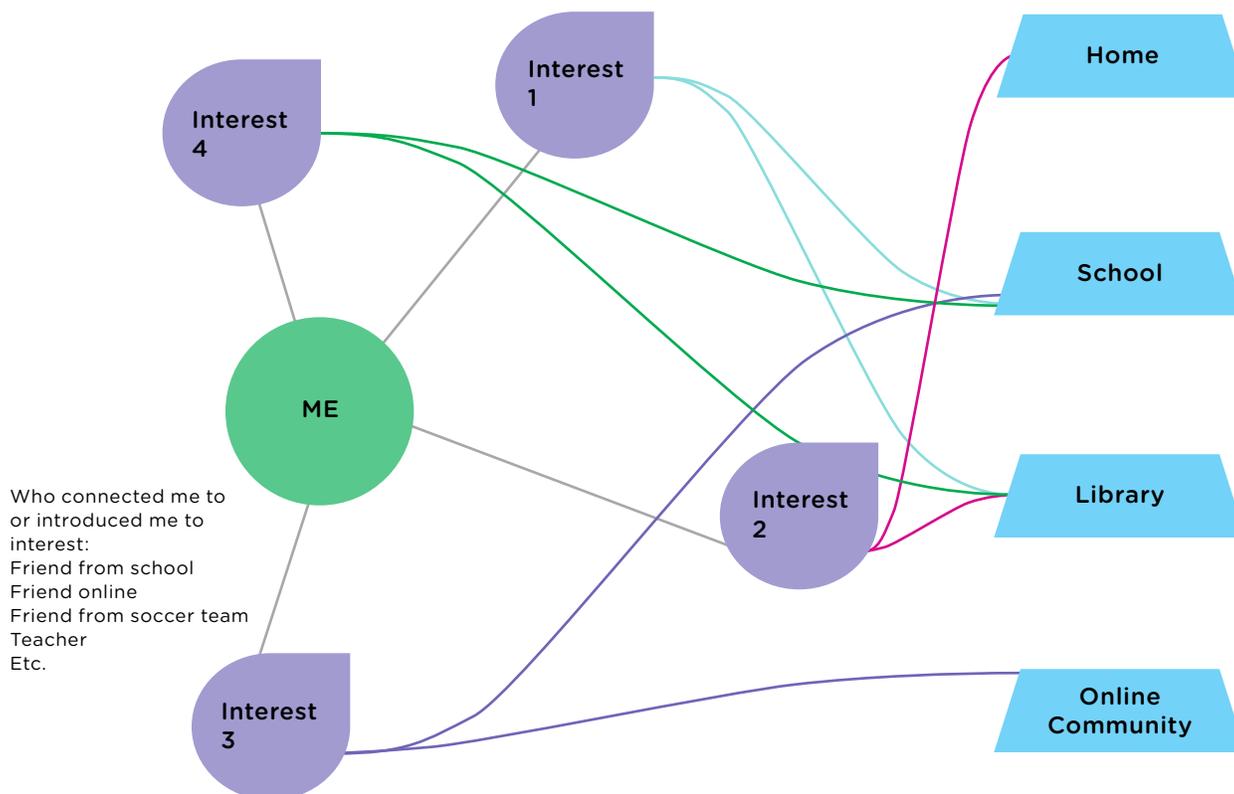
Prompt for drawing self-portrait of themselves:

“I would like you to show me on this piece of paper who you are at this moment in your life. If you wish, add the people and things most important to you at this moment in your life.”

Interest and Relationship Map

Consider asking youth to complete a relationship map like the one below. For each interest, ask them who connected or introduced them to this interest (friend from school, online, a soccer team, or a coach, parent, teacher, etc.). Then ask them to draw a line connecting the interest to each setting where they participate in it (home, school, library, online community, etc.).

You can also ask participants to do the map again after completion of a program (or if it’s ongoing, at a certain time interval, like one year), to see if and how their network has changed or new interests have developed.



⁸ Esteban-Guitart, Moisés, and Luis C. Moll. 2014: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1354067X13515934>

Reflecting: Am I effectively identifying and incorporating youth interests?

Examples of tools you could use to reflect on whether programming is effectively identifying and incorporating youth interests are below.

Self-Assessment or Reflective Survey

Filling out this table or something similar could help you and other library staff reflect on youth interests, how they're identified, and how they're incorporated into your program.

Youth Interest	How I Identified It	How I'm Incorporating It

Other reflection prompts to consider include:

- What opportunities for “geeking out” or “going deeper” do I provide or facilitate in the program? How might we make these opportunities more visible or inviting for youth?
- What do I promote and value in the space/program? Do these things align with what youth value? Do I know what the youth who attend my program value? If not, how might I find out? How might I expand my view of what type of learning and engagement is desirable and valued in my space/program?

Documenting: Interest discovery and leveling up

Examples of tools or prompts you could use to capture whether programming is effectively promoting youth interest discovery and leveling up are below.

Talkback Board Prompts

Today I:

- Discovered an interest or a talent I didn't know I had.
- Am more curious about things I wasn't interested in before.
- Participated in experiences that are related to what I want to do for work in the future.
- Participated in experiences that changed my mind about what I want to do in a future job.

Next time, I want to:

- Do the exact same activity I did today.
- Make something similar to what I did today, but harder.
- Try something completely different.
- Not participate. This was a one-time experience.

Today I did something new because:

- It was easy.
- It felt new.
- People I like were doing it.

Today I did something new because:

- I felt safe trying something new.
- Someone encouraged me to.
- I didn't have any choice.
- I thought it would be a valuable experience for me.

Today I:

- Worked on something I'm already good at.
- Worked on something I'm getting better at.
- Tried something new because it looked easy.
- Tried something new even though it looked hard.

Today I:

- Thought of a new idea for something to work on.
- Came up with a new way to test my idea.
- Worked on an idea to solve a problem.
- Designed something to help my community.

Today I went deeper with something I do a lot here because:

- I could see how it matters for my future.
- It's important to who I am.
- Someone encouraged me.
- There was support for my learning.

Documenting: Interest-related relationship building

Examples of prompts you could use to document interest-related relationship building are below.

Talkback Board Prompts

After working on an [activity] today, I plan to look for:

- Information related to this activity on my own (e.g., look on the web, check out a book?).
- Other people, in real life or online, who are interested in this activity.
- Things to do that could help me get better at the activity.
- Nothing related to this activity.

Today I:

- Plan to connect with other people who are interested in this activity.
- Learned where else I could go to get better at this activity.
- Plan to go to another place where I could get better at this activity.

Today I worked on a project:

- By myself.
- With my family.
- With a friend.
- With a mentor.

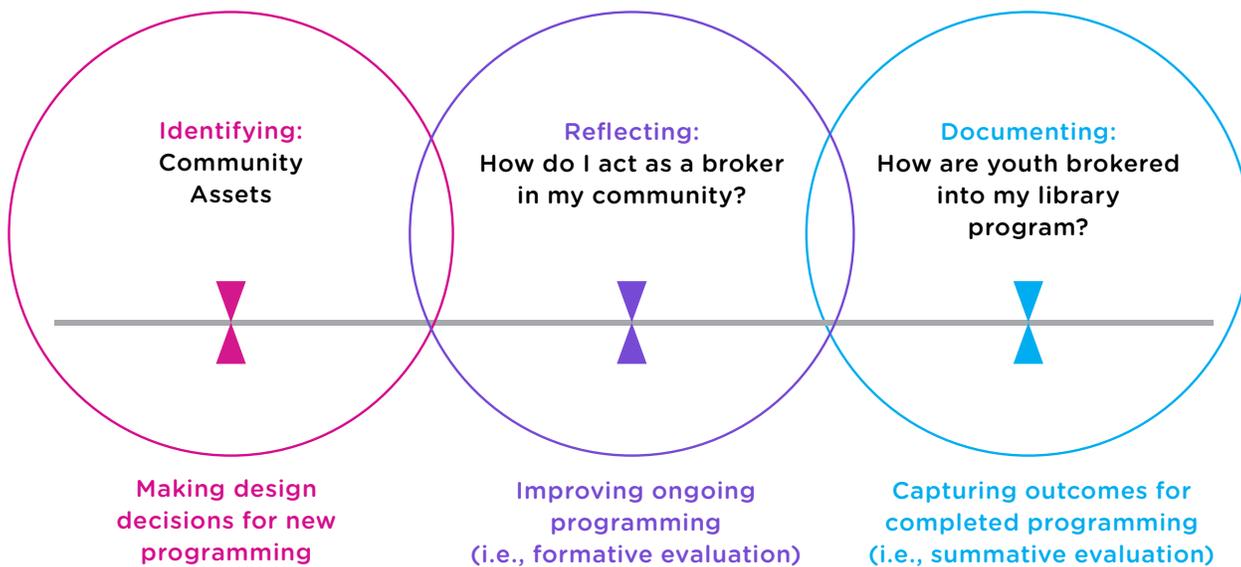
Today I:

- Shared my project with someone.
- Was approached by someone who shared their project with me.
- Taught someone something new.
- Learned something new from someone.
- Learned something or made something that I want to share with a friend or family member.

Open-ended prompts (fill in answer):

- Today someone helped me by...
- Today I helped someone else by...

You Want to Capture: Brokering and Partnerships



Brokering refers to acts of linking youth to people and opportunities that can help them develop their interests. To promote connected learning in communities, youth need an abundance and diversity of opportunities that are accessible. Abundance refers to the number of programs and activities. Diversity refers to different types of programs and activities (e.g., sports, science, technology, engineering, arts, and math [STEAM]). Accessibility means that young people can get there easily, through whatever means they have available to them (e.g., bike, transit, driven by someone). Identifying community assets can help you see what the community offers, where there might be holes in services, and how you could connect youth and adult patrons to different assets in your community.

Identifying: Community assets

Examples of tools or prompts you could use to identify assets within your neighborhood or community are below.

Asset Mapping

To build a map, consider overlaying place characteristics on a physical map, logging into a shared Google account and [annotating a digital map](#), or using a tool like [Tableau](#) to map the assets of a community. You can use color to indicate different activity types, age groups served, or hours. Digital tools allow you to create multiple layers on your map.

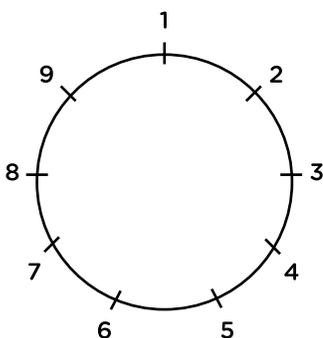
Series of Prompts to Generate a Map of the Neighborhood

- Where can youth [pursue an interest-related activity]?
- How do people get to this place, and where do they come from? How easy is it for youth to get there?
- Who can pursue it there?
- When is the program or activity offered?
- If youth are looking to level up or get better at [interest-related activity], where can they do so?

Reflecting: How do I act as a broker in my community?

Examples of tools or prompts you could use to reflect on how you act as a broker in your community are below.

Relationship Mapping Prompts



Create a list of organizations that offer youth programs to others in your neighborhood. Array the list around the edge of a circle like [this](#).

Participants (yourself and/or other library staff) will draw links between organizations and staff through which information about youth and programs flows.

Draw a second map showing the same organizations and drawing links where there should be links, in order to foster youth development.

Compare the two maps. What would it take to get to your ideal map? Are there community leaders or organizations you haven't partnered with yet, but should?

As an alternate form of this activity, youth could map their own personal learning ecology, placing themselves as a node on the network, and identifying peers and adults who help them learn. They could consider how the others in their network are linked to each other, and if so, how that link helps or hinders their own learning and development.

Self-Assessment or Reflective Survey Prompts

- What connections do I see youth making between the library program and other spaces in their lives? How might I or the program support these connections in an authentic and motivating way?
- How am I currently a broker for youth in my community? Are there aspects of brokering I want to work on or strengthen further?

Documenting: How are youth brokered into my library program?

Examples of tools or prompts you could use to reflect on how youth are brokered into your library program are below.

Talkback Boards Prompts

I came to the library today because:

- My friend told me about it.
- A teacher told me about it.
- My parent or family member heard about it.
- A mentor in my community told me about it.
- I found it myself.

REFLECTING ON EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION⁹

Issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) are addressed throughout this guide in various ways, such as by reflecting on what is valued or considered normal in your library space or program, focusing on youth interests and community needs, and asking questions about how youth are being introduced or brokered into the space. In this section, we take a more explicit look at the ways you can tailor program design and evaluation to prioritize EDI, and some of the challenges you might face to collecting relevant data.

Equity, diversity, and inclusion can and should be a focus in all phases of program design and evaluation. This means ensuring your program and the culture of your space is safe and accessible for youth and adults across race, class, gender identity, sexual orientation, and ability. How might you include this along the way?

One important consideration is creating opportunities for youth to provide anonymous comments and input. Talkback boards sit in public spaces and don't allow for the type of feedback to library staff that might be most appropriate for EDI issues. This section will explore issues regarding safe mechanisms for feedback that may work for your library.

Co-design with Youth

Co-designing parts of an evaluation with youth can deepen understanding of the needs of the communities your library serves, contributing to equitable and inclusive programming. Involving youth in the design helps include their interests, perspectives, needs, and aspirations in the evaluation and, by extension, the programs the evaluation is intended to support. Asking youth to help design specific prompts can promote youth voice in the evaluation and may ensure that the questions are meaningful to them.

Self-Assessment or Reflective Survey

Reflecting on your own practices is an important piece of evaluating equity, diversity, and inclusion at your library and program. We provide some examples below of both broad questions to consider and more specific reflective survey prompts to start thinking about EDI that needs to be addressed at your library and in your community. While these questions can give you some ideas about where to start, don't stop there! Continue to probe, and evolve your questions as you learn.

Questions around equity, diversity, and inclusion can be difficult to engage in, as staff members may have very different definitions of what these terms mean, as well as varying levels of comfort discussing issues of race, class, sexuality, and gender identification. The cultivation of trust and open communication is essential for reflections to be fruitful. Despite the potential for discomfort or tension, it is essential to make time to discuss issues of equity as they relate to your library. This is especially true for libraries where a predominantly white staff is working with youth of color.

⁹ This section has been adapted from the following article, written by the authors for YALS: Widman, Sari, Josie Chang-Order, William R. Penuel, and Amanda Wortman. 2019. "Using Evaluation Tools Toward More Equitable Youth Engagement in Libraries: Measuring Connected Learning and Beyond." *Young Adult Library Services* 17(4):36–44.

<p>Broad questions for thinking about issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion: (As you engage these, consider what evidence you have to support your answers. Is this good evidence? Are there things you might be missing?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are youth across racial, cultural, language, gender, and sexual identities and socioeconomic status able to feel comfortable, safe, and engaged in the learning environment? What are potential barriers to this, and how might we correct those? • What norms do we uphold in the space? Who do these norms include? Who do they exclude? • Are there barriers to entry, or are all able to equally access the space? How might we take steps to remove potential barriers? • Have I noticed that any communities in the neighborhood seem to be underrepresented in the space? Why do I think this? What could we do about that? • Are youth invited to bring their home cultures into their activity in the program? If so, how? If not, how could space be created for this?
<p>Specific reflective survey questions:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did I observe any tensions around a youth's identity today (between peers, between youth and program activity, between youth and staff, etc.)? How did I respond? What was challenging about addressing the situation? What was the outcome of my response (how did the youth involved react)? • What languages are being spoken by patrons and participants? Do staff members speak these languages? Are we integrating students' home languages into programming? If not, how might we do this? • Consider your/the staff's facilitation practices, the objects present around the library, etc: What current practices and arrangements are designed to welcome youth's home cultures into the space? What current practices and arrangements might make them feel unwelcome?

Talkback Boards

Challenges and Limitations to Consider

While talkback boards are flexible and thus have proven to be a useful assessment and evaluation tool for many librarians, there are obstacles to using them for capturing useful and accurate data related to EDI. One challenge of talkback boards is the lack of demographic data for youth responses. This is one of the trade-offs with an evaluation tool that is publicly displayed. There are also issues of privacy and research ethics with tracking individual youth over time. This makes it difficult to obtain evidence of equitable participation or learn who was engaging with the program and in what ways. Some of this information could be filled in through staff surveys and reflections, although library staff might inadvertently make assumptions about how youth identify.

Another option is to use prompts similar to talkback boards through a digital exit ticket. Having youth fill out an anonymous exit ticket on a tablet, for example, would allow you to also ask about demographic data like racial, gender, and sexual identity, home language, and whether they identify as having a disability. You might consider creating this type of exit ticket using a free and simple platform or application like Google Forms. There are many websites that provide common categories for soliciting demographic information on surveys (e.g., <https://www.leadquizzes.com/blog/8-types-of-demographic-questions/>), but to allow students as much freedom as possible to self-identify, we recommend allowing for open response when collecting this data, rather than multiple choice.

Despite these challenges, talkback boards can be used to consider some issues of access and accessibility, and whether a program is effective in inviting connections to youth’s home and cultural practices. We give some example prompts in the table below. Because of the limitations of talkback boards, it is important to keep in mind that the effectiveness of these prompts for determining EDI are highly contextual.

Example Prompt	What It’s Asking
<p>Today, I:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Used tools, technology, or materials I don’t have access to at home or school. • Did an activity I can’t do at home or school. 	<p>If the library is filling a gap for youth participants, in terms of access to resources or opportunities</p>
<p>I came to the makerspace because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My friend told me about it or brought me. • A teacher told me about it. • My parent or family member heard about it and brought me. • A mentor in my community told me about it. • I found it myself. 	<p>How youth are being introduced to the learning program (can help inform building strategic community partnerships, and inclusive recruitment practices)</p>
<p>Today, I:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did an activity that I’ve done before or learned about at home or in my community, from a friend, family member, or mentor. • Learned something or made something that I want to share with a friend or family member. 	<p>Whether program activities connect to and/or build on youth’s home and cultural practices</p> <p>Whether youth find what they’re learning and making in the program relevant to other relationships in their life</p> <p>Whether they plan on sharing work they made, and potentially acting as brokers themselves</p>
<p>In this program, I:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel welcome, because the program welcomes all different kinds of people. • Feel welcome, because the program includes youth like me. • Don’t feel welcome, because the program doesn’t feel like it includes youth like me. • Don’t feel welcome, because I don’t know how I should participate or how to get help with things. 	<p>Whether youth felt a sense of comfort and belonging in the space or program</p>
<p>Today, I:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interacted during the program in my home language. • Shared something unique to my culture or identity. • Felt seen and heard for the contributions I bring to the space. • Felt appreciated for the knowledge I have about a subject. 	<p>Whether students feel that aspects of their identity, such as home language, are welcomed into the space</p> <p>Whether they feel seen and valued for their intersectional identities (only effective with the collection of demographic data)</p>

SETTING GOALS OF EVALUATION



It's important to set concrete goals for your program's assessment and evaluation. What are your overall goals for the program, and what elements of the program are going to be evaluated? One way to think through setting goals is to identify the reasons for evaluation as well as the circumstances and the invested parties. For example: Are you designing a new program with the intention of improving it midstream? Or are you evaluating a program that has already happened or is about to wrap up? The answers to these and similar questions will help you think through what your goals should look like. Involved stakeholders might influence your stated goals as well. What are your stakeholders' interests and needs? What kind of data do you need to gather for them as part of your program evaluation? If your funder is interested in a particular youth outcome, how will you collect evidence to show you are meeting your goals? How you define your goals really has to do with your reasons for doing evaluation. Here are some examples:

- Goal: to apply for a new technology grant that requires detailed information on the local youth population and their use of current library technology offerings.
- Goal: to identify groups that are underrepresented in your space and create programming to encourage different types of youth to come to the space and use it.
- Goal: to create programming that provides opportunities for groups of youth who come to the library to “hang out” to level up their engagement into “messaging around” and “geeking out” – deepening their interest in things they already like.
- Goal: to create a presentation for local community leaders to share how the library provides vital community services.

Workbook: Goals of Evaluation

We outlined some potential goals above. Do any of these resonate with you? You can use this space to reflect on your own goals.

Goals of the Program: Describe the goals of the program and what elements of the program are to be evaluated.

Stakeholders and Evaluation: Returning to the idea of stakeholders, how may they benefit from or participate in the evaluation? Do stakeholders, like funders, have requirements that will guide the evaluation? For example, if you're thinking about a community partner, what may they want or need to know about the outcomes or impacts of a program? Would they help you implement parts of the evaluation or want to be included in how it is designed? Below, consider how each of your stakeholders can be served by the evaluation, and if they may actively contribute or be involved.

Stakeholder	How are they served by evaluation?	Involvement in evaluation (Yes/No; How?)

Elements to Be Evaluated: Based on your goals and stakeholders' needs, what about your program do you want to document or otherwise capture to share with others? How might you translate this into an outcome you can observe? What do you want to know about your program? How specific can you make this question about youth or participants' experiences?

LEARNING FROM DATA

Analysis is a process of making sense of data to come to conclusions about the outcomes you'd like to measure, and to better understand how your program is functioning. Analysis may be the most challenging part of evaluation. It requires time set aside to organize, explore, and discuss data. It's important to make sure you have a realistic plan for analyzing or interpreting the data you plan to collect, based on your capacity.

When creating a plan for evaluation, you'll want to ask the question: What will we do with our analysis when we're done? If the answer is, "We don't know," it's unlikely you'll find the time to carry out data analysis, or benefit from any analysis you will do.

Some possible uses of data analysis are to:

- Decide on programs to continue or to cut.
- Identify who participates in particular programs, who stays, and who might be excluded.
- Prepare a report for a funder showing how youth are benefiting from the programs.
- Tell powerful stories about learning to parents and community leaders.
- Support staff reflection on their roles.

Once you have identified the intended use of your analysis, you are ready to think about how to structure the data analysis process to help you draw accurate conclusions from the data, or inform decision making or iteration on your program design. Next, you are ready to get organized to do analysis. It's critical to have a plan in which you specify who is doing what and when. Otherwise, data analysis will never happen!

Consistency and Organization

It's important to be consistent about your data collection and organization, and to plan this in advance. For example, based on what you're trying to learn from your data collection and analysis, you could consider how often you will collect the data. Once? Weekly? Biweekly? Monthly? Will you repeat the talkback board, survey prompts, or the prompts to see what has changed? If you plan to conduct interviews, make sure you are asking youth the same set of questions each time, to avoid biasing their responses in different ways.

You should also have a plan in place to organize data. If you're taking photo documentation, for example, have a plan of where and how you'll store the photos, being sure to document important things like the date, participants, and activities in the photo.

Let's consider talkback boards. To make data organization and tracking easier, talkback boards should have a template with the start date, end date, location of the board in the library, and the questions youth are responding to, as well as a corresponding Excel spreadsheet or other space for digital collection. Photos of talkback boards can serve as a backup digital record, and can be useful to show to other library staff and stakeholders. The [Post-It Notes app by 3M](#), which allows you to scan and organize multiple post-it notes at once, is also helpful for organizing open-ended responses on sticky notes.

Workbook: Analyzing Data

Next, you are ready to get organized to do analysis. It's critical to have a plan, in which you specify who is doing what and when. Otherwise, data analysis will never happen!

Questions to ask:

When can you schedule time to look at data?

When can you schedule employee time to prepare talkback boards, digitize the data, or take surveys?

Who on your team likes to organize spreadsheets or take detailed notes?

Who on your team knows what your patrons like to do and can create prompts for talkback boards?

Will you share the data with your stakeholders?

Analysis Plan

Data Type	Method of Analysis	Staff Assigned To

Analysis and Interpretation: One Example

To get a sense of how you might analyze and interpret data, let's look at some data from our partners at Anythink. Below, we'll walk through how we might think about data analysis for a talkback board.

First, let's look at the desired outcomes for Anythink. These let us know what Anythink was interested in learning about their program when they created their data collection and analysis plan.

Anythink's Desired Outcomes:

- Interest Discovery and Development—Customers are aware of The Studio as a place to access tools and resources to discover new interests. Customers have the chance to further develop existing interests through Studio activities.
- Skill Development—Customers participating in The Studio gain skills and deepen participation across more challenging tools and design processes.

Here are two talkback boards that Anythink used with prompts that would help them answer questions about their desired outcomes. Both talkback boards use the same prompts and are from two consecutive weeks of programming.



One reason talkback boards are helpful is that you can often get useful information from them even if you don't have time to do a thorough analysis. At a glance, what can you see from participants' responses to the prompts? You might notice that across both of these talkback boards, participants reported coming to use specific equipment to work on their own projects more than they reported coming to get help on a project or work collaboratively.

For the next step in analyzing this data, Anythink chose to enter it into a spreadsheet.

Prompt	Date 5/16/17-6/16/17		Date 6/16/17-7/16/17	
	Count	Open-Ended Response	Count	Open-Ended Response
<i>Someone suggested that I come here</i>	28		20	
<i>To hang out with friends</i>	30		14	
<i>To use equipment to work on my own project</i>	31		31	
<i>To get help on a project</i>	13		7	
<i>To work with others on a group project</i>	8		1	
<i>Other</i>	4	to make a bookmark; to see what's going on; this is the only place I was aloud[sic] to go; Suggestion: try making a video-game creating section/activity	9	learn something new; to check it out; to visit it; to see what's going on and what they're making; 'cause I like it; I lik[sic] projects; this place is awesome; I think it's great; Suggestion: maybe do video-game creation?

Looking at the numbers in the spreadsheet, is there anything we could interpret differently about the data? What stands out? What are the “headlines” or big takeaways you notice, if any? You can also look at percentages with the spreadsheet data. While this won't be that helpful with just two weeks of data, it may help you spot trends over longer periods of time. It's also important to remember that there are different ways to interpret data, and that data you collect won't reflect a singular truth about the program. It can simply point you toward what *might* be going on.

In this case, out of 183 responses over the two weeks (not including open-ended responses), 34% said they were there to use equipment to work on a project, 26% because someone suggested they go, 24% to hang out with friends, 11% to get help on a project, and 5% to work on a group project. This might suggest that while many youth are finding the program through social connections, fewer are motivated to attend the program to seek out social contact (hanging out with friends or working collaboratively). However, another way to interpret the data would be that there are more youth who are seeking social contact and collaboration combined than those attending the program to work solo. While 34% of youth were working solo, when you look at the prompts that suggest social motivation and collaborative activity (*To get help on a project; To work with others on a group project; To hang out with friends*), 40% of youth attended the program to engage in social activity. There's also a third way to look at the data. This compares how often students named project work as their primary motivation for attendance. About 50% of youth

reported attending to work on a project (either solo or collaboratively), while the other reported attending because it was suggested to them or they wanted to hang out with friends.

For open-ended response, you can use “codes” to identify relevant patterns and themes. One way to code open-ended response data like this is to use comments in a spreadsheet or text editor. Some themes we noticed from the open-ended responses in the table include:

- Enjoyment (*'cause I like it; I lik[sic] projects; this place is awesome; I think it's great*),
- Exploring what's going on (*learn something new; to check it out; to visit it; to see what's going on and what they're making*),
- References to specific projects (*to make a bookmark; Suggestion: try making a video-game creating section/activity*).

Once you create codes to identify themes, you can look at the number of times a certain theme emerges, just like with the other prompt responses.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS



Creating programs that successfully assess, include, and serve the needs, well-being, and future possibilities of diverse young people presents multiple challenges. Evaluation tools and methods that solicit input directly from youth provide critical resources to meet the challenges of designing and implementing successful programs. As library staff, you have much knowledge and insight about your patrons that can be integrated into the process of systematically collecting and analyzing data. Collecting this evidenced-based data gives you additional capacity to shape your programs in ways that serve both your goals and youth.

This connected learning guidebook can help you continue to explore and adapt your own vision to establish the best programming possible for youth in your community. Even if a program may not precisely fit the connected learning model, you can still build evaluative thinking into your repertoire of skills and practices. This feedback to assess if your new library programs are working as intended is immensely helpful—even in unexpected ways. It is also helpful to be open to evidence that challenges your thinking and expectations, so that as designers, leaders, stewards, and educators you can keep learning and growing.

The purpose of this guide has been to describe the importance of thinking about how to evaluate your library programs and spaces early and often. After finishing the exercises in this guide, you should feel prepared to use the following template to tell the story of your library programming evaluation:

- Specify what the program was designed to do.
- Explain to your audience what you wanted to find out about your program.
- Describe how you collected and interpreted data.
- Share how the data helped assess if the program is working well and how it could be improved.
- Provide forward-thinking next steps for your evaluation.

We hope your journey into program evaluation continues to provide rewards to you and the youth served by your library.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Want to go further with your learning about connected learning in libraries? Here are some additional resources.

Designing Connected Learning Programs

ConnectedLib

<https://connectedlib.github.io/>

For a step-by-step guide on the connected learning program design process, check out the ConnectedLib project online:

<https://connectedlib.github.io/modules/programming/index.html>

YALSA's Teen Programming Guidelines

For more programming guidelines, visit YALSA's Teen Programming Guidelines:

http://www.ala.org/yalsa/sites/ala.org.yalsa/files/content/TeenProgramming-Guidelines_2015_FINAL.pdf

Free Online Courses (on your own time, at your own speed)

ConnectedLib

<https://connectedlib.github.io/>

This project, funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS), was developed to support library staff in understanding and implementing connected learning programs in libraries. ConnectedLib offers course modules that will help you get oriented to connected learning, implement CL programming, form lasting community partners, recognize and map assets in your community, conduct assessment and evaluation, and develop youth and mentoring practices.

Program Evaluations for Connected Learning

<https://dmlcommons.net/2016-course/>

This program evaluation online course was offered in Spring 2016 and taught by Dr. William Penuel of the University of Colorado at Boulder. It explores different theories and approaches to evaluate connected learning in the field. The course is intended to study real-world scenarios and identify real-world evaluation solutions. Included are discussions of evaluation methods and instruments.

Survey Protocols, Instruments, and Tools

Longitudinal Survey of Connected Learning

<https://connectedlearning.uci.edu/research-tools/studies/longitudinal-survey-of-connected-learning/>

This research study provides surveys for assessing outcomes and youth experiences in connected learning programs. The surveys include measures of each of five connected learning principles: interest-driven, peer supported, openly networked, production-centered, and shared purpose. They also include outcome measures of future orientation and civic engagement.

Capturing Connected Learning in Libraries Video Series

<https://connectedlearning.uci.edu/research-tools/tools/capturing-connected-learning-in-libraries-project-evaluation-video-series/>

Join Josie Chang-Order and Tim Podkul, research team members from the Capturing Connected Learning in Libraries (CCLL) project, as they explore best practices for evaluating your connected learning programs and spaces in a short, online video series.

More Resources on Data Collection Tools

Case Studies on CL programming in libraries

Interested in hearing how libraries have developed and used tools for formative evaluation? Check out these case studies:

- [The Studio at Anythink Libraries](#)
- [Rockwood Makerspace at Multnomah County Library](#)
- [YOUmedia at Harold Washington Library](#)
- [Full STEAM Ahead at Los Angeles Public Library](#)

Asset Mapping Toolkit

Interested in taking a deeper dive into participatory asset mapping with your community? Check out this toolkit! <http://www.communityscience.com/knowledge4equity/AssetMappingToolkit.pdf>

Practical Guide for Open Portfolios

Interested in assembling documentation into a digital portfolio for sharing work? Check out this practical guide:

https://makered.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Maker-Ed-OPP-A-Practical-Guide-to-Open-Portfolios_final.pdf

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