

Frameworks for Healing-Centered Arts Instruction

This document includes frameworks that the L.A. County Department of Arts and Culture has identified that speak to our evolving definition and understanding of healing-centered, arts-based youth development. It is a living document, intended to be continuously informed by our growing community of practitioners.

*Healing-Centered Arts Instruction is an asset driven approach to arts education aimed at the holistic restoration of an individual's well-being, recognizing the profound impact of trauma on youth. Being "healing-centered" in one's approach advances the primacy of **strengths-based** care and moves away from deficit-based mental health models. It seeks to promote **resilience and healing** from traumatic experiences and environments, in **culturally grounded** contexts that view healing as the restoration of **identity, shared experience, community and a sense of belonging**.*

(L.A. County Department of Arts and Culture "Youth Development Through the Arts" Request for Proposals, 2019)

This definition includes aspects of several prominent, intersecting youth disciplines:

- **Creative youth development (including social justice youth development)**
- **Social emotional learning (SEL)**
- **Culturally-responsive pedagogy**
- **Healing-centered pedagogy**

Youth Development frameworks

Youth Development (also referred to as "positive youth development") is an asset-based theory of human development that advocates for engaging young people in services, opportunities, and supports that see and build the whole person, rather than using solely an achievement or prevention model of engagement. It often emphasizes youth agency, or including young people in decision-making and social change. It was codified in the early 1990's, through leadership of scholars and activists like Karen Pittman of the Center for Youth Development and Policy Research (now the Forum for Youth Investment), and has since evolved. There are many frameworks for youth development theory, with key ones being:

- **The Search Institute's 40 Developmental Assets**, which include External Assets (support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, constructive use of time) and Internal Assets (commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, positive identity)
- **The Center for Youth Development and Policy Research of the Academy for Educational Development's** Advancing Youth Development (1996) framework, which includes Aspects of

Identity (safety and structure, self-worth, mastery and future, belonging and membership, responsibility and autonomy, self-awareness and spirituality) and Areas of Ability (physical health, mental health, intellectual ability, employability, civic and social ability, cultural ability)

Local L.A.-based youth development organization, **Youth 4 Justice**, also developed a YD framework with 5 Essential Skills that include health and physical competence, social competence, cognitive and creative competence, vocational competence, leadership competence (and a sixth evolving one: environmental competence)

Creative Youth Development

Creative Youth Development, as described by the Creative Youth Development National Partnership (comprised of the National Guild for Community Arts Education, Americans for the Arts, and the Mass Cultural Council, to organize a cross-sector advancement of creative youth development practices and CYD-informed policies) is:

Creative youth development is a recent term for a longstanding theory of practice that integrates creative skill-building, inquiry, and expression with positive youth development principles, fueling young people's imaginations and building critical learning and life skills. One way to recognize CYD programs is the presence of six key characteristics:

- a. Youth are engaged in **Safe and Healthy Spaces**
- b. Programs focus on **Positive Relationship-Building**
- c. Programs are **Artistically Rigorous** and **Set High Expectations** of youth participants
- d. Programs are **Asset-Based** and help youth to build upon their inherent strengths and talents
- e. Programs are **Youth-Driven** and honor student voice
- f. Program approaches and outcomes are **Holistic**, recognizing a range of youth needs and often integrating with other service providers to create a coordinated community response to those needs.

The Boston Youth Arts Evaluation Project, a CYDNP member, puts forward the following theory of change about creative youth development:

If youth participate in high-quality arts programs, they will develop specific skills and competencies*, which, in turn, leads to a set of intermediate outcomes (able to engage and be productive, to navigate, and to make connections with others), which in turn leads to a set of long-term outcomes (resiliency, self-efficacy and personal fulfillment, and community engagement) that together constitute life success.

*Youth develop skills in artistic engagement, problem solving, critical thinking, and expression; Youth develop meaningful relationships and civic engagement as they contribute to and are recognized by an inclusive community; Youth develop confidence, knowledge of self, an informed cultural identity, and a positive view of their future

Social Justice Youth Development

Social Justice Youth Development takes the creative youth development definition and adds to it the development of critical consciousness (the ability to understand, analyze, and question the worlds

around us from a power and systems analysis), and praxis (“reflection and action upon the world in order to transform it”¹).

Social Emotional Learning

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is often associated with arts instruction. The Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning’s (CASEL) framework identifies five competencies of SEL:

1. Self-awareness: The ability to accurately recognize one’s emotions and thoughts and their influence on behavior. This includes accurately assessing one’s strengths and limitations and possessing a well-grounded sense of confidence and optimism.
2. Self-management: The ability to regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, controlling impulses, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward achieving personal and academic goals.
3. Social awareness: The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others from diverse backgrounds and cultures, to understand social and ethical norms for behavior, and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.
4. Relationship skills: The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. This includes communicating clearly, listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking and offering help when needed.
5. Responsible decision-making: The ability to make constructive and respectful choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on consideration of ethical standards, safety concerns, social norms, the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and the well-being of self and others.

Healing-centered engagement

The idea of healing-centered engagement began to emerge in the 2000’s. [Healing-centered engagement and Radical Healing](#)² are connected concepts put forward by scholars of urban education, arts education, and youth development. Shawn Ginwright and Julio Cammarota are key leaders in this field. Healing-centered engagement:

- Recognizes the strengths and assets that people and communities have
- Necessitates the consideration and healing of the systems, policies, and practices that are the root causes of the harm
- Fosters possibility (well-being), rather than focusing on pathology (trauma)
- Centers the collective context, recognizing that oftentimes trauma is experienced collectively, that it is through being in community with others that an individual heals, and that both individual and community healing are necessary for the sustained well-being of both
- Creates space for youth organizing, activism, and civic engagement, through the development of critical consciousness and systems-analysis

¹ Paulo Freire. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*.

² Dr. Shawn Ginwright, *Black Youth Rising: Activism and Healing in Urban America*, 2009.

- Is grounded in cultural knowledge, engagement with cultural practices, and the restoration and/or development of identity and sense of belonging
- Focuses on the agency that people and communities have to restore their own well-being, and sees agency and civic engagement as inherently healing
- Emphasizes the process and the relationship/s developed, not the product
- Includes the healing and well-being of the adults who work with young people
- “A healing centered approach to addressing trauma requires a different question that moves beyond “what happened to you” to “what’s right with you” and views those exposed to trauma as agents in the creation of their own well-being rather than victims of traumatic events”³

Culturally-responsive pedagogy* (Also known as Culturally-relevant pedagogy)⁴

Culturally-responsive pedagogy (as defined by Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings, who coined the term in the late 1990’s) requires:

- Academic achievement--All students are capable of academic success; setting a high bar for excellence, expecting, assuming, and supporting excellence in all students
- Cultural competence—providing ways for students to maintain their cultural integrity, while succeeding academically—encouraging youth to further explore, develop, and express their cultural art forms (whether the “culture” be their “youth culture” or their ethnic culture) and cultural ways of being/interacting
- Sociopolitical Consciousness—teachers help students to recognize, understand, and critique current social inequities
- Centering relationships—Teachers:
 - Maintain fluid student-teacher relationships (students teach other students and teach the teacher)
 - Demonstrate a connectedness with all of the students
 - Develop a community of learners (rather than foster individual competition)
 - Encourage students to learn collaboratively and be responsible for one another
 - Are members of the community they are teaching in
- Conception of their craft
 - Knowledge is not static
 - Knowledge must be viewed critically
 - Teachers must be passionate about knowledge and learning
 - Teachers must scaffold, or build bridges, to facilitate learning
 - Assessment must be multifaceted, incorporating multiple forms of excellence

³ <https://medium.com/@ginwright/the-future-of-healing-shifting-from-trauma-informed-care-to-healing-centered-engagement-634f557ce69c>

⁴ coined by Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings

Reality Pedagogy—Dr. Christopher Emdin created the term “reality pedagogy⁵” as a way to describe an approach to teaching and learning that focuses on teachers gaining an understanding of student **realities**, and then using this information as the starting point for instruction. Elements of reality pedagogy include:

- Centering of relationships
- Co-generative conversations between teachers and students to surface ways that teachers could work with students to speak to the way they best learn (students evaluate the teachers and teachers take feedback to improve their teaching)
- Cosmopolitanism, wherein youth, family members, and teachers all have specific roles within the learning community
- Context, wherein teachers take the opportunity to go into the community to learn the context/s of the community—learning about the people, history, dynamics, etc. from the community itself
- Content—teacher is student and always learning, vulnerable in exploring unknowns, admitting unknowns, learning together
- Student-and-teacher co-teaching
- Expressing knowledge of a subject through the arts
- Collaborative competition (rather than competing with each other as individuals, it’s competing with each other through teams)

Outcomes for Healing-Centered Arts Engagement could include:

From CYDNP partners:

[Boston Youth Arts Evaluation Project:](#)

- Resiliency
- Self-efficacy and personal fulfillment
- Community engagement [leadership]
- Ability to problem solve
- Ability to think critically
- Ability to express oneself
- Self confidence
- Knowledge of self (informed cultural identity)
- Positive view of the future

[Mosaic Youth Development Model:](#)

- Positive Self image
- High self expectations
- Ambitious goal setting
- Respect for diversity

⁵ <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/sept16/vol74/num01/Seven-Cs-for-Effective-Teaching.aspx>

- Community involvement
- Positive social capital
- Employability skills (need to define)

From the Social Emotional Learning sector:

[The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning](#)

- a. Self-awareness: Identifying emotions, accurate self-perception, recognizing strengths, self-confidence, self-efficacy
- b. Self-management: Impulse control, stress management, self-discipline, self-motivation, goal-setting, organizational skills
- c. Social awareness: Perspective-taking, empathy, appreciating diversity, respect for others
- d. Relationship skills: Communication, social engagement, relationship-building, teamwork
- e. Responsible decision-making: Identifying problems, analyzing situations, solving problems, evaluating, reflecting, ethical responsibility

[SEL Challenge](#)

- a. Empathy
- b. Teamwork
- c. Initiative
- d. Responsibility
- e. Problem solving
- f. Resiliency
- g. Sense of agency