Approaches to Positive Youth Development

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From 'I' to 'We': Development of the Capacity for Teamwork in Youth Programs

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The capacity to work with others has always been important and is becoming even more important in the 21st century. In our more crowded, interdependent, global world, there is less room for individualists. Since the late 1950s, many workplaces have been reorganized around a team approach, in which employees with different knowledge and skills are expected to collaborate (Lindbeck & Snower, 2000; Snell, Shadur, & Wright, 2000). In a service economy, more jobs at all pay levels require interpersonal interaction (Moss & Tilly, 2001). And the hope of a worldwide shift toward democratic governance rests on the presupposition that citizens have the ability to work with each other. It is not surprising, therefore, that when blue ribbon panels have been charged with identifying the key competencies youth need for adulthood, those for collaboration and teamwork are always prominent on their lists (Parker, Ninomiya, & Cogan, 1999; Partnership for 21st Century Skills, 2003; SCANS, 1991).

However, developing the capacity for teamwork is by no means an easy accomplishment. In addition to being born with 'selfish genes,' psychologists have demonstrated that children and adolescents have fundamental egocentric biases in how they perceive themselves relative to others (Elkind, 1967; Piaget, 1965). It is a developmental achievement to understand other people's perspectives (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998; Selman, 2003). To work collaboratively toward shared goals, young people must not only learn to see others' viewpoints, they must learn to coordinate their intentions and actions with those of others. Developing this ability may be particularly hard in cultures that reinforce individualism. Indeed evidence suggests that youth in Western nations struggle with shared decision making and collaboration (Rogoff, 1998), and that even among adults, work in teams is often marked by miscommunication,

misunderstanding, conflict, and destructive group dynamics (Glisson & James, 2002; Mannix & Neal, 2005; Stevens & Campion, 1994).

For these reasons, the emerging field of positive development needs to place the development of teamwork in a prominent place on its agenda. We need to ask what is the process or pathway whereby youth transcend their egocentrism and learn to collaborate? Also, how can the development of teamwork be facilitated? The goal of this chapter is formulation of theory about this change process for adolescents. I have been interested in youth programs, such as extracurricular activities and community programs, as special contexts in which teenagers become deeply engaged in developmental experiences (Larson, 2000). This chapter draws on an intensive investigation of one program to help formulate ideas about how youth engage in this important, but neglected, process of developing teamwork.

Peer Dynamics across Contexts

To understand how teamwork develops, it is useful to first consider what developmental theorists have said about the natural dynamics of young people's peer interactions. One set of theorists takes an optimistic position that peer interactions provide conditions for young people to discover fundamental knowledge and skills for relating to others. It is argued that the 'symmetry' between self and other in peer relationships allows youth to overcome the egocentrism just referred to (Piaget, 1965; Sullivan, 1953; Youniss, 1980). Friends often share similar experiences to one's own, which makes it easier to understand their perspective. Unlike in relationships with adults, friends are more equal in power, creating conditions in which decision making is more likely to be joint. Piaget (1965) argued that this similarity and symmetry between self and other puts young people in a position to 'extract' principles of interpersonal relationships from their ongoing interactions with peers.

The attractiveness of this position is its description of what sounds like a powerful process through which young people produce their own development. In adolescence youth gain the potential to develop new interpersonal cognitive skills, such as coordinating multiple perspectives and understanding self and other as a system (Eisenberg & Fabe, 1998; Selman, 2003), thus adolescence might be a time when youth are able to extract advanced principles about coordinating work with others.

A more pessimistic position, however, suggests that peer interactions easily get on a different track. At their worst, peer interactions devolve into dominance behaviors, negative influence, and other dynamics that propagate risk behavior (Bronfenbrenner, 1974; Sherif & Sherif, 1964). Indeed research shows that youth who spend large amounts of unstructured time with peers show increases in problem behaviors (McHale, Crouter, & Tucker, 2001; Osgood, Wilson, O'Malley, Bachman, & Johnston, 1996). However, even for other youth, the peer literature suggests that peer interactions are most often focused—not on work, not on collaborating to reach instrumental goals—but rather on affective goals such as affiliation, having fun, and

social positioning. Therefore, one might question how often teens' unstructured daily peer interactions provide opportunities for learning collaboration.

Organized youth programs are a more promising context for this learning in a number of ways. Programs typically engage youth in goal-directed activities that youth describe as 'work' (Heath, 1998). Participants report experiencing high levels of concentration and challenge in activities that are often collaborative (Larson, 2000). Further, the adult advisors or leaders of programs play roles in helping keep youth's work on track and scaffolding youth's learning (Halpern, 2005; Rhodes, 2004). This combination of intent engagement in collaborative activities and adult scaffolding may provide more optimal conditions for youth to learn teamwork.

We obtained partial support for this prediction from a large survey of youth. We asked 2280 11th graders from 19 representative high schools whether they had had a diverse set of learning experiences in different daily contexts. These youth reported substantially higher rates of learning experiences pertaining to teamwork in the youth programs they were involved in than during schoolwork (Larson, Hansen, & Moneta, 2006). For example, 40% of respondents indicated that they 'became better at sharing responsibility' in a youth program as compared to 20% during class. We were surprised to find that youth programs did not differ from 'hanging out with friends' in rates of reported teamwork experiences, although this may be because of friendship interactions accounting for an average of twice as much of young people's waking hours (Larson & Verma, 1999). However, we did find that students reported much less frequent experiences with negative peer dynamics and negative peer influence in youth programs than in other interactions with friends. For example, only 11% of youth reported that others 'made sexual comments, jokes, or gestures' during programs compared to 23% with friends (23% in class) and 7% reported feeling 'pressure by peers to do something wrong' in the youth program compared to 12% with friends (9% in class). This suggests that the peer interactions that occur during programs are less likely to devolve into these types of negative dynamics, which can sidetrack development.

These self-report findings support the idea that youth programs are contexts that facilitate development of teamwork. Before attempting a longitudinal study to test this, I feel it crucial to understand the processes in youth programs through which teamwork might develop. In order to do effective quantitative research (and to provide useful information for youth practitioners), we need a theory of change.

A Theory-Generating Study

We have been studying the progression of daily experiences in high-quality youth programs, trying to understand the different types of developmental transactions that take place (Larson et al., 2004). One program has been particularly useful in generating theory about the developmental transactions through which youth learn teamwork. Media Masters[1] was a 10-week program aimed at helping high-school-aged youth develop high tech skills in using computer software and video equipment. I was

intrigued by this program because for much of the time it resembled many modern workplaces, with youth working at individual computer screens, drawing on and coordinating their work with others. Media Masters was located in the computer laboratory of a primarily Mexican-American Chicago high school. While some of the 22 youth in Media Masters knew each other before, only five had been in a prior program together, thus we were able to observe collaborative relationships develop more or less *de novo*. Some researchers have found that the peer relationships of urban youth are often characterized by distrust (Seiman, 2003; Way, 1996), which suggests these youth may have had less opportunity to learn teamwork skills outside the program. However, the two young adult leaders, Janna and Gary, had a philosophy in which youth learn through doing collaborative projects, which provided a good opportunity to observe teamwork development.

Our goal was to follow the unfolding of activities and experiences in Media Masters from three viewpoints. First, our observer, Catherine (who had a doctorate in education), conducted participant observations once per week and wrote detailed field notes. Second, we interviewed each adult leader five times over this period. Finally, we asked the leaders to select a sample of eight representative youth, and we interviewed each of them every 2–3 week (35 total interviews). These teens were ages 14–18 and included six boys and two girls, reflecting the gender mix of the program. The interviews with adults and youth followed a flexible protocol that included open-ended questions about events and developmental experiences in the program. I analyzed the observation and interview transcripts using grounded theory and related methods for analysis of qualitative data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998), with the goal of deriving theory based on intensive case examination.

To understand the process of developmental change in the youth and how leaders supported this change, it is useful to start with the sequence of peer interactions that Catherine observed.

The Sequence of Activities over the 10-Week Program

On the first day of Media Masters, most youth entered in clusters of two to three, reflecting preexisting friendship groups. A few youth, including the one non-Mexican, Kye, sat alone. Catherine observed that the leaders did little to lay out rules or set a tone for the program. Rather Janna asked youth to pair up with someone at an adjacent computer and then she launched into instructions on how to use the software Photoshop, which were so fast paced that many youth were unable to keep up. However, Janna's primary goal appeared to be motivating the youth by showing them how they can make some 'really crazy images.' Catherine said she was riveted by the demonstration, and saw that Janna was 'holding out the promise that one could do some cool, sophisticated stuff.' Indeed the youth appeared to be drawn in.

Over the next few weeks, program members were given structured assignments that required them to use Photoshop and then Flash (an animation program), which

prompted youth to work together. In week 2 they were given the assignment of creating a storyboard about an incident in their life, and as youth got into their work, they were constantly calling on the leaders (e.g., 'How do I do a fade out?'). Because the leaders couldn't satisfy everyone fast enough, youth turned to each other for assistance. Youth were also fascinated looking at the stick figure animations each other had produced with Flash.

In this process of getting and giving assistance, Catherine observed that several new relationships started to form. For example, a freshman boy, Joaquin, started out as a loner, but progressively entered into an exchange relationship with a freshman girl, Victoria. Catherine also observed that when a computer was not working (and when a girl's neighbor was visiting prom-planning Web sites), youth moved to other workstations and started interactions with new people. At week 5 Catherine wrote, 'It feels as if a larger group identity has formed.' Gary commented in his interview that 'No one's making fun of anyone, no one's looking down on anyone. They are a team and you can see it.'

The leaders' contribution to these peer-to-peer exchanges was indirect. They encouraged youth to go to each other for help and, of course, they provided the assignments, instruction, and some of the inspiration for the work that drew people together. They also kept youth on task. For example, when they found youth surfing the Internet, as happened a lot, they told them to get back to their work. In week 4 they also started encouraging youth to seek constructive feedback from each other on their storyboards.

Peer interactions evolved further in the final 5 weeks, when the youth's assignment was to film short videos based on the storyboards that each had completed. These stories were supposed to express the youth's identity, and they were encouraged to draw upon significant moments in their past lives. This assignment required youth to work in five-person 'crews,' which the leaders chose. Janna explained that youth in the crews were to rotate roles—director, cameraperson, and actors—so that each could film his or her story.

The first crew was in high spirits when Catherine followed them off to a stairwell for Hector to film his video, titled 'Terrible Day.' Janna had suggested that Hector start because she thought he had leadership abilities and would set a good example. However, the filming quickly broke down. Hector instructed two actors to fight, but they did not understand their roles. After several unsuccessful takes, Janna interrupted the filming and asked Hector to help people understand what he wanted. She said to Hector: 'You're the director, that's your camera person, what are you gonna tell your camera person? How are you gonna have your vision be made known?' Janna used the same approach to encourage the actors and camera person to become active listeners. Taking their role, she said, 'Hector, where do you want me to look? What do you want me to do?' She was trying to get them to think about each other's subjective viewpoints.

It took Hector a full hour to complete his video, but youth appeared to be learning how to communicate about the work. The third student in the crew took only 20 minutes to film his video about a boy who gets beat up by his father after

getting a B on an Algebra test. Janna mainly stepped back and let each director run things, but stepped in when no one volunteered to play a role that required crying. Then, after Joaquin accepted the role, she defended him when a boy called him a 'sissy.' When it was the turn of a timid girl, Lucia, to direct Janna provided support that helped her be assertive. Catherine noted that this crew was not a 'natural group' that hung out together and a few youth were loners, yet all were engaged.

Through this process, youth in this and other crews became better at working together. One exception occurred when the leaders decided to let a crew go outside to film by itself. Although Hector and Kye were appointed to go along as 'assistant teachers,' Catherine observed a lot of off-task behavior and described their work as 'chaotic.' Youth ignored Kye and spoke in Spanish, which he did not understand. Several girls walked to the edge of the school grounds to talk to boys in cars. Although they were motivated, youth engaged in these types of off-task peer dynamics frequently, particularly when the leaders were not present. However, the overall picture from the observations was that youth increasingly worked in collaboration.

What Youth Learned and How

To understand what accounted for this change in behavior, we need to know the youth's internal thought processes as it unfolded. Were there shifts in their thinking about working with others? What, if anything, were they learning about how to collaborate effectively and how did they learn it? The procedures of grounded theory entail progressing from methodically coding each passage in data to analyses of the larger overall patterns in them. At the first stage, I coded the youth's statements on what they were learning regarding teamwork and then how they were learning it.

What youth learned

I found that youth reported learning three types of reciprocity between self and other (see examples in Table 15.1). The first involved the exchange of *helping and being helped*. Reports coded into this category reflected the type of exchanges of assistance that Catherine observed in the first half of the program, when youth helped each other learn the software programs. They described learning to share information and programming tips, and learning that these exchanges were useful. At the beginning of Media Masters, Joaquin described himself as a social isolate, saying: 'I don't like to hang out because the only people I know are mean. They want to be only friends with you, like "Give me the homework, then I'll be your friend." But midway through the program Joaquin reported, 'Right here I've seen that's not a friend. Friends are somebody that you might want to like to go and aid; [and] when you need help,

Table 15.1 What Youth Reported Learning

Helping and being helped

Getting people to help you was a pretty way to success. You will always accomplish it through teamwork. That's what I think I've learned. (Rogelio, week 10)

It's better when you work with someone and you consult someone for something than just working alone and doing it by yourself. (Victoria, week 10)

They [peers] showed me how to work some things that I didn't know how to do. (Paco, week 10)

Getting and giving feedback

You won't get enough opinions working alone. The good thing of working in the group is that they give their opinion about the thing we're working on. Yeah, it helps me like get more ideas. (Joaquin, week 10)

When you're working independently, it's only you thinking about it. But working with other people, you get more chances of finding other ways to express what you're doing. (Rogelio, week 10)

To listen to what other people have to say. Just share a lot of different ideas. (Diego, week 10)

Leading and being led

I learned that you need to talk to others, you need to explain to them what do you want so it all comes correctly. Because if we don't say what you want to do, they're never gonna understand. You have to explain yourself to them. You have to work with them. (Gustavo, week 10)

You listen to what they got to say and you'll get the things done faster. (Diego, week 10)

Some projects, you had to work as a group. For example, the video project, we had to work in groups. We couldn't show ourselves for five minutes, or five seconds. We didn't have to show our face. But then for the rest of the movie, we had to choose somebody else to play us. And that helped us out. (Paco, week 10)

Note: The table includes youth's descriptions of what they learned from participating in Media Masters.

somebody might aid you.' He had recognized the potential complementarity between giving and getting help. Later he confirmed a change in his thinking, saying that when people need help 'now I help them more, like, share everything I know.' Joaquin, like other youth, reported learning that reciprocal assistance can be mutually beneficial.

The second reciprocity involved learning the value of exchanging critical opinions: *getting and giving feedback*. I coded this separate from helping because it involved a distinct commodity, which is easily bruising to a person's ego. Getting and giving feedback is something youth in other programs we studied say is hard to learn (Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003). Rogelio reported in one instance how the feedback he obtained from peers effectively captured the problem he was having and was just what he needed. But he also recognized his own narcissistic resistance: 'It's your own work. You think you've done it. So you think some things people say are bologna.' Rogelio described seeing how people are egocentric and how the pain feedback can cause leads them to discredit potentially useful information. Transposing this insight, he also reported learning to be sensitive in giving feedback to others: 'I noticed that it's hard to say what you mean, but then again, control what you're

gonna say: [to] not just say what you're thinking right away.' As a result, you try to sort through the useful from the 'bologna' in the feedback you get, but you also try to give feedback to others in ways that minimize the sting and are useful to them. For these youth, exchanging critical opinions to improve the quality of their work involved understanding the parallelism between how you experience feedback and how others do.

The third form of reciprocity youth learned was *leading and being led*. This change appeared to correspond to learning the different roles that crew members exchanged in making their videos. First, they reported discovering that to lead others you must *work at helping them understand your intentions*. Gustavo said:

I learned that you need to talk to others, you need to explain to them what you want so it all comes correctly. Because if we don't say what you want to do, they're never gonna understand. You have to explain yourself to them. You have to work with them.

Leading requires doing whatever it takes to make sure people comprehend. Second, they learned that when roles were reversed they had to devote effort to understanding and complying with the goals of the director. Diego described the role of actor:

We all had a part. The director, she had her video. Some of the guys had to do, like, a girl. It's characters, you know, no matter what was the situation, we all had to do it .... You listen to what they got to say and you'll get the things done faster.

The youth were coming to understand principles of communication underlying the reciprocal roles of leader and led. People in both roles had to actively explain and listen to ensure that messages were transmitted and enacted faithfully.

The common ideas across these three forms or reciprocity were, first, the recognition of a symmetry between self and other. Youth transcended an egocentric viewpoint and articulated cognitive reversibility between what oneself and others wanted, did, and experienced. Second, they came to recognize that exchanges between self and other facilitated their work. Of course, even preschool children enter into social exchanges (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998), but what is new in adolescence is the ability to understand and engage in exchanges that involve more abstract commodities (cf. Laursen & Hartup, 2002). In this case these commodities were instrumental actions: assistance, opinions, and leadership. What seemed to be emergent for these youth was a grasp of the complementarity between self and others as members of a collaborative system working toward an instrumental goal.

How youth learned

What was the change process? What stimulated this learning? Because the youth were describing changes in their conscious thoughts about working with others,

we drew on their accounts of how they learned. When youth reported learning or changing in some way, our interviewers were instructed to ask them how that learning occurred. In response, they typically provided narrative descriptions of the activities and experiences that led to their learning. Three main change processes emerged from coding these and other responses that suggested what their learning processes were.

The most common process involved *learning from experiences*. They described learning from getting or giving help, seeing the benefits of feedback, and playing the roles of director, camera person, and actor. As an example, several youth reported learning from getting 'stuck' and 'frustrated' and then seeing how valuable it was to get help and, conversely, seeing how they had been helpful in getting someone else unstuck. Diego reported learning about the value of feedback from his experiences: Sometimes when one person had like an idea and told us, and we were like, 'You know what? It would be better to do it like this.' And they were: 'You're right, it would be better.' His words suggest that it was a surprising revelation that feedback can be useful. This change process reflects Piaget's idea that young people 'extract' interpersonal principles from participating in social interactions. In this context, youth were extracting principles about the exchange of instrumental actions.

A second change process involved learning through *taking others' perspective*, through thinking about what others might do or feel. Rogelio provided an example of this in describing his learning about giving feedback: 'For me, it was hard because you gotta find the right words so you won't hurt people's feelings, and just won't blurt something out that might not be eligible.' He had realized that a wrong word could be experienced as a significant blow, and he reported that he had changed accordingly: 'I see their ideas in a more mature way. I don't just joke around with their ideas. I actually think it over, and see how I can help them.' Rogelio's and other youth's quotes suggested that their learning came, in part, through 'thought experiments' in which they imagined how different types of feedback might impact others. They were drawing on advanced forms of perspective taking associated with adolescence that involve using one's own experience to imagine the impact of different actions on others' experiences.

A third change process involved *growing trust leading to the development of collective norms*. Joaquin said, 'Like at the beginning, we were all separate. Although, we were friendly, we didn't trust each other that much.' Over the interviews, he progressed from a relationship of trust with Victoria to expressing trust of the group. Gustavo, who initially said he preferred to work by himself, experienced the group coming together in the fourth week, which corresponds to when Catherine first observed the formation of a group identity. This increasing trust appeared to be a platform for development of group norms. In the second half of the program, youth provided numerous descriptions of shared norms they had formed regarding how they made decisions and functioned as a team (Table 15.2).

A key point is that the change process did not solely entail learning. It also reflected individual and collective *decisions* by the youth to cooperate—to form social contracts.

Table 15.2 Generalised Norms for Functioning as a Team

We're working as a group so far. And, so far everybody's making a part of their scene, and we're cooperating with them if they need help. We're there, as a group, to help them out, give them a hand. (Rogilio, week 5)

We all get along and work together. We all decide what's the best choice. (Ana, week 5)

Well, we just like try to make the decisions, like altogether and not just be like, 'Oh, he has to decide, or we can't do anything about it, 'cause he's the one that has to decide, and we can't do anything.' (Victoria, week 7)

We are working hard because everybody's doing the work. Everybody is working. I think that is kind of cool. (Gustavo, week 8)

Before we can do anything, we sit around and talk about what we're gonna be doing for the tool we're gonna do. So we just [gather] around and have a talk, get to know what we're gonna do, how we're gonna do it. So when it's ready, we do it. You already know what was planned. We plan things before we do it. (Diego, week 10)

Even if we had—if one of our group members was missing, we had to replace them with somebody one day, we would always do a pretty good job, even though the person that wasn't there. (Paco, week 10)

Note: The table provides youth's descriptions from individual interviews of how they worked together in Media Masters.

As a result, they reported learning concepts about reciprocal exchange of help, feedback, and leadership, but this learning process was interrelated with a growing commitment to generalized norms in the group—norms that were, at least in part, based on what they were learning. Paco wove together these elements of learning and commitment in his final interview:

I learned how to be organized. How to work with people. How to plan out things as a group. We would come together and we would say, 'Okay. We're gonna do this one part this way.' We would agree on something. We would always hear each other's opinions.

There is a process of learning here, but also a process in which the group formed a consensus around principles they had derived for working together. Youth were active agents, both of development and of formulating group norms.

The achievement of this type of harmonious collaboration should not necessarily be seen as the final goal of teamwork development. In an FFA program we studied, youth were attempting to plan an event together, but some youth were not doing their part.[2] It was only when several youth stepped forward who were willing to go against the grain, be assertive, and not let peer' irresponsibility derail the process that progress was made. These emergent teen leaders reported learning that, rather than abnegating the self to the group, they needed to be willing to stick their necks out (Larson, Hansen, & Walker, 2005). Effective group functioning requires people who are willing to assert themselves and provide leadership when needed.

Let me try to synthesize these findings by proposing a tentative model for one pathway of teamwork development. In grounded theory analyses, the final stage is integrating findings from the methodical coding into a whole. I found that our observational and youth interview data suggested a sequence of change that youth may go through.

The sequence of change

At a beginning egocentric stage some but not all youth entered Media Masters with a sense of self-sufficiency and distrust of others. Joaquin had believed he could do his best work by himself: 'Like before, I didn't, I didn't want nobody to come help me to work, because I thought it was all perfect. I didn't need no help. I was really good,' Joaquin and other youth also said they worked alone because they had been burned trying to cooperate with peers in other contexts. We have seen this strong distrust of peers in a number of the other urban programs we studied.

At a second stage, youth started learning the benefits of reciprocity with peers. From Catherine's observations, these began with one-on-one quid pro quo exchanges. One youth invoked this mutual obligation by recounting, 'They had to help me because I had helped them.' These interactions involved beginning trust, and youth reported learning from experience that their work was more effective when they engaged in these exchanges, including the exchange of potentially painful feedback. Joaquin said he 'started to figure out' that there were mutual benefits from exchanging help, 'so I tried to change.'

The third stage involved the gradual development of group norms for working together. These norms were less dependent on quid pro quo exchange, but rather involved principles the youth had derived for working together. Perspective taking and group level trust helped youth develop rules about group level communication and decision making. Across the 10 weeks, youth increasingly used the word 'we' to describe their work, but as noted in our FFA study, this does not necessarily mean self-abnegation to the group; it may entail 'I' as a distinct member of 'we.'

A subsequent developmental process, mentioned by several youth, involved transferring what they learned about teamwork to other contexts in their lives. This was not the case for Joaquin's interactions with his peers outside the program, which still were based on a premise of mutual distrust. However, Victoria and Rogelio described carry over to other contexts. Also, when we talked to Gary 6 months later, he reported that in the next program they offered, the youth from Media Masters played leadership roles: 'We stood back. They ran workshops. They did a great job!' I would speculate that youth experiment with transferring their new knowledge of working with others to other contexts, learning to use it discriminately in other relationships depending on the level of mutuality they are able to achieve in these relationships.

This general sequence in developing teamwork—from social exchanges to generalized norms—resembles a progression in prosocial developmental that others have described occurring across the length of adolescence (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998; Laursen & Hartup, 2002). What impressed me here was, first, that youth were able to articulate the change process and that they cast themselves as the producers of this change. They

appeared to have drawn on new cognitive skills of adolescence for coordinating one's own and others' perspectives and being conscious agents of self-change. Second, I was impressed that youth were learning a distinct set of skills for collaboration: to negotiate exchange of help, feedback, and leadership in order to achieve instrumental goals.

I was also impressed that these changes appeared to be compacted into 10 weeks and that they were the product of the deliberate goals of the program leaders. Before the program started, I was skeptical when Janna stated with confidence: 'They're gonna learn to negotiate, compromise, how to decide, how to set rules for each other, how to support each other.' The fulfillment of her prediction, however, suggests that the leaders knew how to produce replicable developmental change in youth. This leads to my final analyses, which addressed what Janna and Gary did to create conditions for youth to experience these changes.

The Role of Program Leaders

There is a kind of paradox here. The analyses indicated that the youth experienced *themselves* as producers of this development sequence, yet from a social policy perspective, we want to know how *we* can create this kind of learning process: how to make it replicable. I have called this the 'intentionality paradox': program leaders want to be intentional in supporting youth's development, but this requires supporting the youth's intentionality. The solution to this paradox, we have discovered, is to not see it as a tug of war (Larson, 2006; Larson, Walker, & Pearce, 2005). Adult input and control are not at odds with youth input and control. We have found that youth are most empowered to engage in developmental change when adults strike an optimal balance between encouraging youth agency and providing structure and support that keeps youth on track.

We clearly saw this balancing at Media Masters. On the one hand, Janna and Gary consistently reinforced youth's ownership. Catherine repeatedly observed them feeding youth's motivation and encouraging their self-expression and creativity. The youth confirmed that they felt ownership, praising the freedom the leaders gave them to develop their work. On the other hand, Janna and Gary balanced this encouragement with actions to keep the youth's work and learning on track. They created assignments that directed youth's creativity toward goals that were manageable and permitted experiences of mastery. When youth needed help, the adults provided assistance in ways that kept ownership with the youth, as illustrated in Janna's use of questioning (rather than instruction) to get the first film crew to think about their roles. In addition, the adults monitored youth's work and challenged them according to their progress and needs. Janna said, 'It's always pushing them to go farther and deeper into their own work and their own selves.' By getting this balance right, as Janna and Gary did, we think it creates a channel for youth's sustained engagement with developmental challenge (Larson, Hansen, & Walker, 2005).

In addition to providing this overall balance, the leaders did a number of things that specifically aided youth's learning teamwork. My analyses suggested, first, that

the leaders provided '*intermediate structures*' that facilitated youth's collaborative work. We call these structures 'intermediate' because they are at a middle level between organizing youth's work for them and providing total freedom. They included creating assignments that required youth to work together and structuring sessions where youth critiqued each other's work. Paco pointed to the 'guidelines' the leaders provided. Janna and Gary brought youth together in ways that were conducive to joint work, but gave youth substantial latitude in how they interacted with each other.

The second thing the leaders did was cultivate an *ethos of helping*. This included encouraging youth to seek assistance from each other. 'They connect the people,' Gustavo said, 'because if you have a question they tell: "Okay, go over there and ask him. He can help you." In addition to directing youth to others, the leaders encouraged youth to be sensitive in how they provided help to peers. Rogelio, the student who was more articulate about learning to give and get feedback, pointed in part to the positive model that the leaders provided. 'Instead of laughing, they have shown us a better way to help [peers] out.' Statements by other youth suggested that this ethos appeared to facilitate youth's perspective taking and their eventual development of collaborative group norms.

The third thing the leaders did to support teamwork development was to be *guarantors of interpersonal safety*. Working with new peers involves taking risks; it exposes you to the possibility that others will exploit or make fun of you. These leaders did what they could to reduce these negative peer dynamics. Janna explained, 'There were certain things that I felt were sexist that I addressed immediately, in a casual joking way, but definitely making it clear.' Janna did this when a youth made a derogatory remark about Joaquin's accepting the role of a girl in a video. Of course, the leaders could not police every youth interaction; nonetheless they tried to support the experience of interpersonal safety, thus contributing to the youth's development of trust.

Compared to other programs we studied, Media Masters was relatively adult driven. In some ways it was like a class: there was a curriculum, the adults were called 'teachers,' and the students received evaluations from the adults at the end of the program. However, the students were given a lot of freedom and ownership within a channel of engagement in challenges. Stated differently, they provided youth a 'zone of proximal development' for learning teamwork. If this program had gone on for another 10 weeks, I suspect the leaders would have supported development of more advanced teamwork skills by stepping back little by little to give youth more experiences in creating collaborative structures by themselves. Indeed, that is what Gary described doing when he ran a new session with many of the same youth the next spring.

Adding Teamwork to the Agenda of Positive Development

I began this chapter by stressing the importance of teamwork as an outcome of positive development, especially in the 21st century. But it is also important as a means.

Because youth in Media Masters learned to work together, they had other developmental experiences, which I have not had space to describe. We have found that many forms of development in youth programs—gaining strategic thinking skills, community capital, and intercultural competence—were often collaborative (Larson & Hansen, 2005; Larson et al., 2004). Youth frequently describe their developmental experiences in youth programs using 'we.' Research and theory on positive development almost always employs the individual as the unit of analysis, but development often occurs in a dyad, group, or team. Rogoff (1998) summarized evidence from classroom and laboratory studies showing that this collaborative learning can be more effective than individual learning. As a result, this capacity for working with others needs to be on our agenda both as an end and as a means of positive development.

The important finding of this chapter—one we have made in other youth programs—is that, within a context of adult structure and support, youth readily become active producers of this developmental change. In Media Masters, youth described extracting knowledge from their experiences. Individually and collectively, they figured out how to work together. We saw youth teach themselves how to collaborate and work as a team. The findings here suggest a preliminary model of teamwork development in which youth actively progress from *quid pro quo* exchanges that help them learn reciprocity to the formation of social contracts around discovered principles of group functioning. I'm excited about this as a powerful change process.

Of course, much more research is needed to test this model and understand how this sequence plays out in different situation, under different types of adult leadership, and with different ages and types of youth. In a study of other Chicago programs sponsored by the same organization, Halpern (2006) raised questions about how transient learning in a 10-week program might be. It is a difficult challenge for youth development researchers to evaluate how the incremental gains that youth report in a 10-week program might add up and transfer to future contexts in their lives. However, in 2-year follow-up interviews with our youth at Media Masters, most reported that they continued to use what they had learned about teamwork from the program, particularly in group projects at school. Having followed youth's accounts of systematic processes of their development in this and other programs, I think we should take these reports seriously. I predict that future research will eventually prove youth programs to be a valuable context for young people to learn teamwork and, also, for us to learn how we can best facilitate this developmental process.

Notes

1   This program was one of many apprenticeship programs funded by Chicago's After School Matters (see Halpern, 2006). Youth were paid $5 per hour for participation. We have used pseudonyms for the program and all people mentioned.

2   The practitioner literature suggests that group formation often goes through a phase like this in which group members come in conflict around their egocentric personalities and desires. Groups progress from 'forming to storming to norming (Priest & Gass, 1997).

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