Pears Foundation

ACC ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES

YOUTH SOCIAL ACTION

Reflecting on Social Action Projects

About this resource

This resource is designed to support you to reflect with students who are working on a social action project. You can reflect with students at any point throughout the project, but it is most useful after any big activities or events and at the end of projects. Reflection is one of the principles of social action and is important to help students learn from their actions.

This resource has been created as part of the Association of Colleges Youth Social Action Programme (Phase Three) by the Regional Enrichment Coordinator, and with the support of the Social Action mentor. The programme was originally funded through the #iwill Pears fund in partnership with the Pears Foundation, #iwill and the National Lottery. The Pears Foundation have continued to support the programme by funding a further two phases.

Find out more about the Youth Social Action Programme (Phase 3)



Bio



Florence Smith-Drayson is AoC's Regional Enrichment Coordinator and Youth Social Action Lead for Leeds City College.

Florence has been part of the Youth Social Action Programme since Phase One (2021-2023) and has been in a role dedicated to social action since 2021.

Youth Social Action

Definition

Youth social action refers to activities that you can do to make a positive difference to others or the environment.

There are lots of ways in which you can take practical action to make a positive difference. It can take place in a range of contexts and can mean formal or informal activities. These include volunteering, fundraising, campaigning or supporting peers.

Principles

What does great youth social action look like? Research suggests that high quality activities will meet six principles including:

1. Be youth-led
2. Be challenging
3. Have social impact
4. Allow progression to other opportunities
5. Be embedded in a young person's life
6. Enable reflection about the value of the activity

This definition and the principles come from #iwill, who champion social action in the UK.

The aim of social action is to empower young people to take action on issues that they care about and become active members of the community, so projects should be guided by them. Young people should build skills to take into the future to continue to act and create lasting habits.

Reflection Questions

Reflection questions can be used to help with reflection at any point. They can be used as part of group activiites or individual reflection.

How did you feel before taking part?

How did you feel after?

What went well? Why?

What was the best thing about taking part?

What didn't go well? Why?

What have you learnt from taking part?

What would you do differently next time?

What do you need to work on/improve?

Are there any changes (positive or negative) that have happened to you as a result of taking part?

Activities for the end of a session

Picture cards



Using emojis or pictures to help the participants to express their feelings.

1. Spread the emoji cards over a table or the floor
2. Give the students time to look over the cards and decide how they are feeling about the project
3. Ask students to select the card and as a group discuss the feelings

Tops and Bottoms



This activity helps students express positive and challenging moments.

Tops represents the high points, moments of joy, success or positive experiences

Bottoms represents the low points, challenges and difficulties, or moments of struggle

Tip: Maintain a relaxed, conversational tone and be mindful of their emotions, offering support if difficult topics arise.

Encourage the young people to think about their most recent experiences and answer the following questions:

‘What were your tops this week?’ (Positive moments, achievements or enjoyable experiences)

‘Did you have any bottoms moments?’ (Challenges, disappointments or difficult situations)

Ask follow up questions:

‘What made that moment special or challenging?’

‘What did you learn from that experience?’

‘How did you respond and what would you differently next time?’

One-to-ones

These reflections are one-to-one between a staff member and student focusing on personal growth and goal setting.



Create a safe environment that is comfortable, safe and free from distractions. Ensure confidentiality and build trust.

1. Start with open ended questions such as ‘how are you feeling today?’ and ‘how have you found the project?’

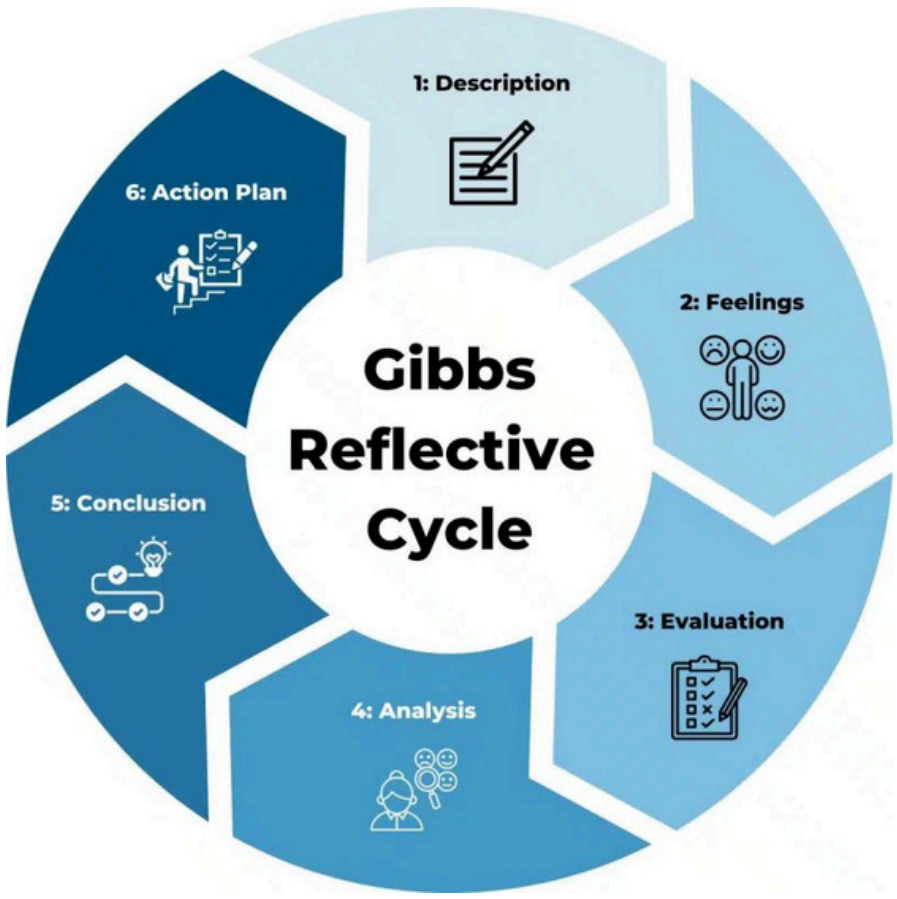
Allow the young person to lead the conversation and explore more on topics they bring up.

2. Use reflection questions further up to ask more about the impact of the project on them and their community.
3. Support the young person to identify goals or solutions. Break down goals into manageable steps.

Activities for the end of the project

Reflective cycle





Explain the cycle to the students then do the following activities to work through the cycle.

Activity 1 - Describe
Write a description together about what you did.

Activity 2 - One word
Hand out post-it notes and ask students to write one word that describes how they feel about the project. Collect the post-it notes and share with everyone then invite anyone to discuss their feelings.

Activity 3 - Rating scale
Make a scale (1 to 5) along the floor and ask students to stand where they are on the scale. Ask questions like:

‘How did you feel before the activity?’
1 - not at all good 5- very good

‘How do you feel after?’

‘How confident did you feel before the activity?’
1 - not at all confident 5- very confident

‘How confident do you feel after?’

Add any question that is relevant for your group.

Activity 4 - Pair and Share

Get students into pairs and have them think about what went well and why, and what didn't go well and why. Share with the group.

Activity 5 - Skills

Play hot potato and the students have to name a skill they learnt every time they catch the ball.

Activity 6 - Tower of Progress

Hand out two Jenga blocks and two post-it notes each.
Students reflect on:
What will I do differently next time?
What skills/knowledge do I need to develop?

Have students come up and place their block to make a tower together.

Interviews



Interviews are a good way for students to think about effective reflection questions and work with their peers.

1. Students individuall write questions to ask their peers. You can show them example questions but they should think about their own project and what they want to know.
2. Get students to plan how they will record their interview (audio, video, written).
2. Put students in pairs. One interveiws the other with their questions then they swap. Make sure you have access to the answers.

References

hhttps://www.linkedin.com/posts/anubha-dubey-0579a32b6_gibbs-reflective-cycle-in-a-nutshell-gibbs-activity-7368641387170398208-AJ9P

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