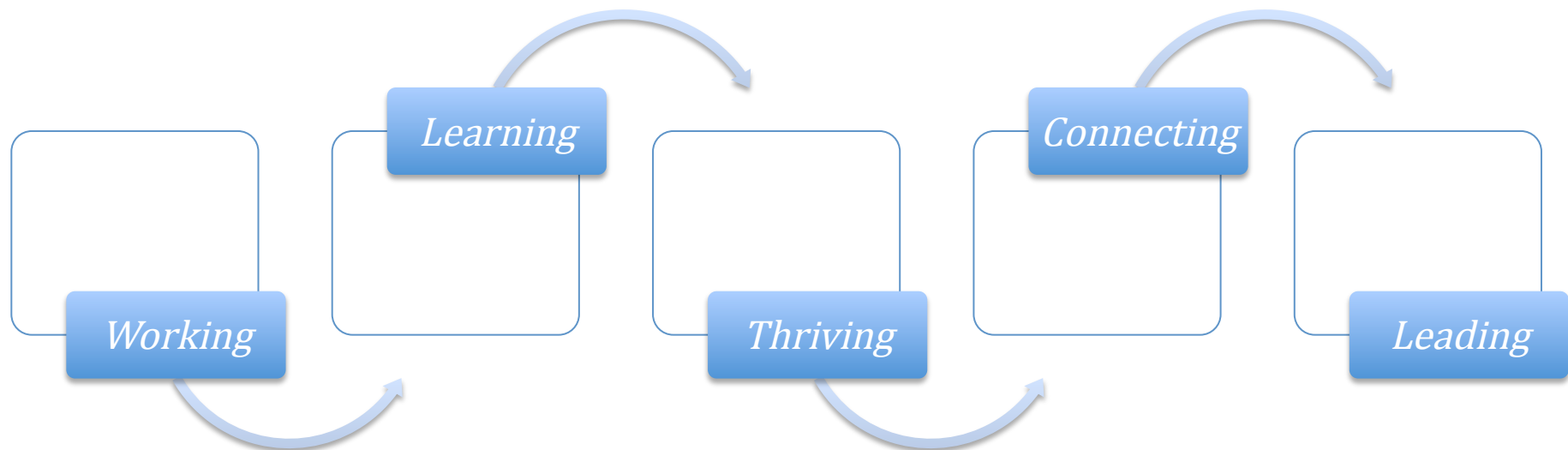


Five Essential Pillars to Achieve a Successful Tech Wizards Service Learning Project:

The Forum is “a national nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing the quality and quantity of youth investment and youth involvement by promoting a big picture approach to planning, research, advocacy, and policy development among the broad range of organizations that help constituents and communities invest in children, youth, and families” (Forum for Youth Investment, 2001). The five developmental areas identified by the Forum are **working, learning, thriving, connecting,** and **leading** (Ferber, Pittman, & Marshall, 2002). 4-H Tech Wizards has chosen to utilize these pillars as an effective framework for creating effective service learning projects that can provide experiential learning and leadership development.





Positive attitudes, skills, and behaviors around vocational direction characterize the area of development known as **working** (Ferber, Pittman, & Marshall, 2002). Tech Wizards participants should be actively involved in activities that will expose them to practice not only the actual skills needed for a particular career, but also the work readiness skills needed to find and maintain employment. Some of the intended outcomes for this area of development include the

following:

- ❖ Meaningful engagement in one's own career development process
- ❖ Demonstrated skill in work readiness
- ❖ Awareness of options for future employment, careers, and professional development
- ❖ Completion of educational requirements or involvement in training that culminates in a specific vocation or opportunity for career advancement
- ❖ Established involvement in meaningful work that offers advancement, satisfaction, and self-sufficiency
- ❖ Positive attitude about one's ability and future in working in a particular industry or the opportunities to grow into another

When thinking about engaging the youth in a Service Learning Projects, there are few things that we have to keep in mind when we include **Working** as part of the 5 essential pillars. Program activities employed in the after-school or out-of-school environment should include the following:

- ❖ Career exploration activities, including career interest assessments, job shadowing, job and career fairs, and workplace visits and tours
- ❖ Career-related goal setting and planning
- ❖ Internships
- ❖ Work experience, including summer employment
- ❖ Information on entrepreneurship
- ❖ Networking activities
- ❖ Mock interviews
- ❖ Work readiness workshops
- ❖ Visits from representatives of specific industries to speak to youth participants about the employment opportunities and details of working within their industry
- ❖ Mock job searches, preparing resumes, and writing cover letters and thank-you letters

- ❖ Visits to education or training programs
- ❖ Job coaching or mentoring
- ❖ Learning activities using computers and other current workplace technology.

Learning

Positive basic and applied academic attitudes, skills, and behaviors characterize the area of development known as **learning** (Ferber, Pittman, & Marshall, 2002). Tech Wizards program should be focused on activities that provides the necessary skills to learn by encouraging youth to develop a higher aptitude for academic achievement. Some of the outcomes of having a successful Tech Wizards program that includes learning as part of the process are:

- ❖ Basic aptitude in math and reading
- ❖ Rational problem solving skills
- ❖ Ability to think critically toward a positive outcome
- ❖ Logical reasoning based on personal knowledge
- ❖ Ability to determine one's own skills and areas of academic weakness or need for further education and training
- ❖ Sense of creativity
- ❖ Appreciation and the foundation for lifelong learning, including a desire for further education
- ❖ Initial and ongoing skills assessment, both formal and informal
- ❖ Initial and ongoing career and vocational assessment, both formal and informal
- ❖ Identification of one's learning styles, strengths, and challenges
- ❖ Creation of a personal development plan
- ❖ Contextualized learning activities such as service learning projects in which youth apply academic skills to community needs
- ❖ Monitoring of and accountability for own grades and creation of a continuous improvement plan based on grades and goals
- ❖ Showcase of work highlighting a youth's learning experience
- ❖ Development of a formal learning plan that includes long- and short-term goals and action steps
- ❖ Group problem-solving activities
- ❖ Peer tutoring activities

See the Index to obtain a sample of the Skills Log Developed by 4-H Tech Wizards Evaluators.

Thriving

Attitudes, skills, and behaviors that are demonstrated by maintaining optimal physical and emotional wellbeing characterize the area of development known as

thriving (Ferber, Pittman, & Marshall, 2002).

Therefore, positive outcomes for thriving may include the following:

- ❖ Understanding of growth and development as both an objective and a personal indicator of physical and emotional maturation
- ❖ Knowledge and practice of good nutrition and hygiene
- ❖ Ability to identify situations of safety and uphold those standards in daily life
- ❖ Ability to assess situations and environments independently
- ❖ Ability to learn from mistakes
- ❖ Workshops on human development issues, including physical, sexual, and emotional development
- ❖ Role playing activities that hypothesize conflict management and resolution. Personal and peer counseling
- ❖ Community mapping to create a directory of resources
- ❖ Meal planning and preparation activities during the Summer Capstone Program
- ❖ Social activities that offer opportunities to practice skills in communication, negotiation, and personal presentation
- ❖ Training in life skills such as how to manage a small budget, find transportation, etc.

Connecting



Connecting refers to the development of positive social behaviors, skills, and attitudes (Ferber, Pittman, & Marshall, 2002). Relationships with elders, peers, supervisors, family, and other community members commonly influence these behaviors, skills, and attitudes. The level to which a young person has developed in this area will also dictate how he or she continues to build varied relationships later on in life. Further, maintaining these relationships in a way

that will positively benefit the young person is the goal of this area of development. Outcomes for the area of connecting include the following:

Quality relationships with adults and peers

- ❖ Interpersonal skills, such as the ability to build trust, handle conflict, value differences, listen actively, and communicate effectively
- ❖ Sense of belonging and membership, (e.g. valuing and being valued by others and being a part of a group or greater whole)
- ❖ Ability to empathize with others
- ❖ Sense of one's own identity apart from and in relation to others
- ❖ Knowledge of and ability to seek out resources in the community
- ❖ Ability to network in order to develop personal and professional relationships
- ❖ Mentoring activities that connect youth to adult mentors to provide guidance and support and build interpersonal skills that are needed to relate to older people and those in roles of authority
- ❖ Tutoring activities that engage youth as tutors or in being tutored, since both types of tutoring activities advance a young person's ability to work on group projects, communicate with others, teach, and learn
- ❖ Research activities in which youth identify resources within the community through activities that allow them to practice conversation and investigation skills with those individuals who they do not know very well
- ❖ Letter writing to friends, family members, and pen pals to build language and communication skills and encourage connecting to others

Attendance at job and trade fairs to begin building a network of contacts in particular career fields of interest

- Role-playing of interview and other workplace scenarios
- Positive peer and group activities that build camaraderie, teamwork, and belonging, such as teambuilding exercises, science projects, technology based projects, etc.
- Cultural activities that promote understanding and tolerance

Connecting is an important area of development for youth. The essence of 4-H Tech Wizards is connecting students with the world. Connecting is a very strong skill for youth to take responsibility in their own projects and finding resources to advance their projects. The site coordinator should keep in mind that employing activities enhancing the communication skills can provide an effective tool for connecting with others.

The students and mentors working in conjunction to develop a project should develop:

- ❖ Ability to communicate to get a point across
- ❖ Ability to influence others
- ❖ Ability to motivate others
- ❖ Ability to seek out role models who have been leaders
- ❖ Ability to be a role model for others

Activities that could enhance the connecting area of development in the context of leadership development include the following:

- ❖ Workshops in public speaking
- ❖ Research on historical or current leaders
- ❖ Contact with local leaders
- ❖ Strategic planning to change something in the community or within the youth program

Leading

Leading is the area of development that centers on positive skills, attitudes, and behaviors around civic involvement and personal goal setting (Ferber, Pittman, & Marshall, 2002).

- ❖ Ability to articulate one's personal values
- ❖ Awareness of how one's personal actions impact the larger communities
- ❖ Ability to engage in the community in a positive manner
- ❖ Respect and caring for oneself and others
- ❖ Sense of responsibility to self and others
- ❖ Integrity
- ❖ Awareness of and appreciation for cultural differences among peers and within the larger community
- ❖ High expectations for self and community
- ❖ Sense of purpose in goals and activities
- ❖ Ability to follow the lead of others when appropriate

Resource-mapping activities in which youth take the lead in planning and carrying out a search of community resources for youth

- ❖ Voter registration and voting in local, state, and federal elections
- ❖ Participation in town hall meetings
- ❖ Participation in the planning/development of the project
- ❖ Participation in resource development plan, fundraising
- ❖ Participation in a youth advisory committee within the program, school, or community
- ❖ Learning activities or courses about leadership principles and styles
- ❖ Participation in group activities that promote collaboration and team work;
- ❖ Mentoring relationships with positive role models
- ❖ Opportunities to serve in leadership roles such as club officer, Committee member, team captain, or coach

Outcomes that Tech Wizards programs should focus on when developing good leaders include:

- ❖ Ability to motivate others
- ❖ Ability to share power and distribute tasks
- ❖ Ability to work with a team
- ❖ Ability to resolve conflicts
- ❖ Ability to create and communicate a vision
- ❖ Ability to manage change and value continuous improvement