

# Click2ComputerScience: Building Strong Teen Leaders

How can we support the growth and development of young staff and teen volunteers? What do teens and young adults need to be successful teachers and leaders in our programs? This session includes an engaging discussion with colleagues and resources, strategies, and ideas from Click2ComputerScience.

---

## ELO Innovation Invitational - Workshop Notes

How do you use teens in your program?

- High schoolers are helpers in our program.
- High schoolers are club leaders in our program (higher level of responsibility that helpers).
- We have high schoolers on our staff.
- We have high school students who are licensed para-educators work in our program. They are licensed through a program at the high school.
- We provide opportunities for teen participants in the program to take on a leadership role for specific activities or program.

Are the teens who work in your program paid staff or volunteers?

- 9 of the 20 people in the room indicated they have teens work in their program as paid staff.
- 3 people indicated they have teens work in their program as volunteers - 2 of these people also indicated they have teens work as paid staff.

Brainstormed list of supports that can help teens be successful.

- Prior training
- Training how to communicate instructions clearly to participants.
- Teens have opportunities to role play or practice leading an activity before they do it with kids.
- Help teens understand that they don't have to control everything.
- Help teens find good activities to implement.
- Debriefing with an adult after the activity – What went well? What would you change next time? Feedback on what they should do differently.
- Help teens learn to get feedback from participants – to incorporate questions like - What did you learn today?
- Provide support around logistics – selecting activities, how long to spend on each part of an activity, managing supplies and space, being prepared.
- Teens need flexibility to grow and improve over time. Adjust you expectations as they grow.

Research by Lee and Murdock found that these elements led to positive outcomes for the teen teachers and those they teach.

Lee, F.C.H. & Murdock, S. (2001). Teenagers as Teachers programs: Ten essential elements. Journal of Extension, 39(1). Retrieved from

<https://tigerprints.clemson.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5248&context=joe>

1. Dedicated adults who support teens
2. Active teen recruitment
3. Strong curriculum
4. Initial training
5. Ongoing training and support
6. Attention to details

7. Recognition and reward
8. Team building
9. Setting teens up for success
10. Feedback and evaluation

The [Teens Learning to Lead](https://click2computerscience.org/education/teens-learning-to-lead/) course from [Click2Computer](https://click2computerscience.org/) science is designed for teens to complete online on their own or with a small group.

<https://click2computerscience.org/education/teens-learning-to-lead/>

There are four sections that each take about an hour to complete. It is important for teens to keep a learning journal as they go through the course. The journal is great to share with a supervisor or mentor.

1. What is Leadership?
2. Communication as a Teen Leader
3. Experiential Learning
4. Creating a Learning Environment

Brainstormed list of how teens benefit from their experience as teen leaders in OST.

Working as a teen staff member or volunteer:

- Lets them explore different career options. Some are obvious, like careers in education, but can also help with careers in STEM fields, or being a pediatrician.
- Builds confidence.
- Provides opportunities to contribute to the community – to understand the impact of giving back to your community.
- Builds people skills that are important in life – working as part of a team, getting along with others, communicating clearly.
- Build skills for work – showing up on time, being responsible, working with a supervisor.

Research by Dworkin, Larson & Hanson on the experiences of teen leaders in 4-H shows that young people were interested in both personal and interpersonal development through their leadership experiences.

Dworkin, Larson & Hanson (2003) Adolescents accounts of growth experiences in Youth Activities.

Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 32(1). Retrieved from

<https://link.springer.com/article/10.1023/A:1021076222321>

They found that successful teen leadership experiences help young people:

- Experience being a leader.
- Make important decisions.
- Build positive relationships with youth and adults.
- Feel like they are making a contribution/serve others.
- Learn new skills.
- Plan activities.
- Overcome challenges and solve problems.

Please use this survey to give us feedback on the session:

[https://ssp.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_0fha4CwzfASyHP0](https://ssp.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0fha4CwzfASyHP0)