

# Ideas for Implementation

*The following tips come from a diverse group of Media-Smart Youth facilitators, who wanted to share their suggestions for successfully implementing the program.*

## Teaching Style

- ✓ Show enthusiasm and a positive attitude when facilitating--the youth will follow your lead.
- ✓ Allow time for the youth to get to know each other and interact with you and with each other--team building will enhance their experience.
- ✓ Find a balance between structure and flexibility/fun for the youth. Youth have already been in a structured environment all day and will benefit from a change of pace after school. While the curriculum is filled with challenging content, it should be taught in a fun and interactive way.
- ✓ Get to know your participants and some interesting things about them--youth crave adult interaction in their lives and building these relationships will draw youth into the program.
- ✓ Focus on the strength of each youth, even when some participants may act in a way that makes this challenging. Engage youth in the lessons by tapping into their unique strengths and interests.
- ✓ Make an effort to display the youths' mini-production projects in your after-school setting--youth are proud and motivated by seeing their work displayed publicly.

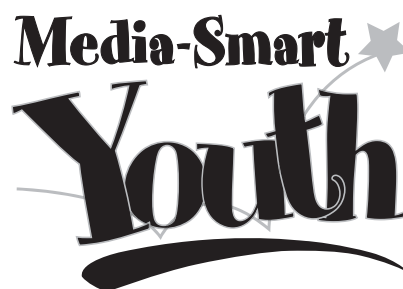
## Preparing for the Lessons

- ✓ Learn the content by reading the lesson over several times. Consider creating a small "cheat sheet" for yourself made up of key words to help you remember the major points and lesson flow.
- ✓ Practice facilitating in front of a mirror or with friends or family--it really helps to practice delivering the curriculum out loud.
- ✓ Be familiar enough with the scripts so that you can adapt and say all the main points in your own words.
- ✓ In lessons where the content is heavy, create large sheets of paper with an outline and information to post in the room to ensure to cover the key points.
- ✓ Be prepared to explain the meaning of words to youth in terms they can understand and relate to.
- ✓ Start organizing supplies for the lesson--including the snack and all materials--at least two days ahead of time.

- ✓ As you get to know the youth, incorporate the dynamics of the group into your preparation. For example, think of roles for youth as appropriate or adapt an activity to reflect the youths' specific interests.
- ✓ Consider teaming up with a media partner from the very beginning and having them co-facilitate throughout the program.

## Setting Up the Room

- ✓ Choose a room with plenty of space for the youth to move around.
- ✓ Establish places in the room for different kind of work. For example, define a regular space for the whole group to brainstorm together, a space for putting out the snack break, an area for doing the action break, and smaller areas of the room for dividing into small groups. This makes set up easier and helps familiarize youth with the lesson structure.
- ✓ Designate certain spaces on the wall for posting the same materials for each lesson, such as the 6 Media Questions poster or the working agreement. This predictability will make it easier for youth to find and learn the posted information.
- ✓ Begin setting up the room at least 30 minutes before the lesson will start, if possible.
- ✓ Set up all activities as much as possible so youth can move quickly from one to the other.
- ✓ Cover large sheets of paper that have directions about later activities until you need them, so youth will not be distracted.
- ✓ Set up the room in a format that promotes group work and creative brainstorming--such as putting chairs in a circle or sitting at round tables.
- ✓ Set up the snack before the lesson starts as much as possible.
- ✓ Set up the snack in the back of the room so youth won't be distracted by the food.
- ✓ Place a large sheet of paper with the lesson name and key words about what the youth will do by the door to welcome youth and introduce them to the lesson.
- ✓ Set aside space for blank sheets of large paper so you can access them easily if needed.



# Ideas for Implementation, cont.

## Managing Time During the Lesson

- ✓ Each lesson is filled with new content and creative activities--be sure to keep an eye on time and be prepared to make decisions about places to expand or cut time for various activities based on your group's interests. For example, some activities allow for more physical activity while others focus on being creative--your group may prefer to spend more time on one type of activity on a given day.
- ✓ Lessons 4 and 7 are quite content heavy--plan ahead for this by adding extra time to these two lessons if you can, or by adding a few more sessions to your entire program schedule and dividing lessons 4 and/or 7 into two sessions.
- ✓ Build in extra days on your program schedule ahead of time, if you can, for padding. This is helpful if there is bad weather and you miss a day, or if your group gets behind in a lesson. If you don't end up needing the extra time, you can use it for extra Big Production sessions.
- ✓ Use a kitchen timer to keep track of time during the lesson. Use a timer shaped like a fruit!
- ✓ Anticipate ahead of time where you may need to reserve more time for your group to have deeper discussion about a topic, and also where questions may arise.
- ✓ Allow youth the time to express themselves and get into deeper discussions on the program topics, even if it means you will lose a little time for an activity--this dialogue among youth is important and creates productive energy and momentum in the lesson activities.

## Managing Group Dynamics

- ✓ Recognize the group dynamics and relationships that are already established in your group and also the strengths and challenges of these dynamics. Tailor the group work to build on the strengths of these dynamics.
- ✓ If cliques form among the youth, separate the groups to keep them from straying off topic and to promote new relationships and ideas.
- ✓ Group together youth of similar ages as much as possible.
- ✓ If problems arise, remind youth of the Working Agreement that they created and agreed to in Lesson 1.
- ✓ Tailor discussions and activities to each specific group of youth to reflect the group's learning style, cultural diversity, interests, and personality.
- ✓ Keep discussions interactive and applicable to youths' lives.
- ✓ Create additional roles to engage youth who need some extra attention, such as helping to take notes on large paper or hand out papers to the group. Oftentimes, young people who are acting out just need a way to focus their energy and will benefit from feeling important to the group.
- ✓ Amend the group format for a particular activity to fit your group's dynamics as needed. For example, if it seems that breaking into small groups will not be productive, keep the whole group together for an activity. Or divide a large group into smaller groups to help the youth work together.
- ✓ Bring a disposable video or still camera for youth to use to capture the mini-productions. (These are available at drug stores for a nominal cost.) This is a good job for some youth to share, can help bring out creativity in the group, and can help youth prepare for the Big Production. Being chosen to record a mini-production is also a great incentive for good behavior.