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# Using Vignettes to Improve Staff Knowledge about Program Quality

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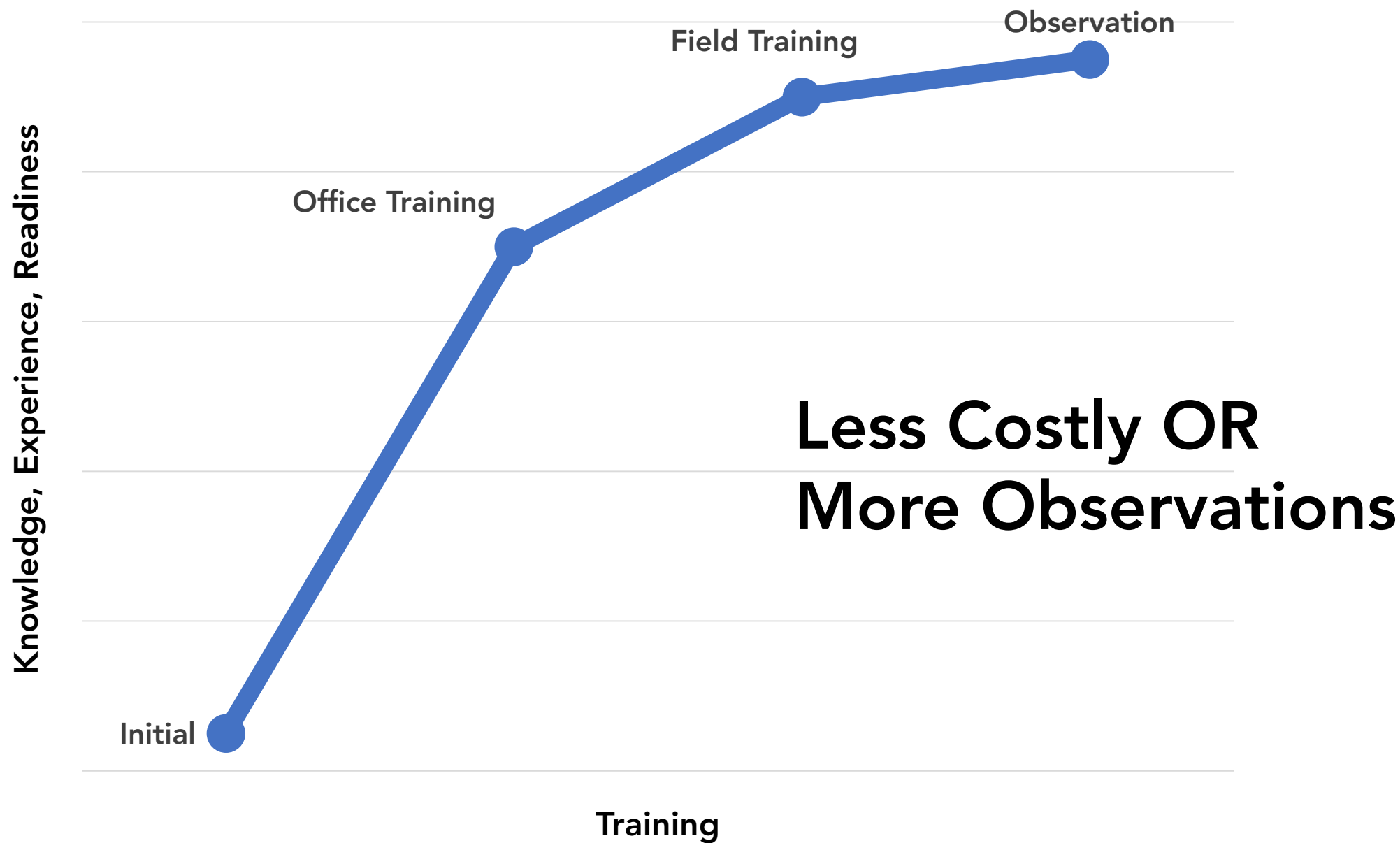
CLAREMONT EVALUATION CENTER  
 Claremont Graduate University











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# Quality Standards for Expanded Learning in California:

*Creating and Implementing a Shared Vision of Quality*

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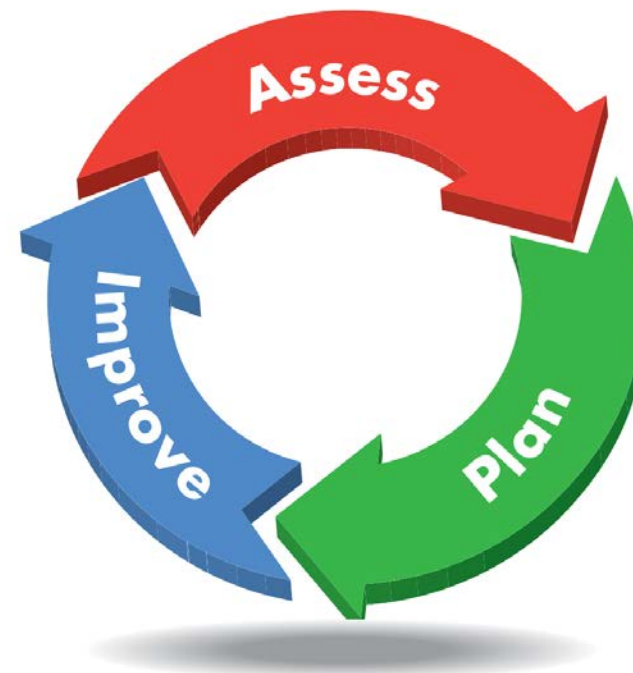


*"This bold initiative provides a road map for improving expanded learning throughout California."*

**– Tom Torlakson**  
Superintendent of Public Instruction

### FINAL RELEASE: SEPTEMBER 2014

Informed by Expanded Learning stakeholders and practitioners, and produced in collaboration between the California Department of Education, After School Division, and the California AfterSchool Network.



**Continuous quality improvement cycle**



**VIGNETTES!**

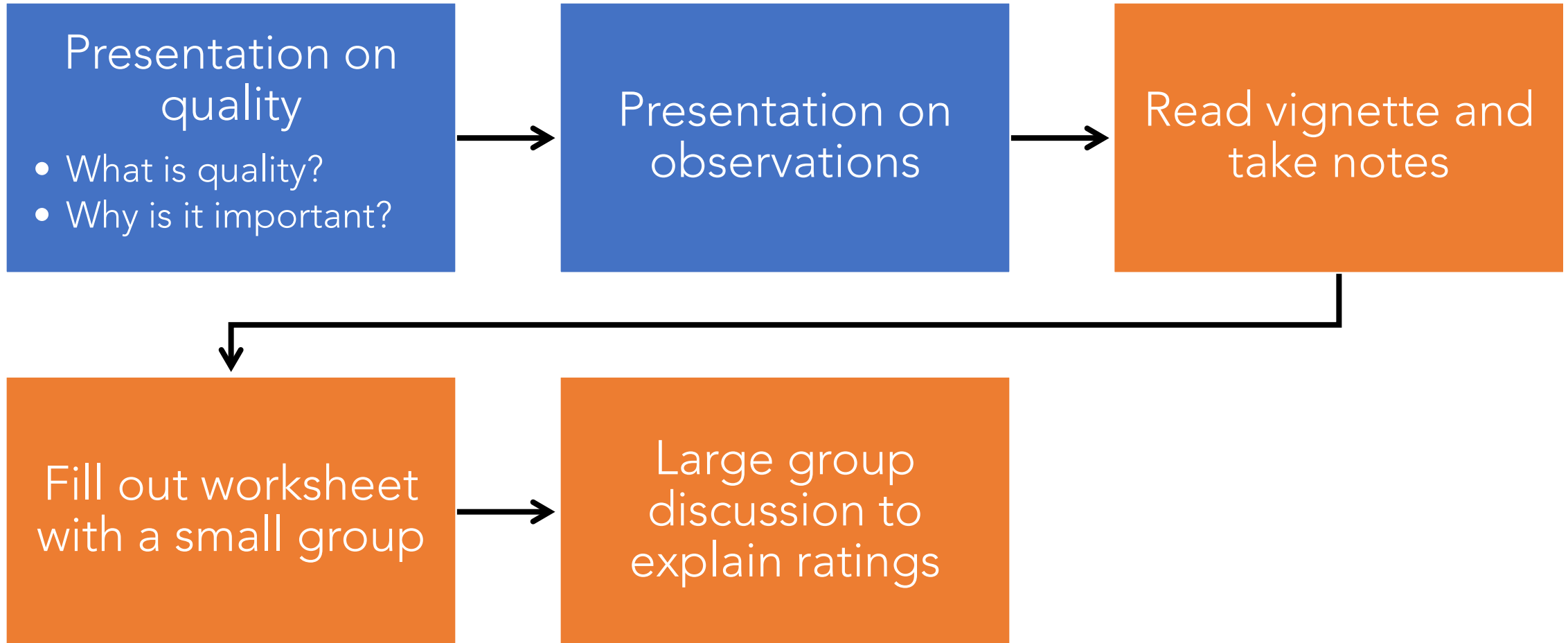
Reading  
Lectures  
Presentations  
Demonstrations



# Vignettes

- short, descriptive literary sketches, scenarios, or stories
- Used as a research methodology in a wide range of fields
  - Bradbury-Jones, Taylor, & Herber, 2014
- Designed based on multiple years' experience observing their programs
- Designed around the CDE quality standards
- One quality standard was low quality, the rest were moderate or high quality
- Also had activity worksheets

# Vignette Observation Trainings





## Low Capacity Program Staff

## High Capacity Program Staff

## Budding Evaluators

Site coordinators

- mostly college students or graduates

Accountability-driven

Low evaluative thinking

Little experience working directly  
in an evaluation

## Low Capacity Program Staff

- Site coordinators
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Accountability-driven

Low evaluative thinking

Little experience working directly in an evaluation

## High Capacity Program Staff

- Site coordinators
- mostly college students or graduates

Quality-driven

Higher evaluative thinking

More experience working directly in an evaluation

## Budding Evaluators

Low Capacity Program Staff	High Capacity Program Staff	Budding Evaluators
Site coordinators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mostly college students or graduates</li> </ul>	Site coordinators <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mostly college students or graduates</li> </ul>	First and second year graduate students with 0-2 years evaluation training
Accountability-driven	Quality-driven	Quality-driven
Low evaluative thinking	Higher evaluative thinking	Highest evaluative thinking
Little experience working directly in an evaluation	More experience working directly in an evaluation	Range of experiences working directly in an evaluation, but mostly higher than program staff



## Low Capacity Program Staff

## High Capacity Program Staff

## Budding Evaluators

Quality Standard #3: Skill Development	Quality Standard #4: Youth Voice and Leadership
Was this standard addressed in the vignette? <input type="radio"/> Yes / No <input type="radio"/>	Was this standard addressed in the vignette? <input type="radio"/> Yes / No <input type="radio"/>
Did the vignette describe high-quality or low-quality practice? <input type="radio"/> High / Low <input type="radio"/>	Did the vignette describe high-quality or low-quality practice? <input type="radio"/> High / Low <input type="radio"/>
What is the <i>evidence</i> for your rating of high or low quality?	What is the <i>evidence</i> for your rating of high or low quality?

What *specific recommendations* would you give to the staff member to improve on the low-quality standard?

## Low Capacity Program Staff

## High Capacity Program Staff

## Budding Evaluators

Activity Description
Space Appropriate? <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <i>If no, why?</i>
Distractions which interfere? <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <i>If yes, what?</i>
Resources Sufficient? <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <i>If no, youth w/o productively engaged?</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N
Developmentally Appropriate? <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <i>If no, why?</i>
What was the intended goal of the activity? Was this explicitly stated by the staff?
Describe the structure of the activity. What happened? What did the staff and students do?
Strengths
What are at least 2 <u>strengths</u> you observed at this site?
Areas of Improvement
What are at least 2 <u>areas of improvement</u> you observed at this site?
Recommendations
What are at least 2 <u>actionable recommendations</u> you would provide to staff at this site?

<b>1. Safe and Supportive Environment</b>	<b>Rating + Evidence:</b>
<b>Staff practices:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respectful and warm towards students</li> <li>• Building and maintaining trusting, nurturing, and supportive relationships</li> <li>• High expectations for behavior and achievement</li> <li>• Actively encourage positive youth interactions</li> </ul> <b>Student responses:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seek positive relationships with staff and treat staff with respect</li> <li>• Positive youth interactions</li> </ul>	
<b>2. Active and Engaged Learning</b>	<b>Rating + Evidence:</b>
<b>Staff practices:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity is hands-on and cognitively challenging</li> <li>• Activity has a clear purpose</li> <li>• Staff provide youth opportunities to talk about what they are doing and thinking</li> </ul> <b>Student responses:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth are busy and engaged in the activity</li> <li>• Youth discuss the activity</li> <li>• Youth appear to be enjoying the activity</li> </ul>	
<b>3. Skill Building</b>	<b>Rating + Evidence:</b>
<b>Staff practices:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Activity involves teaching a new skill or building on previously learned skills</li> <li>• Provides skill instruction, including demonstration or modeling of skills</li> <li>• Monitor student progress and provide feedback</li> <li>• Encourage higher levels of performance</li> <li>• Ask open-ended questions to the group to extend student learning</li> <li>• <i>HW:</i> Provide youth with structured, developmentally appropriate academic activities if they have no homework</li> </ul> <b>Student responses:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students ask questions to extend their own learning</li> <li>• Students strive for higher levels of performance</li> </ul>	
<b>4. Youth Voice and Leadership</b>	<b>Rating + Evidence:</b>
<b>Staff practices:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide opportunities for youth to make at least one choice on <i>what</i> they will do and <i>how</i> they will do it</li> <li>• Actively encourage youth input, feedback, and opinions, and incorporate it into session plans</li> <li>• Provide youth opportunities to take on leadership roles as mentors or group leaders regardless of age</li> <li>• Provide youth opportunities to work cooperatively as a team or group</li> </ul> <b>Student responses:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth seek out leadership opportunities</li> <li>• Youth provide feedback both to each other and to staff</li> </ul>	

0=Low Quality  
Needs Much Improvement

1=Moderate Quality  
Some Improvement Needed

**2=High Quality  
Little Improvement Needed**

## Low Capacity Program Staff

## High Capacity Program Staff

## Budding Evaluators

Activity Description	1. Safe and Supportive Environment	Notes and Specific Examples
Space Appropriate? <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <i>If no, why?</i>	1. Staff are respectful and warm towards students	
Distractions which interfere? <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <i>If yes, what?</i>	2. Staff build and maintain trusting, nurturing, and supportive relationships with students	
Resources Sufficient? <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <i>If no, youth w/o productively engaged? <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N</i>	3. Staff have high expectations for behavior and achievement	
Developmentally Appropriate? <input type="checkbox"/> Y <input type="checkbox"/> N <i>If no, why?</i>	4. Staff actively encourage positive youth interactions	
What was the intended goal of the activity? Was this explicitly stated by the staff?	5. Students seek positive relationships with staff and treat staff with respect	
	6. Students interact positively with one another	
	<b>2. Active and Engaged Learning</b>	
Describe the structure of the activity. What happened? What did the staff and students do?	1. Activity is hands-on and cognitively engaging	
	2. Activity has a clear purpose	
	3. Staff provide youth opportunities to talk about what they are doing and thinking	
	4. Youth are busy and engaged in the activity	
	5. Youth discuss the activity	
	6. Youth appear to be enjoying the activity	
	<b>3. Skill Building</b>	
	1. Activity involves teaching a new skill or building on previously learned skills	
	2. Staff provides skill instruction, including demonstration or modeling of skills	
	3. Staff monitor student progress and provide feedback	
	4. Staff encourage higher levels of performance	
	5. Staff ask open-ended questions to the group to extend student learning	
	6. Students ask questions to extend their own learning	
	7. Students strive for higher levels of performance	
	8. <i>HW:</i> Staff provide youth with structured, developmentally appropriate academic activities if they have no homework	
	<b>4. Youth Voice and Leadership</b>	
	1. Staff provide opportunities for youth to make at least one choice on <i>what</i> they will do and <i>how</i> they will do it	
	2. Staff actively encourage youth input, feedback, and opinions, and incorporate it into session plans	
	3. Staff provide youth opportunities to take on leadership roles as mentors or group leaders regardless of age	
	4. Staff provide youth opportunities to work cooperatively as a team or group	
	5. Youth seek out leadership opportunities	
	6. Youth provide feedback both to each other and to staff	
<b>Strengths</b>		
What are at least 2 <u>strengths</u> you observed at this site?		
<b>Areas of Improvement</b>		
What are at least 2 <u>areas of improvement</u> you observed at this site?		
<b>Recommendations</b>		
What are at least 2 <u>actionable recommendations</u> you would provide to staff at this site?		

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## Low Capacity Program Staff

Most staff disengaged throughout the process (*Just another thing I have to do...*)

Low implementation of the quality observations in their work

## High Capacity Program Staff

## Budding Evaluators

## Low Capacity Program Staff

Most staff disengaged throughout the process (*Just another thing I have to do...*)

Low implementation of the quality observations in their work

## High Capacity Program Staff

Highly engaged in the process

Higher implementation of the quality observations in their work

Many staff said the vignette training was very helpful in learning about quality and subsequently used the observation rating tool to observe their staff

## Budding Evaluators

Low Capacity Program Staff	High Capacity Program Staff	Budding Evaluators
<p>Most staff disengaged throughout the process (<i>Just another thing I have to do...</i>)</p>	<p>Highly engaged in the process</p>	<p>Highly engaged in the process</p>
<p>Low implementation of the quality observations in their work</p>	<p>Higher implementation of the quality observations in their work</p>	
	<p>Many staff said the vignette training was very helpful in learning about quality and subsequently used the observation rating tool to observe their staff</p>	<p>The vignette training helped inexperienced evaluators learn about the program processes, but not so much about observation processes. Still need more support to be better prepared for their first site observation.</p>





## When to use Vignettes

- You want to discuss quality at organizations
- You can write a realistic and detailed activity scenario
- Training on how to conduct observations
- You don't have access to videos of program activities to use instead



## Value Added from Vignettes

- Reduce the number of trainings for observation staff
- OR increase the number of observations under same budget
- Receive data from site coordinators on program quality (cheaper than external team!)
- Site coordinators had better understanding of program quality

# Questions?

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