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🌀How to Remix PLIX Creative Learning Activities

To remix is to take the original elements of something and change and recombine them to be your own. Here at PLIX, we've expanded the meaning of "remix" to mean making an activity your own.

Because PLIX activities are designed to be open-ended, they are also easily customized and adapted by members of our community. In fact, everything we create is shared under a Creative Commons license!

This guide is intended to help you to remix PLIX activities to fit your context, programming ideas, and community interests.

Context: Remixing Code

In the realm of computer science, programmers are constantly reusing or expanding code written by peers, customizing it for their needs or context.

If you've ever coded with Scratch, you may have noticed the "Remix" button on each project page. It allows Scratchers to expand on what other community members have already created. Remixing does more than jumpstart the creative process; it enables learners to create projects that are more complex (or sometimes simpler!) than those they might have made working by themselves. By using the "Remix" button, Scratchers get a chance to learn how others thought about solving the problem, as they hack the existing code to work just as they envision.



Examples

Here are just five of many ways you can reimagine activities by remixing different activity components.

Paperflatables

Concerned about using heat/irons and melting mylar with younger patrons, Ry Greene and Chris Dorman remixed the PLIX Inflatables activity. Ry (with colleagues in Phoenix) and Chris (in Maine) explored alternative materials. They discovered just using paper and tape could unlock the same types of motion achievable with the original mylar designs, and called these paperflatables.

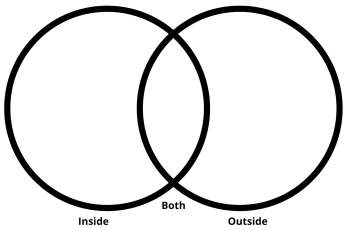
Remix Strategy: Use materials you already have (or can easily get)
Component(s) Affected: Materials lists



Patterns in the Park

PLIX activity prompts suggest a wide range of topics, but you needn't feel limited to them at all. Adapt any activity to incorporate a prompt that, for example, ties into a certain holiday, local event, or even a season. When Chris Dorman was looking for an outdoor activity at the annual summer program, she created a remix of Beautiful Symmetry called Patterns in the Park — which used natural objects as tools for creating customized, symmetrical works of art.

Remix Strategy: Give it a local twist or framing
Component(s) Affected: Project prompts, Example projects



Bugs Among Us

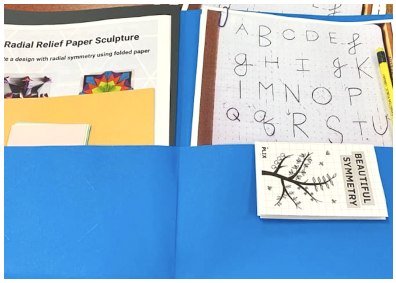
For libraries with smaller staffs, remixing an activity as a drop-in workshop might make sense. Tyler of Cherokee, Iowa liked the PLIX Urban Ecology activity, but wanted to find a way to offer it while on desk duty. Venturing outside to field sites would require additional staff, which his small, rural library doesn't have. In response, he developed the Bugs Among Us remix. It hones in on entomology, and patrons could participate indoors in the library while still engaging with the broader topics/questions explored in the Sorting and Collecting part of the PLIX Urban Ecology activity.

Remix Strategy: Offer drop-in activities that don't require a facilitator
Component(s) Affected: Facilitation tips, Patron handouts



There are several ways to deliver any activity. Most PLIX activities were designed to be completed in-person at a library, but many members of the community have created take-and-make kits (Claudia's Space Food Kit; Jean's Beautiful Symmetry kit), making it possible for patrons to complete creative learning programming from their homes.

Remix Strategy: Prepare Take-and-Make Kits so patrons can take PLIX home
Component(s) Affected: Patron handouts



Some libraries space out the content of the workshop, going deeper more slowly in a multi-week program plan or another workshop model that is not just a 1- or 2-hour engagement (as is typical of PLIX activities).

Remix Strategy: Break it into multiple workshops
Component(s) Affected: Zines, Patron handouts, Project prompts

Other ways of remixing might include engaging local experts to help run a workshop at your library; combining PLIX activities with one another; and tailoring activity content specifically to your community or context.

Use whatever parts you need!

Any and all of the core components of a PLIX activity are open to riffing and adding your own twist (all of the following are remixable!): materials lists, project prompts, example projects, facilitation tips, zines, patron handouts (like pattern cards or troubleshooting guides)

Need inspiration? Check out the remix section on the PLIX activity repository and the remix tag on the PLIX forum for librarian-contributed examples.

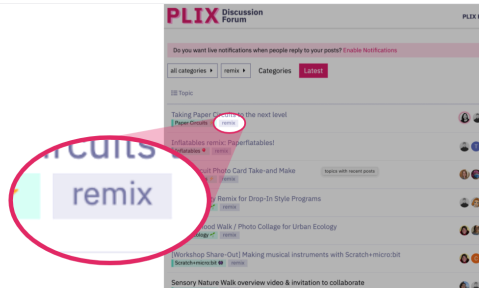
All PLIX materials are licensed under a CC BY SA 4.0 license, which means you can take any pieces of them and change them however you'd like! When you do, it'd help other library professionals if you shared your remixed designs on the PLIX Forum. Be sure to tag it as a "remix."

Slideshows / Table tents / Program plans / Posters / Templates / References / Flyers / Examples / Tweets / Web pages

Don't Change ***Everything***

Of course, there are some aspects of PLIX activity that should remain intact. Consider the PLIX facilitation techniques. Does your design still feel "PLIX-y"? Your remix should allow for peer collaboration, maintain an appropriate technical level, widen the walls, lower the floor, and raise the ceiling of creative possibilities.

Share your remixes



Check out how other librarians have remixed PLIX activities on our community forum. We encourage you to share yours!

No matter how large or small your modifications to PLIX activities are, they are valuable. Your shared experiences encourage other librarians to gain confidence in running an PLIX activity, and feel that it is not only doable, but also enjoyable.

We hope you'll share reflections and resources with other librarians on our community forum, including:



- Notes/reflections on running the program
- Any documentation you've created for the remix (zines, handouts, additional resources, etc.)
- Images or video of the creations in action
- A final "gallery" of projects that came out of the workshop

Learn more!

Take a deeper dive into this topic and read more about what researchers in creative learning have to say about remixing.

- Remixing as a Pathway to Computational Thinking
  by Sayamindu Dasgupta et al.
- New frameworks for studying and assessing the development of computational thinking
  by Karen Brennan and Mitchel Resnick