Evaluation instrument use for camp practitioners: A review of evaluation instruments for a one-week or short-term residential camp context

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Abstract

For camps, designing and executing experiential-based programming, as well as their structure is central to their value of providing opportunities for positive youth development. Those within the camp community, inherently understand this value and see it throughout the many characteristics of camp. However, demonstrating these positive outcomes can produce challenges to camp practitioners. This report presents recommendations for evaluation instrument implementation for interviews, observations, and surveys. Using a one-week or short-term residential camp context lens, this report is able to provide real-world factors and structure that affect and should be considered when implementing an evaluation approach. A brief introduction and purpose of the project is described first, followed by background information on evaluation, and then the description of the report’s camp context lens. From there, each evaluation instrument is generally described, and recommendations stated. These recommendations are meant to provide camp practitioners with a guide in helping them decide which evaluation approach and instrument suits the needs of their camp. In providing recommendations through a specific camp context lens, this report tries to present the information in a way that camp practitioners can use and will aid in demonstrating their camps’ value to their stakeholders, especially in terms of positive youth development outcomes. The report concludes by highlighting some important evaluation implementation points from the paper, as well as a few best practice recommendations for camp practitioners moving forward.
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Introduction and Purpose of the Project

Within many camp settings, programs and activities are designed to focus on experience-based outcomes to achieve positive youth development. However, those positive outcomes do not just occur because youth attended camp; those outcomes must be planned, measured, and then incorporated in future programs (Garst, Browne, & Bialeschki, 2011). It is critical, then that camp practitioners properly use evaluation to assess those embedded experience-based outcomes. For camps to demonstrate they are achieving their goals and objectives; they must conduct evaluations. If camps state they provide value by fostering opportunities for positive youth development, they must obtain evaluation data and results that support these claims. However, a lack of effective translation of evaluation frameworks or methods into program practice is a main concern with planning, implementing, and evaluating positive youth development programs (Arnold & Silliman, 2017). The authors state, “this translational gap between the work of the research scientists and program practitioners leads to an uneven, and in some case incorrect application of the frameworks” (Arnold & Silliman, 2017).

The purpose of this project was to develop a reference for camp practitioners on implementing evaluation instruments, which hopefully will in turn be useful in determining their own camps’ program improvements and positive youth development outcomes. A camp context lens, specifically with a one-week or short-term residential time frame, was used to inform recommendations for camp practitioners. Under these conditions, this report serves to aid to camp practitioners in choosing an appropriate evaluation instrument that best suits their needs. Using this camp context lens allows this report to inform camp practitioners on two points: the highlighting of real-world characteristics and structures that are important factors in the overall
evaluation process and providing information that practitioners can identify that corresponds best with their evaluation needs.

The literature utilized in this report was identified and described through a systematic review of the current literature related to camp evaluation. Full review methods and results of the content analysis are provided in Appendices A-H. Findings were synthesized into this resource in order to minimize this translational gap and other possible errors that may occur with evaluation use by camp practitioners.

**Evaluation Background**

As summarized by Mertens & Wilson (2012), evaluation is an applied inquiry process for collecting and analyzing evidence that culminates in conclusions about the value, significance, or quality of a program, product, or policy. Conclusions made in evaluation contain both that something is the case and about the value of something (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). That value feature of evaluation is what separates it from other types of inquiry. Program evaluation is the collection of information of activities, characteristics, and outcomes of programs to make judgements about the program, improve program effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future programs (Carleton-Hug & Hug, 2010). There are two categories that camps primarily focus their evaluation processes on: program improvement and program effectiveness. Program improvement evaluation focuses on the implementation of the program, including activities, design, staffing, and connection to outcomes, while program effectiveness evaluation focuses on the short-term (outcomes) and long-term (impact) effects of the program (Mertens & Wilson, 2012).

Evaluation purpose focuses on the “why” an evaluation is to be conducted, who needs to be involved (e.g. stakeholders), and what evaluation questions need to be answered (Mertens &
Wilson, 2012). The purpose of evaluation needs to be understood and defined by those implementing the evaluation prior to engaging in evaluation. Camp practitioners need to understand their organization’s mission and goals, their programs, and the desired outcomes the program is designed to obtain. It is up to them to decide on the evaluation’s purpose. Camp practitioners must be intentional when defining the desired outcomes based upon reasonable expectations of their program’s capabilities and their camp context, such as length of time or camp activities, to achieve those outcomes. As Arnold and Silliman (2017) summarize from previous literature, “program theory contains two critical aspects: (a) the program theory of change that articulates the way in which a change is to come about; and (b) the program theory of action that refers specifically to what actions need to happen, at what level of success, for the program outcomes to be achieved.”

If camp practitioners are working with an external evaluator, they need to ensure that there is not a disconnect between the two. Prior to the implementation of an evaluation, camp practitioners and other organizational staff should meet with the external evaluator to discuss the program’s goals and design, desired outcomes, and the overall evaluation plan. When an external evaluator is attentive to the unique characteristics of the program and incorporates these into the evaluation, the evaluation will be more reflective of the people who will eventually use the results (Clavijo, Fleming, Hoermann, Toal, & Johnson, 2005). The external evaluator can provide expertise on evaluation and on comparable programs, which can lead to a more sound evaluation. There should be a collaboration between the professional evaluator and camp staff to assess processes and outcomes from the inside out (Silliman & Shutt, 2010).

“Why are we evaluating?” is a critical question to be answered. Camp practitioners use evaluation to document the value of camp. Camp practitioners need to show their stakeholders
that camp is a valuable use of resources (time, money, staff, etc.). Stakeholders are people who have a vested interest in the program, policy, or product being evaluated and, therefore, have a vested interest in the evaluation (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). Within camp settings stakeholders who serve as decision-making authorities range from Virginia Cooperative Extension (in the case of Virginia 4-H), board of directors, donors, and funders. Stakeholders who are intended beneficiaries of camp programs include campers, parents, and camp staff. Each of these stakeholder groups need to be considered and engaged throughout the evaluation process. However, camp practitioners should take into consideration that most stakeholders are limited in their evaluation understanding. This could be helped by some effort to educate stakeholders on the evaluation process and reasonable expectations of desired outcomes.

Within camp settings, camp practitioners must figure out what evaluation design will measure the programs’ outcomes and impacts in a useful, credible way. Evaluation design includes the evaluation instruments used within an evaluation method. An evaluation instrument, for example a survey, is used to collect data. An evaluation method refers to the entire process including evaluation instruments(s), sample population, data collection, analysis, and results. Practitioners must choose the design that best suits their program and evaluation needs. There are three main evaluation designs that camp practitioners can choose from; quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. Camp practitioners can use quantitative designs to determine the effectiveness of camp through the collection of numerical data, typically achieved by using a survey. The use of quantitative designs to determine an intervention’s effectiveness is to be able to say with confidence that whatever changes that occur in the participants’ behavior, knowledge, skills, or attitudes are the result of the intervention (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). For camp practitioners this is useful as they are trying to find out if the outcomes that occurred
(change in behaviors, skills, etc.) are the result of the camp (intervention). Qualitative designs use evaluation instruments (such as observations & interviews) to identify a cause-and-effect relationship (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). For qualitative methods, trustworthiness of the findings is important. Qualitative data allows the reader to gain an understanding that goes beyond numbers and statistical inference. (Wholey, Hatry, & Newcomer, 2010). Qualitative data can also provide deep insights into how programs work or fail and more compelling accounts of success and failure (Wholey et al., 2010). The third design option is mixed methods, which uses both quantitative and qualitative evaluation instruments. A common practice is to use an embedded mixed-method design where the qualitative data collection is used to support the larger, quantitative data set (Mertens & Wilson, 2012).

Camp practitioners need to evaluate the effectiveness of camp programming by collecting data on possible positive youth development outcomes. Those outcome results should then be used as feedback for program improvement. Within evaluation, camps tend to fall into the Use Branch category, which focuses on a pragmatic approach. As Mertens & Wilson (2012) state, “it makes sense that evaluators test the workability (effectiveness) of a line of action (intervention) by collecting results (data collection) that provides a warrant for assertions (conclusions) about the line of action.” The value of something is a function of its’ consequences, hence camp’s value is the function of its’ ability to promote positive youth development. Camp practitioners believe that participants (campers) have their own interpretation of reality. That personal reality is at the heart of camp programming and structure, designed to elicit those positive youth development outcomes. Camp practitioners then have the luxury of choosing quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods evaluation designs to match their own purposes and needs. This report focuses primarily on qualitative and quantitative designs and the usefulness of a mixed
method approach will be discussed briefly within the discussion section of the paper. In this report, the evaluation instruments of observations, interviews, and surveys are discussed in depth within the focus of a one-week or short-term residential camp context.

**Description of Short-term Camp Context**

The following overview provides the characteristics of and assumptions about the short-term camp context that guided review of published literature and analysis of recommended evaluation tools for camp practitioners. It is based on my experience with 4-H camp that I am drawing from for the report’s camp context. For five years, I was the program director at a 4-H Educational Center that ran 9-10 week-long camp sessions during the summer. I oversaw camp programming, hiring and training of camp staff, implementation of evaluation, and many of the other camp logistics. The 4-H Educational Center was a nonprofit organization that also ran nonformal educational programming year-round both for youth and adults. As the program director, I was responsible for this year-round programming, which gave me a more well-rounded understanding and knowledge base of nonprofit organization operations.

**Purpose of Camp**

Camp’s goals and objectives are focused around positive experiences and developmental growth of youth. Positive youth development promotes healthy youth development by “fostering individual, social, and environmental characteristics—such as positive identity, social competence, and independence” (Thurber, Scanlin, Scheuler, & Henderson, 2007). Youth development encompasses preparing “young people to meet the challenges of adolescence and adulthood by providing supports and activities that contribute to their growth and development” (Henderson, Whitaker, Bialeschki, Scanlin, & Thurber, 2007). Today’s model of youth development
“focus[es] on creating opportunities and developing assets to move beyond simply problem prevention” (Henderson et al., 2007).

Camp Session Time Frame

Camp sessions varying from day camps (campers do not stay overnight on-site) to six or eight-week long sessions. This paper will focus on the one-week and short-term residential session time frames. Short-term residential refers to camp sessions that are less than a week in length and campers stay on-site overnight.

Camp Staff

Camp staff play an important role within a camp setting. Their responsibilities include being instructors, role-models, and sometimes even evaluators, all while experiencing their own personal and professional developmental growth. As summarized by Garst et al. (2011), the most common developmental outcomes derived from camp staff experiences can be described as instrumental learning, which includes social and life skills development, and transformative learning, which describes how camp experiences promote deep change in young adult staff. Typically, camp staff are college-aged young adults (18-24 years old), who were previous campers and decided to be a camp staff member because of their positive experiences at the camp. Camp staff tend to be seasonal staff with staffing changes from camp season to camp season. Some camps have teen leaders (13-18 years old) that are counted on for supervision of campers and other responsibilities. These teen leaders however, tend to be volunteers and change week to week.

Camp Staff Training

Staff training is usually two weeks in length. Within this short time frame numerous topics and training sessions need to be covered including, but not limited to, objectives and goals of the
camp, positive youth development, risk management, and instructor/specialized training (e.g., archery, rifle, challenge course). Inevitably, cleaning, set-up, maintenance, and other tasks to get “camp ready” also find their way into the training schedule. Evaluation is thus squeezed to minimal training time or staff are not trained at all on evaluation.

**Evaluation Capacity of Staff**

As Arnold & Cater (2011), summarized from previous literature, evaluation capacity building (ECB) is defined as an intentional process to create and sustain an organizational culture that routinely conducts and uses the evaluation results and that building individual evaluation capacity alone will not do enough to create quality evaluation practice. Baughman, Boyd, & Franz (2012), summarize that teaching of non-formal educators typically focused on traditional evaluation skills and does not necessarily address using evaluation findings. As with the limited training for camp staff in evaluation, there also tends to be limited capacity of evaluation for camp practitioners. With the seasonal nature of staff and limited training, staff understand at a basic level that camp aims for positive experiences for campers and that evaluation needs to take place to determine these outcomes. In addition, staff might not be involved in the evaluation process (implementing, analyzing, and reporting). Thus, staff instability in these settings may be a barrier to evaluation use (Clavijo et al., 2005).

**Camp Structure**

Camps have well-defined characteristics such as natural settings, experiential learning programming, and certain structural components that might aid in participants achieving experience-based outcomes. Under supervision of adults and staff, youth experience “community living, away from home, and an outdoor, recreation setting” (Thurber et al., 2007). Those support systems can build healthy and positive relationships through caring, social inclusion, and
interactions with peers, adults, and staff. Camps promote a group and social living atmosphere such as group names, language, meal times, and numerous shared spaces, which fosters a sense of community among youth. As youth leave their homes and neighborhoods to enter the camp community, they have the opportunity to leave behind their personal baggage or negative influences, thus camp is an equalizing context (Garst et al., 2011). Camp programming emphasizes experiential learning, which provides opportunities through “the experiential nature of activities, combined with elements of choice, personal interest, skill development, and risk taking, allows structured camp activities to promote positive youth development” (Garst et al., 2011).

**Camp Resources**

With my experience within the nonprofit camp sector, there tends to be limited resources available. Limitations in funding mean that camp practitioners must concentrate on other areas, such as program facilitation, training staff in risk management and facilitation skills, program development, and program marketing rather than evaluation training or external evaluators. There is a low staff to responsibilities ratio, referring to the many “responsibility hats” that camp practitioners must wear and be knowledgeable about. However, this variety can lead to either no expertise in any area or less focus placed on evaluation. On the reverse side, the passion, care, and effort placed on positive youth development of the campers is a top priority and positive resource for camps. There is the desire and want for camp practitioners to determine the achievement of positive youth development outcomes, but there tend to be multiple barriers that limit proper evaluation practices at camps.
Recommendations for Use of Evaluation Instruments

Recommendations for use of interviews, observations, and surveys, based on the short-term residential camp context lens, are provided for camp practitioners. Recommendations are described in detail within each section, which includes a general description and overview followed by implementation considerations. Whether camp practitioners develop their own evaluation instruments or use previously researched and established instruments, they must test it first within their own particular setting. The testing of an instrument and its’ validity at each camp location ensures that the evaluation instrument being used applies to that particular setting.

Interviews

Within a camp setting, engaged staff and the design of experiential programming allows for frequent “checking-in” with campers on their well-being and experiences. Staff “check-in” by asking campers questions on subjects such as activities they are enjoying, having fun, learning or trying new things, friendships, and general well-being. Camp practitioners and staff are searching for constant feedback by executing this informal means of interviewing. This natural interaction with stakeholders (e.g. campers), can include interviewing as part of the data collection process (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). When interviewing moves from that informal interaction into a formal evaluation instrument used in a qualitative design, it can take different forms, including focus group interviews and semi-structured interviews.

Focus group interviewing provides an opportunity to collect data from a large group of stakeholders, limits resource constraints, and can allow for a more free-form administrations that may lead to a larger range of possible outcomes. With camper or staff focus groups, they tend to be already comfortable being around each other and the interviewer, which allows for the possibility of group processing and the building off one another’s ideas leading to those larger
range of possible feedback on the program and its’ effectiveness. Results from focus groups are valuable because they provide insights into the logic and rationale for certain behaviors, how a program is perceived, or the barriers or concerns of stakeholders (Wholey et al., 2010).

Semi-structured interviews are an intermediate approach that falls between the more standardized, mostly close-ended surveys of individuals and the free-form, open-ended sessions with groups pulling elements from both into a distinctive package (Wholey et al., 2010). To take advantage of the benefits of semi-structured interviews, they should be used in situations where a formative program evaluation is needed to be conducted, want to ask probing open-ended questions to individual stakeholders, or to supplement and add depth to other evaluation approaches (Wholey et al., 2010). Camp practitioners should be aware of a few factors when conducting interviews: cultural differences among interviewers and participants, unexpected participant behaviors and responses, interviewers’ own subjectivities and actions, phrasing and questioning, and dealing with sensitive issues (Mertens & Wilson, 2012).

Interview Implementation

During camp, well engaged staff and experientially-designed programming allows for frequent camper interactions and informal interviewing to take place. However, a more systematic design should be implemented to use interviews as a data collection instrument for formal evaluation. As with any sound evaluation tool use, proper training must be provided and completed by those staff members or camp practitioners that will be conducting the interviews and analyzing the interview data. Typically, however, camps do not have experienced evaluation scholars to code and develop interview themes might lead camps to look outside their organization for support if funding resources allow. In Schelbe, Diechen Hansen, France, Rony, & Twichell (2018), an experienced research team included an experienced qualitative scholar, a
doctoral student, and Master of Social Work student. The team coded, developed themes, and completed the analysis. In another study, trained coders were employed during the analysis process for testing the reliability of coding and consistency of category development (Wright, John, Alaggia, & Sheel, 2006).

In terms of how the interview data is collected, a proper medium and appropriate timing needs to be considered. That medium could be an in-person or by phone call interview, but it must be feasible given the camps’ and stakeholders conditions. In Richmond, Sibthorp, & Wilson (2019), the authors used a phone call, semi-structured interview approach as they were collecting data from camp alumni that were living in locations across the United States. With staff interviews, they should be conducted at the conclusion of each camp session or as soon as possible, allowing for an in-person approach. Staff interviews can be either approached as a focus group, semi-structured, or both depending upon the time availability and the need for a more in-depth examination of initial findings, and they can be incorporated into the exit interview or as a separate process. Schelbe et al. (2018), conducted semi-structured staff interviews mostly within a week of the conclusion of camp. The authors wanted to gain a wide range of responses and asked focused questions on staffs’ perceptions on the impact of camp and development of youth.

When interviews include parents and/or campers, a focus group approach may be the most effective for use in a camp setting. It is nearly impossible for camp practitioners to use a semi-structured approach with every parent when a camp population ranges from 100-200 campers. Focus group interviews minimize time constraints and resources needed for data collection. Focus groups tend to be conducted in locations that are convenient and familiar to the participants, while also not pushing for the group to reach consensus or discover a single solution.
but to gather the range of opinions and experiences (Wholey et al., 2010). For example, in the study by Cryan & Martinek (2017), they conducted teacher focus group interviews at the school and prior to their weekly teachers’ meeting. Cryan & Martinek (2017), also used the teacher interviews as an external, not involved in the program, data collection source as they wanted to examine the teachers’ perceptions of the program by any transference of the program principles into the classroom. Camp practitioners and staff use parents’ perceptions about their campers to achieve this additional, external data collection source. Interviews can be a valuable evaluation tool that can collect data not just from those involved in the program but also from external stakeholders, which can provide a wider range of outcomes and perceptions of the programs’ effectiveness. Interviews provide support and conformation of outcomes reported from other evaluation instruments like observations and surveys.

Observations

In addition to the frequent “checking-in” with campers that occurs within a camp setting, camp staff are constantly observing campers’ behaviors, attitudes, and skill development. This observational habit from camp practitioners and staff stems from a camp’s mission and goals that tends to be inherently passed down through previous camper experiences and intentional training of staff. As stated earlier, the goals of camps are focused around positive youth development; that focus is communicated to staff during training, in role modeling from camp practitioners and experienced staff, as well as program design. However, in order to move from that informal realm of assessing and monitoring, a more formalized plan should be implemented to utilize observations as an evaluation data collection instrument. For starters, good practice is that camp practitioners or staff should not use observations unless they are properly trained in administering that observational instrument, the program being evaluated, and the program’s
desired outcomes desired. As Wholey et al., (2010) states, “a good working knowledge of the subject under study is necessary so that you are familiar beforehand with the various possibilities that may be observed.” Camp practitioners know their programs, which is essential for quality observations.

Observations can be documented via checklists or field notes; both include some indicators that practitioners will need to keep track of when using this evaluation instrument. Mertens & Wilson (2012) summarized from previous literature a list of these indicators such as; the program setting (e.g. physical environment), any behavioral change from the beginning to the end of the program (e.g. verbal, nonverbal, or body language), and based on prior knowledge and expectations, what is not happening that might have been expected. Camp practitioners and staff, because of their authoritative positions at camp, have access to observe camper behavior in a variety of settings such as; archery class, meals, or during swim periods. Observed behaviors can be interpreted in different ways and practitioners need to be aware of how their authoritative position can influence their access to the observational context, what they choose to record in their observations, and how people in that context interpret their own behaviors (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). Observations are inherently subjective because they rely on human sense to document conditions, so questions about reliability and accuracy of the results come into question, especially in program evaluation (Whooley et al., 2010). A well-designed, clearly defined observation instrument, combined with effective quality-control procedures can minimize the subjective nature of the results, ensuring reliable results (Whooley et al., 2010).

Observation Implementation

Camps’ designed structure allows for the practitioners and staff to observe campers through experiential programming, supervision responsibilities, and supportive relationships.
However, to utilize observations as a sound evaluation instrument, systematic procedures need to be put in place to obtain the desired information. In ACA (2005) each camp participating in the study chose a staff member to attend a full-day training at a national or regional American Camp Association (ACA) conference on how to administer the checklists and surveys (used also in the study). Thurber et al. (2007), a study that implemented the observational instruments used in ACA (2005), all staff using the checklists watched a training video on how to complete the instrument. Training took place over a three-year period in the study by Silliman & Shutt (2010), where staff received progressively more training each year in administration and incorporation of the observational checklists.

Use of an observation evaluation instrument should be integrated into the normal routine of programming and does not disrupt the natural flow of camp. Camp practitioners must designate within that natural flow of camp time for staff to conduct observations. In a study aiming to compare before and after camp, observations were conducted within 24 hours of campers arriving at the beginning of the camp session (pre-camp), in addition as post-camp checklist was completed on the final day of the camp session for each camper under the staff’s direct supervision (Thurber et al., 2007). In some cases, within a camp setting supervision structure, such as Virginia 4-H Camp, there are approximately 200-300 campers during a week-long camp session with around 20 camp staff and 20-30 teen and adult volunteers in which the teen and adult volunteers act as direct supervision inside the cabins. In this case, camp staff do not have specific cabin groups under their direct supervision, so completing an observational checklist for each camper would be quite logistically difficult. But within these circumstances, staff could conduct observations during class time, recreation periods, campfires, meals, and other camp life activities.
In Silliman & Shutt (2010), staff used observational checklists within archery and canoeing to assess campers’ development in outdoor and life skills. Using such classes as archery, where skill development is directly observed and measurable and is likely a realistic achievable outcome during a short-term camp, can provide valuable results that can provide support to those larger positive youth development impacts. The direct observation of behavioral change or skill development can also be used for support and confirmation of outcomes reported by use of quantitative instruments. In Thurber et al. (2007) and ACA (2005), the observational instrument was designed to assess the same four developmental domains that were used in the camper and parent surveys. That development in tandem provides congruency between evaluation instruments, which in turn provides further trustworthiness and validity to the outcome results.

Another way to implement observations is through using field notes. Field notes should be conducted by the camp practitioner or an experienced staff member who is well versed with the camp programming. In Cryan & Martinek (2017), field notes were compiled by the program director after consultation with program staff at the conclusion of each session. Field notes have the ability to provide a rich, detailed narrative of the program, which again can provide additional qualitative data for program improvements and effectiveness. Two final points about observational implementation that camp practitioners should consider are: (1) observations can be conducted at a high occurrence rate, which can lead to a more responsive and flexible evaluation and (2) practitioners should be observing staff as well. Both of these considerations aid in the overall execution of a camps’ evaluation purpose, program improvement and program effectiveness. The study by van der Mars, Timken, & McNamee (2018) provides a great example of a systematic evaluation method that practitioners can use in observational data on camp staff.
The study is focused on physical education teachers being observed but the observational checklist instrument and method can be augmented for practical use within a camp setting.

*Surveys*

As stated earlier, camp practitioners have the ability to choose between a quantitative or a qualitative design for their evaluation. I have described the two main qualitative instruments (e.g. interviews and observations) above; the main quantitative instrument used within camp settings are surveys. Survey designs include simple descriptive designs, which occur at a single point in time with the purpose of gaining a descriptive picture of a group on targeted characteristics (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). Survey designs can include open-ended questions that elicits qualitative data, but primarily include close-ended questions such as, rating scales to generate quantitative data. Open-ended questions in surveys allow for a wide range of answers from participants, as they get to the answer the question in whatever way they choose, leading to qualitative data. Close-ended questions in surveys are determined in advance to measure the outcomes desired, to obtain that numerical, quantitative data. For camps that design their programming around an experiential focus and positive youth development for the campers, surveys are an efficient way to elicit self-reporting of campers’ own experiences and developmental growth. Listening to program beneficiaries and other stakeholders is frequently necessary to evaluate program delivery and outcomes, this information can be captured reliably and efficiently through surveying. (Wholey et al., 2010). Surveys can be conducted relatively quickly, and responses can be collected from a large group of stakeholders.

There are multiple stakeholders involved with camp; campers, parents or guardians of those campers, and camp staff. Each of these stakeholder groups have their own perceptions of the camp experience and the possible occurrence of positive developmental growth. Surveys, as
opposed to interviews and observations, might be the only feasible way a camp can engage certain stakeholder groups (e.g. parents). A camps’ program goals, resources, evaluation purpose, and the ability to implement an evaluation instrument, will determine which stakeholder group(s) they focus their evaluation on. Camp practitioners need to decide what outcomes they want to obtain, and which stakeholder group is the best to capture this information from.

**Survey Implementation**

Surveys tend to be frequently used within camp settings for evaluation. There are survey instruments that have been researched, developed, and tested however, typically camp practitioners are implementing surveys that are used year after year or handed to them by supervisors without knowledge of development and/or testing history. Camp practitioners should consider using or pulling questions from a researched survey instrument that best fits their programs’ needs. In Sibthorp, Bialeschki, Morgan, & Browne (2013), the Youth Outcomes Battery (YOB) instrument was developed and tested over a six-year period including using current literature for outcome conceptualization and pilot-testing the instrument. The YOB focused on campers, using an in-depth instrument that included eleven camper outcome constructs designed to elicit campers’ beliefs about the effect that camp had on their development (Sibthorp et al., 2013). Guion & Rivera (2006), researched the literature that conceptualized 4-H life skills, which lead to ultimately adapting the life skills from the Texas 4-H evaluation instrument and those life skills with the highest level consensus from Extension 4-H Agents were included into the Life Skills Improvement Scale. The authors provide an illustration of their researched survey instrument in the study’s paper. The 4-H youth club members were surveyed to measure their perceptions of their improvement in life skill areas from their involvement in 4-H clubs (Guion & Rivera, 2006).
If camp practitioners decide to develop their own surveys, they should be aware that there are recommended key steps of survey development. Mertens & Wilson (2012), lay out these steps as follows: (a) clarify the purpose of the survey, (b) determine the appropriate format for survey administration (print, telephone, in-person, or web-based) and for the survey questions (open- or closed-ended), (c) construct a draft instrument, (d) pilot-test the draft instrument for both content and process, (e) make revisions as necessary, and (f) implement the final survey version. Pilot-testing the instrument allows camp practitioners to gauge if the survey is measuring the outcomes desired. This pilot-testing stage enables feedback from stakeholders on the survey and where improvements need to be made to the survey. Once the developed survey is measuring the outcomes desired, the final version can then be implemented. The ACA (2005) study pilot-tested the early versions of the surveys at multiple camps in order to find the combination of questions that reliably measured camper’s growth. To ensure consistent implementation of the final survey version, the research protocols were field-tested at various camps (ACA, 2005). In Silliman & Shutt (2010), over a three period the study sought to develop multiple instruments for the evaluation process. The camper survey, Youth Program Climate (YPC), used PowerPoint slides and infrared remote clickers to measure best practice program traits like safety, positive social norms, and belongingness (Silliman & Shutt, 2010). In the first year of implementation, camp staff feedback provided insight into areas of improvements and concerns leading to the survey’s final implementation in the second year (Silliman & Shutt, 2010).

The YOB instrument was implemented once using a post-camp survey (Sibthorp et al., 2013). In Guion & Rivera (2006), the survey was administered once at a regular 4-H club meeting. Each of these studies used surveys as a single point in time design. The use of this
design is limiting, as it only represents responses at a specific moment, excluding the possibility to capture a more well-rounded picture of developmental growth. Moving past a single point in time survey, camp practitioners should consider a time series design. This type of design includes multiple data collections, allowing for continuity of outcomes and responses that can indicate a better trajectory of behavioral change. This can be accomplished by the use of pre-, post-, and six-month follow-up camp surveys (ACA, 2005, Thurber et al., 2007, & Henderson et al., 2007). Each of these studies also included data collection on the perceived developmental growth from the campers’ parents or guardians for additional support of the results. It is important that camp practitioners ensure there is a relationship link between the camper and the parent/guardian. This linkage allows for direct comparison between the campers’ perceived growth and their parents’ perception of their campers’ growth. A different approach of surveying campers was taken by Richmond et al., (2019), in that they surveyed camp alumni, these alumni had attended camp in their youth. The study used a retrospective format to assess the role of camp in developmental outcomes and the importance of these outcomes in their current adult daily lives (Richmond et al., 2019). Camp alumni can be a valuable source of data and add further evidence to the importance of camp in the positive development of youth into adulthood.

Camp staff are central to the overall experience of camp. Being able to assess their experiences and developmental growth can only benefit camp practitioners when it comes to decisions on program improvement and effectiveness. In Silliman & Shutt (2010), camp staff completed a pre- and post-camp survey assessing their skill development growth. At the end of the camping season, staff also completed responses to the Influence of Camp Experience Survey to determine their perceptions on the influence the camp experience had on their developmental growth (Silliman & Shutt, 2010).
Camp resources are essential to consider in determining the survey implementation method and analysis of the data. Mailing surveys is a possibility for implementation because they are relatively inexpensive, a complete list of addresses is usually obtainable, and they can yield less response bias with sensitive questions (Whooley et al., 2010). In the typical evaluation context (e.g. on-site at camp), campers might be inclined to answer in a more positive and desirable manner, which can make it challenging to determine what growth actually occurred. Removing campers from that camp setting, could elicit a more accurate determination of developmental growth. Mailing surveys are also the most practical if including parents in the data collection method. For in-person surveys, it is important that camp practitioners build time in the schedule at the beginning and the end of the camp session; this can ensure full participation of the camp population. As discussed previously, camps do not typically have experienced data analysts on their staff. If funding resources allow, camps might want to consider looking outside their organization for support with data analysis. In ACA (2005), an outside research firm collaborated with ACA’s research committee in analyzing the study’s data. In regard to Virginia 4-H, Virginia Cooperative Extension has researchers and experts, Extension Specialists and Virginia Tech University faculty, that analyze the survey data, which they then provide the results to the camp practitioners. Used properly, surveys are a valuable evaluation instrument that can capture stakeholders’ perceptions of their experiences and developmental growth.

Discussion

Evaluation of camp programs and outcomes has increasingly become a high priority for camp practitioners. The need to demonstrate the value of camp to their stakeholders results in camp practitioners undertaking an evaluation process even if there is a lack of understanding,
knowledge, capacity, or resources available. Camp staff state that their programs and activities, which are designed around an experiential-based focus, provide the opportunity for positive youth development. Then, this leads to the necessity of camp practitioners to conduct evaluations to obtain data and results that support these statements.

Camp practitioners are the ones who must know their organization’s mission, programs, and the desired outcomes, so it is critical that camp practitioners decide an evaluation’s purpose before implementing the evaluation process. Camps typically focus their evaluation processes on program improvement and program effectiveness. Within any data collection process, obtaining negative results is a possibility. In order to turn these negative results into opportunities for program improvements, many camps utilize debriefing and reflection strategies for camp staff. Incorporating regular debriefing sessions of camp practitioners with camp staff can provide additional insights on the evaluation process and camping program, as well as opportunities for staff to understand their role within the bigger picture of a camp’s mission. As Silliman and Shutt (2010) stated, during weekly debriefing sessions, staff noted observations enabled them to see their activities in the context of the larger goal and know what to look for and nurture during contacts with campers, thus for both campers and staff the process of action and reflection reinforced practices of positive youth development. Sound evaluation will include a feedback loop, where new information about program effectiveness feeds back into program improvements. Camp practitioners have the ability to choose between quantitative and qualitative designs for their evaluation. This report focused on interviews and observations within qualitative designs and surveys within a quantitative design. These three evaluation instruments typically are the most used within camp settings for evaluation.
Camp practitioners, like most non-formal educators, may be responsible for some or all of the program evaluation process including evaluation planning, evaluation implementation, reporting, and use (Baughman et al., 2012). Once camp practitioners decide on their evaluation’s purpose and design, implementation is the next step. This report provided recommendations on the implementation of three evaluation instruments; interviews, observations, and surveys.

A few overarching points were raised that apply across the instruments. First, staff training is critical. All three instruments require that staff are trained prior to the administration and data collection process. If there is not someone on staff within the organization that has the knowledge level necessary for training on an evaluation instrument, they should consider attending an ACA conference, reaching out to local universities, or an outside agency to aid in implementation training. Organizations should provide additional training opportunities for staff on topics such as latest thinking on evaluation designs, questionnaire design, working with program personnel, or effective presentation of evaluation results (Wholey et al., 2010). Second, camp practitioners must designate time either within the camp sessions or immediately following the conclusion of a camp session for instrument implementation. This can range from integration into the normal camp routine when using observations to the use of surveys on the final day of a camp session. If data collection includes other stakeholders such as parents/guardians or staff, then camp practitioners must be aware of the time commitments for both them and the stakeholders outside of the camp session. Time is a major limiting factor when it comes to evaluation, especially within a one-week or short-term residential camp session. Camp practitioners need to carefully take into consideration how much time commitment is required for each of the evaluation instruments. Third, analyzing the data collected and reporting results correctly may lead camps to look outside their organization to external resources. Typically,
camps do not have analysis experts on their staff, so as funding resources and cost permits, camps would be wise to turn to an outside agency such as a research firm (there are a few that work specifically with camps) or a local university for data analysis. If camps spend the time and resources to go through the evaluation process, in order to demonstrate their value to their stakeholders, it is imperative the evaluation data collected is analyzed and reported properly and in a manner that highlights those positive youth development outcomes. Storage and confidentiality of results data must be considered as well by camp practitioners. All stakeholders involved in the evaluation process (campers, parents, staff, etc.) are entitled to reporting their results in confidence, which must be maintain throughout the process, including the storage of the results. Most camp organizations, especially those involving youth, have policies on the storage and confidentiality of participant records and evaluation results should be included within these policies. Finally, each instrument can be used to collect data from multiple stakeholders. This option allows camp practitioners the opportunity to gather perceptions and additional outcomes across the stakeholder landscape. Involving numerous stakeholders in the evaluation can only benefit the camp in demonstrating those experience-based outcomes.

In this report, recommendations on each evaluation instrument were presented in their own separate section. However, as camp practitioner’s evaluation capacity grows, the next logical step is to combine evaluation instruments into a multi-method evaluation approach. This can be highlighted by an example of survey limitations. Surveys do not involve direct observation of the behavioral change to confirm that what participants say is actually what happened (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). However, when surveys are combined with observational checklists in the evaluation, this multi-method approach provides observational data that supplements and supports the data collected by the surveys. A campers’ skill development is
directly observed using the checklists, which supports their self-reported skill development on the survey. Camp practitioners would be adding depth to the data collected, which in turn adds strength to the results reported and support for possible positive youth development outcomes.

Limitations of the Project

This project did have its’ limitations. First, it is focused around a specific, one-week or short-term residential camp context lens. The recommendations suggested are not meant for a one-size fits all approach and is limited in its’ scope. Camps that differ in their camp session length such as day or multi-week camps might not be able to incorporate a few or all of the recommendations. Second, the project focused on three evaluation data collection instruments; interviews, observations, and surveys. There are multiple other data collection instruments that can be used, as well as varying implementation strategies for each instrument. The project focused on the most frequently used evaluation instruments and possibly most feasibly implemented within a camp setting. In addition, this report does not provide an exhaustive list of recommendations for implementation of each instrument. Lastly, there are many other things to be aware of within evaluation including outcomes measured and whether or not the evaluation instrument is measuring what it is supposed to measure. This project focused on evaluation instrument implementation, not on other evaluation factors needing to be considered. Usually there are assumptions that accompany evaluation measures and the ability of evaluation methods to produce desired outcomes like social or individual competencies. Camp practitioners should take into consideration that further review of literature is necessary to gain a deeper understanding of these assumptions, as well as descriptions of the evaluation process.
Conclusion

This project resulted in recommendations for camp practitioners for use in their own evaluation process and instrument implementation approach. Given the camp context lens of the report, camp practitioners are able to relate their own camps’ needs to the recommendations provided, enabling them to make sound evaluation implementation decisions. The report, in addition to providing recommendations, also presented the case for further training of staff, resource consideration, and developing evaluation capacity that camps must be aware of when engaging in evaluation.

The role of camp staff within a camp setting is vital, as they are on the front-line to facilitate the camp’s goals and objectives, implementing various programs and activities, and may perform evaluation. Organizations need to understand camp staffs’ important role within camp setting, while also understanding the limiting capacity of resources, evaluation knowledge, and the seasonal nature of camp staff. It is recommended that camp organizations focus on refining resources, training, coaching, and support for camp staff as a top priority for continued improvement of programs and evaluations (Silliman & Shutt, 2010).

Camps would be wise to invest in evaluation capacity building within their organization. This notion highlights the need for evaluation capacity within the whole organization from camp director and practitioners to seasonal camp staff. A three-part framework for EBC including professional development, resources and support, and organizational environment outlines use for organizations (Arnold & Cater, 2011). Building an organizations’ evaluation capacity provides camps with a stronger foundation of support for their pursuit of demonstrating their value to stakeholders, as they then may be able to state more confidently that their programming and overall camp experience produces positive youth development outcomes.
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doi:/10.1002/ev.170


doi:/10/18666/TPE-2017-VA74-I1-6901


Appendix A: Systematic Review Methods

Through this study’s methodology, systematic review methods were used to provide a comprehensive review for use by non-formal education practitioners, primarily in camp settings. In order to ensure relevant literature was examined, search strategies were developed. These strategies included a search review approach, search strategy builder, and inclusion and exclusion criteria. Using the Education Research Complete database with the search host of EBSCO, literature was found based upon their title and abstract. EBSCO search criteria was not limited to a specific time period or only peer-reviewed journals. The rationale was not to limit the initial search scope of relevant literature. Utilizing the search strategy builder resource (Appendix B), concepts were used to search for occurrences within paper title, abstract, subject, or keyword. The first two result pages from each concept in the search strategy builder, with each page accounting for twenty papers, were scanned. Those papers whose abstracts matched the inclusion criteria (Appendix C) were selected for a more comprehensive review, which included a thorough read of each paper. Twenty-two papers were found to match based upon their abstracts. Upon further review of these twenty-two papers, only eight were found to match the inclusion criteria, thus included in this study. Also, reference sections of each of the twenty-two matched papers were scanned for other potential papers. Of this additional reference scanning, fourteen papers were found to match based upon their abstracts, with two matching the inclusion criteria and included in this study. A pragmatic approach to the review meant no restrictions on types of study (qualitative and quantitative) were made during the more comprehensive search (Brettle, 2003).

A qualitative data analysis was used throughout this study. This enabled all types of studies (qualitative, quantitative, or multi-methods) to be analyzed, regardless of their type as each study
contain sources of qualitative data (Onwuegbuzie, Leech, & Collins, 2012). Content analysis was conducted on the ten papers included in the study using pre-determined parameters for coding the characteristics of each study (Appendix D). These parameters ensured continuity throughout the review process. Additionally, open coding of evaluation methods and designs was conducted in order to capture the range of evaluation instrument use reported in the literature.
Appendix B: Search Strategy

Search Strategy Builder:

- **Concept 1:**
  (evaluation OR assessment) and (education OR youth development) and (non-formal OR informal)

- **Concept 2:**
  ("evaluation") and ("youth development") and ("non-formal" OR camp OR after-school OR outdoor)

- **Concept 3:**
  (evaluation) and (positive youth development OR youth development) and (camp OR summer camp)

- **Concept 4:**
  (evaluation) and (youth development) and (non-formal)
Appendix C: Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Inclusion Criteria:
- Studies conducted in a non-formal education setting.
- Studies contain/report evaluation methodologies or design.
- Studies contain non-formal or youth development programs/activities.
- Studies report youth development outcomes.
- Studies conducted on youth (ages 5-17 years old).

Exclusion Criteria:
- Studies that do not report youth development outcomes.
- Studies not conducted in non-formal education settings.
- Studies with evaluation methods not applicable to non-formal settings.
- Studies that do not report evaluation methodologies.
- Studies conducted on adults (ages 18+ years old).
Appendix D: Content Analysis Parameters

Content Analysis Parameters:

- Non-formal Education Setting
  - Camps
  - 4-H, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, YMCA, etc.
  - After-School
  - Outdoor or Environmental Education
  - Mentorships
  - Community-based programs (sports, etc.)

- Types of Evaluation Methods
  - Variety of methods, techniques, and designs reported in the literature

- Positive Youth Development Outcomes Measured
  - Social Competencies (Making friends, Peer relationships, Teamwork, etc.)
  - Individual Competencies (Self-confidence, Leadership, Responsibility, etc.)
  - Environmental Competencies

- Year of Publication
  - 2004-2019

- Participant Demographics
  - Youth Ages (5-17 years old)
  - Either single or multi-ethnicity
  - Either single or multi-gender
Appendix E: Researcher Reflexivity

Through my own experiences, which is close to ten years as an environmental educator and program director (at a 4-H Educational Center), I have firsthand observed positive youth development within camp, environmental/outdoor education, and other non-formal settings. I have been on both sides of the equation, as a front-line educator and as a program administrator developing, implementing, and training staff. Intuitively, I assumed camp provided valuable opportunities and support systems for positive youth development. However, like many other camp practitioners I struggled to evaluate those positive youth developmental outcomes.

My first experience with evaluation was using a survey method that involved a pre-survey and post-survey of overnight and day field trips. These surveys were geared toward school curriculum outcomes that were taught during the field trips but also included a few questions on environmental awareness. As far as positive developmental outcomes, they were not top priority in this evaluation. However, this first experience allowed me to learn about evaluations and grow my different levels of understanding. I started by just handing out the surveys and moved to editing and creating new questions on subsequent surveys. Then, once I moved into an administration role as program director, I utilized a couple different evaluation tools to evaluate the Center’s programming. Youth surveys were still more frequently used for positive youth development outcomes, but staff observations and surveys and parent surveys were also utilized. In working for the Center, I had access to Virginia Cooperative Extension’s research-based survey evaluation for youth to be used during camp. This extensive youth survey sought to evaluate multiple positive youth development outcomes, including various life skills of individual and social competencies. However, I was only involved in the handing out of the surveys and not in any other aspect of the evaluation process. As a camp practitioner, I found
incorporating staff observations and surveys allowed me to gain a deeper insight into programmatic logistics and possible positive youth developmental outcomes. Staff are on the front-line of facilitating camp programming and assessing possible youth development, so it made sense for me to gain their insight for possible program improvements and any youth developmental growth. I found that by using that specific camp context when reviewing the literature, it has been helpful in my understanding of evaluation and future evaluation use.
Appendix F: Results

Ten papers were reviewed and included in this report. A few papers focused on a single evaluation instrument for data collection, while others combined instruments for a more multi-method approach (Appendix F: Figure 1). Each paper’s evaluation approach was focused on youth developmental outcomes. These papers encompassed a range of uses and approaches for three evaluation instruments; interviews, observations, and surveys. I consolidate the individual (Appendix F: Figure 2) and social (Appendix F: Figure 3) competency outcomes into the ten most frequently described in the papers, while only two types of environmental (Appendix F: Figure 4) competencies were described.

Appendix F: Figure 1. Describes the different evaluation instruments included in the study. It displays how many papers utilized each evaluation instrument approach.
Appendix F: Figure 2. Describes the ten individual competencies that were found throughout the papers included in this study. It displays how often each competency was reported.
Appendix F: Figure 3. Describes the ten social competencies that were found throughout the papers included in this study. It displays how often each competency outcome was reported.

Appendix F: Figure 4. Describes the two environmental competencies that were found throughout the papers included in this study. It displays how often each competency outcome was reported.
# Appendix G: Overview of Papers Included in Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Papers</th>
<th>Program Type</th>
<th>Evaluation Instrument</th>
<th>Positive Youth Development Competencies Measured</th>
<th>Publication Year</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does camp make a difference? Camp Counselors' Perceptions of How Camp Impacted Youth.</td>
<td>Arts &amp; Athletics Day Camp</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>Relationships (Staff &amp; Peer), Self-Esteem, and Confidence</td>
<td>2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statistical Testing of a Measure of Youth's Perceived Improvement in Life Skills</td>
<td>4-H</td>
<td>Youth Surveys</td>
<td>Leadership, Conflict Resolution, Citizenship, Decision Making, Problem Solving, Set Goals, Public Speaking, and Life Skills</td>
<td>2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study Title</td>
<td>Methodology</td>
<td>Data Collection</td>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Year</td>
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Appendix H: Expanded Summary of Papers Included in the Study
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>Program or Study Description</th>
<th>Evaluation Capacity</th>
<th>Who was Being Evaluated?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does camp make a difference? Camp counselors' perceptions of how camp impacted youth.</td>
<td>The five-person research team, composed of all women, led by an experienced qualitative scholar, served as the faculty advisor of the camp and supervised the head staff member who scheduled the events and oversaw the camp. None of the research-team were associated with the camp outside of the evaluation. Other team members included a social work doctoral student, a MSW graduate student, and two undergraduates. The doctoral student possessed experience in qualitative methods and research. The graduate student had practice experience working with youth. One of the undergraduate students had previously worked at summer camps.</td>
<td>Eleven camp staff participated for the two years the study was being conducted. Staff were students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs at Florida State University College of Social Work (hosting the Arts &amp; Athletics Camp). All the staff were women and majority of them had social work backgrounds.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Validating, Norming, and Utility of a Youth Outcomes Battery for Recreation Programs and Camps</td>
<td>This study collected data from both residential and day camps. For Battery A Outcomes, 22 camps completed the YOB subscales. Thirteen were residential, six were day, and three included both day and resident participants. For Battery B Outcomes, 17 camps completed the YOB subscales. The camps were residential, two were day camps, and five camps included both day and resident participants. The study does not specify time length of the residential camps, whether they are a week in length or longer.</td>
<td>The study does not specify details on the research team and their evaluation knowledge and experiences. The authors of the paper of the study are an associate professor, director of research for ACA, and two assistant professors. The authors do state acknowledgment of generous support from the ACA in conducting this study.</td>
<td>Youth from both residential and day camps, 10-17 years old. Youth ranged in their ethnicity, were majority female, and had an average of two years attending their particular camp.</td>
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<td>Statistical Testing of a Measure of Youth's Perceived Improvement in Life Skills</td>
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<td>Youth members from numerous Florida 4-H clubs participated in the study. The evaluation instrument was administered during a regular 4-H club meeting. The study does not provide details on the number of times youth completed the survey instrument, however the instrument itself does clarify that youth are to answer the survey based upon the past years' club experience. The study also does not specify 4-H club details such as frequency of club meetings or number of clubs youth members participated in.</td>
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<td>The researcher surveyed the literature that conceptualized 4-H life skills, with life skills from the Texas 4-H evaluation instrument (based on the Hendrix model) being adapted for use in the instrument. Then nine Extension 4-H Agents (across Florida) were asked to select life skills that their 4-H programs target. The items with the greatest level of consensus were chosen for inclusion. The authors of the study are an associate professor from the Department of Family, Youth, and Community Services and from the Department of Education, College of Education at the University of Florida. Face and content validity of the instrument was assessed by a panel of experts. The six-member panel included three Extension Specialists, two faculty members in Schools of Education, and one Extension Evaluation Specialist.</td>
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<td>Youth participants were 126 members of Florida 4-H clubs ranging from 7-17 years old. Majority of the members were female (36% were male and 64% were female), from a variety of ethnicities, and ranged from 7-18 years old. The youth averaged 13.8 years of age and had been 4-H members for an average of 4.7 years.</td>
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The Soccer Coaching Club program was a six-week, after-school program that met two afternoons per week for approximately two hours/session. Participants were all male youth, 11-12 years old. The program met at a public school using the school’s large front lawn for playing soccer and other physical activities, as well as team-building activities were included. The Teaching Personal and Social Responsibility Model (TPSR) was used as the program’s framework for positive youth development through sport.

The program director served as the principal investigator, who had significant coursework in the TPSR model. The program director was a long-time youth coach and youth athletic program administrator and experience working with diverse populations. Six college students (from same university that the program director is a faculty member from) served as program staff. Program staff brought a variety of skills and backgrounds including playing college soccer and working at youth sports camps. The program staff received two classroom sessions on the TPSR model.

Youth that were surveyed were male sixth grade students (ages 11-12) of a low-income middle school in central North Carolina. Classroom teachers recommended students who exhibit risk behaviors, with an initial pool of 50 students. A group of fourteen participants were defined as regular attendees, meaning they participated in at least half of the program sessions. Program staff were consulted for observation field notes data collection and a summative survey on their own perceptions. Classroom teachers of the participants were interviewed postprogram. The classroom teachers were sixth grade middle school teachers.
### Parental Perceptions of Youth Development Outcomes

Two sets of selection criteria were used for camp participation within the study. All camps were ACA accredited. The first criteria set included day or residential status, camp sponsorship categories, and gender served. The second set included camps of varying duration length, camp size, primarily purposes of camp, and ages of campers. A total of 92 camps participated in the two-year study. About 57% of the camps reported that the one-week session was their most popular. But 12% stated the 6-8 week session was most popular. Only one seventh of the participating camps were days, while residential made up the remaining six sevenths of camps. Close to half of the camps indicated they serve a camp population size between 100-200 youth.

The study does not provide details on the research team and their evaluation knowledge and experiences. The authors of the study are associated with North Carolina State University, Philliber Research Associates, American Camp Association, and Phillips Exeter Academy. The study does state that the authors previously developed the camper questionnaire, which is what the parent evaluation instrument was developed in tandem with. For the camps, once they agreed to participate in the study, their cmap staff recieved training in data collection. The study does not specifically describe the training, number of sessions, length of training, or how the training took place.

Parents of youth campers that attended ACA accredited camps over the two-year study. Data was not collecting on the parents but the study did link all data analysis to the camper in the family who was involved. From the information reported about the participating camps, the study suggests that the parents reflected middle-class, primarily White families.
Youth Developmental Outcomes of the Camp Experience: Evidence for Multidimensional Growth

<p>| Selection of participating camps were first derived by choosing only ACA accredited camps. The study used a matrix based on (1) camp type [resident or day], (2) sponsorship category, (3) gender served, (4) session length [one, two, three, or four or more weeks]. A total of 80 camps participated in the two-year study. Close to 57% of camps offered one-week camp sessions, 31% offered 2-4 week camp sessions, and 12% offered 6-8 weeks. About 71% of the participating camps were residential, while 29% were day camps. Camps that did participate in the study received a $700 reimbursement to defray the administrative costs for the research. | The authors of the study have youth development and research experience. Thurber is full-time faculty at Phillips Exeter Academy and received his PhD in clinical psychology. His research includes homesickness, youth camping, and developmental psychopathology. Scanlin is Executive Officer for Research at the American Camp Association. Her major research includes youth development outcomes and program improvement in youth organizations. Scheuler Whitaker is a Senior Associate with Philliber Research Associates. Her primary research includes youth development and program evaluation. Henderson is a professor at North Carolina State University and a current member of the ACA Board of Directors. Validity of the constructs was established through confirmatory factor analysis and examination and revision by an advisory panel of seven expert researchers in the field of child development. As for the participating camps, the study describes only a four-hour training workshop on research design and questionnaire administration. Camp staff also watched a training video on instructions and explanation of the observational checklist evaluation instrument. | Youth surveyed were 8-14 years old and attended an ACA accredited camp. Parents of those youth were also surveyed. The study describes in detail the types of participating camps but does not provide much information on the campers and parents that were surveyed. |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Directions: Youth Development Outcomes of the Camp Experience</th>
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<tr>
<td>Selection of 80 ACA accredited camps from across the United States, took part in the final version of the study. These camps included day and residential camps, one-week and multi-weeks, co-ed and single gender camps, private, nonprofit, and for profit camps, as well as religiously and non-religiously-affiliated camps. Camps selected contained 57% having one-week sessions, 31% having two to four-week sessions, and 12% having six to eight-week sessions.</td>
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<td>Data was collected and analyzed by an independent research group, Philliber Research Associates. The study also had a Research Committee, Advisory Committee, and other researcher coordinators that were associated with universities, the ACA, and other youth development organizations. Each camp that participated the study chose a staff member to be the on-site research coordinator. This staff member attended a full-day training at a national or regional ACA conference to understand the purpose of the study, how to administer surveys and checklists, and how to enlist the cooperation of campers and families.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Community-based Arts Program for Youth in Low-Income Communities: A Multi-Method Evaluation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Youth participated in a 9-month community-based arts program. The program was a 90-minute art session held after-school, twice a week, for a total of 74 sessions. To overcome barriers to participation, materials, snacks, and transportation to and from the program site were offered free of charge. Visual and media arts curriculum was focused on skill development and social goals that increased in complexity and challenge but achievable for youth. Participants were 9-15 years of age, were located in low-income communities, and represented both urban and rural areas.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Each program site the art sessions were conducted by a lead instructor, tow to three assistants, and an on-site research assistant. The study does not provide specific details on the research team and evaluation capacity of those implementing and performing the evaluation. The authors of the study are affiliated with School of Social Work, McGill University and Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto. During the interview analysis process, trained multiple coders were employed for testing of interrater reliability on coding and consistency of category development. The research design was a three-year longitudinal study evaluating community-based arts programs in five sites across Canada.</td>
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</table>

<p>| Campers from the selected camps ranged from 8-14 years old, with an average age of 11 years. Majority were girls at 68%. The camper pool ranged in ethnicity. Parents of the campers also were surveyed. The study does not specific demographic details regarding the parents. |
| Youth were 9-15 years old, from low-income communities across urban and rural areas and reflected cultural and regional diversity of Canada. Youth's parents were surveyed and interviewed as well. |
| Weaving Evaluation into the Fabric of Youth Development | Using a selected camp facility, a sample of the diverse camping groups included 4-H Junior Camp (JR), Operation Military Kids (OMK), and a special audience camp, Fur, Fish, and Game (FFG) was used. Each of these camps were a week-long duration, residential camp. Two impact areas, outdoor skills and life skills, one environmental factor, and a youth program climate were assessed. Outdoor skills included archery and canoeing (JR and OMK) and hunter safety and wildlife knowledge assessments (FFG). The youth program climate assessment took place at the end of the camp session. The study become woven into the fabric of camp life over a three year period. | The study's authors are associated with North Carolina State University within the Department of 4-H Youth Development and Family &amp; Consumer Sciences. In the first year, the authors developed and trained staff to complete checklists on outdoor skills and manage youth self-assessments of life skills (pre/post) and program climate (post). Camp staff received more training in the second year. The third year, experience were able to blend observations, checklists, individual contacts, and debriefing conversations in the natural flow of programming. The camp director and several experienced staff worked together to coach newer staff. | Campers participating the study were 10-15 years old, included both boys and girls. All campers attended one of three different camps that were residential and week-long in duration. Camp staff also were also evaluated, no specific details on camp staff were provided in this study. |
| Understanding the Role of Summer Camps in the Learning Landscape: An Exploratory Sequential Study | The study's sample included alumni from 22 camps across the United States from camps accredited by the American Camp Association (ACA). A stratified sample was selected from a list of volunteers collected by the ACA to include a balance of alumni from residential overnight camps, day camps, religious affiliated camps, specialized camps for participants with particular needs, and camps serving low-income participants. For Phase 2, participants were recruited through an online panel provided by the research firm Qualtrics. Participants had to meet the specific inclusion criteria. The types of camps attended by the participants were 31% day camps, 43% overnight camps, and 26% both day and overnight camps. The study does not provide specific details on the evaluation capacity of the authors. However, each author is associated with a university and seem to be the ones who executed the evaluation process. Interviews were analyzed by two researchers, but no details on these two researchers. The study does utilize a research firm, Qualtrics, during the quantitative design Phase 2 process to recruit participants and ensure equal representation of male and female respondents. | Camp alumni participants were young adults 18-25 years old, had attended camp for at least three weeks as a camper, and who currently did not work at a camp. Fifty-two percent identified as female, the majority identified as White but overall participants ranged in their ethnicity. Of the participants, 99% held a high school degree and 81% had some college. On average, participants were seven years removed from their last camp experiences and 13.4% reported they had participated in a counselor-in-training or leader-in-training program. |</p>
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<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>How was the Evaluation Tool Used?</th>
<th>Why did the Study Perform an Evaluation? (Program Purpose)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Does camp make a difference? Camp counselors' perceptions of how camp impacted youth.</td>
<td>Within a month following the conclusion of camp, semi-structured interviews were conducted. The interview questions focused on camp staffs' perceptions on the impact of camp development of youth over the course of the week. Four of the interviews conducted with two staff and three conducted with individual staff. Interviews were digitally audio recorded and then transcribed verbatim by research assistants. Two research team members independently developed original codes, representing commonly occurring subjects within the transcripts. Team members then used NVivo 11 software to develop a series of themes. The research team then organized and determined relationships between themes. Analysis was completed when the research team reached a consensus on the themes and relationships among them.</td>
<td>The day camp was intended to expose youth to various arts and athletic activities, as well as elements of post-secondary education in order to promote positive youth development. The study looked at camp staff perceptions of the impact of camp on youth during the week to better understand if camp made a difference. How does the camp staff perceive that camp contributes to positive youth development? What were the pathways to positive youth development that occurred at the day camp?</td>
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Over a six year period, the Youth Outcomes Battery was created and tested. The YOB is currently in its second printing, which contains eleven subscales of a youth self-reporting instrument. The eleven subscales are: Friendship Skills (FS), Family Citizenship Behavior (FCB), Responsibility (RESP), Independence (IND), Teamwork Skills (TW), Perceived Competence (COMP), Affinity for Exploration (AE), Affinity for Nature (AN), Problem Solving Confidence (PSC), Camp Connectedness (CC), and Spiritual Wellbeing (SWB). The YOB was broken into two instruments, Battery A and Battery B. Battery A included six outcome subscales (FCB, COMP, RESP, IND, TW, & PSC). Battery B included four outcome subscales (AE, AN, CC, and FS). The SWB outcome was added only in the second year of data collection. Camps were invited to participate in the study during the summers of 2010 and 2011, with all camps being ACA accredited not-for-profit camps. Each camp was asked to provide a minimum of 100 completed questionnaire batteries. The basic response format was used for this study, campers indicated along a 5-point scale the extent to which particular skills decreased or increased. Camp Connectedness (which does not exist prior to camp) was measured using a 6-point scale. Original data analysis was conducted by SPSS, then the use of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) using AMOS 18 assessing validity. Two separate CFAs were conducted as Battery A and Battery B were completed by different youth. Each subscale was inspected by Lagrange multiplier tests to identify correlated errors within subscales.

Through a comprehensive effort, the purpose of this study was to establish normative data and provide further evidence of the construct validity and reliability for the YOB. There is an increase in accountability necessary for youth programs to document outcome achievements and developmental growth. The YOB is a reliable evaluation tool that includes eleven subscales relevant to positive youth development. The YOB is a customizable outcome evaluation tool designed for youth programs and can be tailored to the program’s needs.
### Statistical Testing of a Measure of Youth's Perceived Improvement in Life Skills

The Life Skills Improvement Scale is a self-reporting survey instrument designed for perceived increase in life skills development by 4-H youth. The instrument included four subscales (Leadership, Basic Life Skills, 4-H Animal Projects, and Workforce Preparedness). The instrument consists of a 5-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Participants and their parents that participated signed informed consent forms and no compensation was provided for participation. The instrument was administered during a regular 4-H club meeting.

Cronbach’s alpha (numerical coefficient of reliability) was used to test the reliability of the Life Skills Improvement Scale. The coefficients range from 0 to 1, the higher the score the more reliable the scale is. An alpha above 0.80 is generally accepted as a level of internal reliability.

Exploratory factor analysis was conducted on the instrument using Principal Component extraction and Varimax rotation to determine the total variation in the data. The Kaise-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measures of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity were used to determine the suitability of the relations among variables.

The purpose of the study was to test the validity and reliability of a scale designed to measure youth's perceived improvements in life skills resulting from their involvement in 4-H clubs. A critical part of 4-H Youth Development is the ability of Extension Agents to coordinate program inclusion of life skills and their outcomes from the evaluatin process. The Life Skills Improvement Scale provides an instrument Extension Agents can demonstrate the effectiveness of their 4-H Club Program in improving life skills among 4-H youth.
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<tr>
<th>Youth Sport Development Through Soccer: An Evaluation of an After-School Program Using the TPSR Model</th>
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<td>Youth surveys, pre-and post-surveys, were used as the primarily quantitative data collection tool by way of the Personal and Social Responsibility Questionnaire (PSRQ). This is an instrument that measures TPSR constructs including respect and self-control, effort and participation, self-direction, and caring and leadership. The PSRQ uses 14 questions formatted in a 6-point from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The response were grouped to measure the two major factors of TPSR model: social responsibility and personal responsibility. Personal responsibility includes respecting the rights and feelings of others and helping others and caring (Level 1 &amp; 4 of TPSR). Social responsibility includes effort and participation and self-direction (Level 2 &amp; 3 of TPSR). Observation field notes conducted by the program director with consultation of program staff was organized into a detail program narrative sorted by the Person-Social Responsibility Themes categories of the Tool for Assessing Responsibility Based-Education (TARE), integration, transfer, empowerment, and teacher-student relationship. Finally, use of postprogram focus-group interviews with participants’ classroom teachers (10 teachers). Interviews were open-ended questions focusing on transference (Level 5 of TPSR) of the program's principles into the classroom.</td>
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<td>The TPSR model usse physical activity to teach values or life skills. The model includes a series of levels the participants work through, each building on the other. The levels create a pathway of progression for participants. The study sought to establish fidelity and immediate outcomes in terms of the TPSR model. Are the principles of the TPSR being implemented with fidelity? The use of qualitative field notes was used to help determine this question. Are the students exhibiting learning of the TPSR principles, including respect, effort and participation, self-direction, and helping and caring for others? The PSRQ youth surveys, field notes, and postprogram interviews with participants' classroom teachers were used to help determine this question.</td>
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### Parental Perceptions of Youth Development Outcomes

Parents completed surveys at a pre-, post-, and six-month follow-up time frame. The evaluation instrument was developed in tandem with the camper survey, which was also administered on the pre-post-, and follow-up basis. Four domains common in the literature served as the basis of the surveys: positive identity, social skills, positive values and spiritual growth, and thinking and physical skills. Initial versions of the survey were pilot tested and field tested with parents. The final survey consists of a 52-Likert type items with an overall reliability of 0.92, measuring ten constructs within the four domains. The Cronbach's alpha reliability scores are for all ten constructs were in appropriate range. Camp staff mailed camper and parents precamp surveys along with permission forms to selected households. One parent was asked to complete the survey. Postcamp surveys were also mailed to campers' households after the camps session ended, with parents being asked to complete the survey after they had the opportunity to observe their child's attitudes and behaviors (approximately one month). The study does not specify procedure for the six-month follow-up.

The study set out to examine parents' perceived changes of youth in the ten youth development constructs related to leadership, positive values and decision making, positive identity, making friends, spirituality, environmental awareness, social comfort, independence, peer relationships, and adventure & exploration. The study also wanted to determine the relationships between parents and camper perceptions and descriptions of parents provided about youth's changes they noted.
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<th>Youth Developmental Outcomes of the Camp Experience: Evidence for Multidimensional Growth</th>
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<td>The authors designed, piloted, validated, and field-tested a customized evaluation instrument over three camp seasons. The final version was named Camper Growth Index-Child Form (CGI-C), which consists of 52 items that youth response based on a 4-point Likert scale. Each construct (Self-Esteem, Independence, Leadership, Friendship Skills, Social Comfort, Peer Relationships, Adventure &amp; Exploration, Environmental Awareness, Values &amp; Decisions, and Spirituality) had a moderate level of reliability based on their Cronbach’s alpha scores. Parents also completed a customized evaluation instrument, CGI-P, that mirrored the CGI-C. Camp staff completed the Staff Observational Checklist (SOC) for each of the participating campers under their direct supervision. The SOCs included the same four domains as the surveys (Positive Identity, Social Skills, Physical &amp; Thinking Skills, and Positive Values &amp; Spirituality). The checklist was a 16-item list and was to be completed after they were with the campers for 24 hours (pre-) and one day prior to the end of the camp session (post-). The survey procedures involved the administration of a pre-, post-, and six-month follow-up survey for both campers and parents. The precamp surveys were sent to selected households about four weeks prior to start of camp and included consent forms, a cover letter describing the study, and a $2 bill for an incentive for survey completion. The postcamp surveys were only sent to households that sent back completed precamp surveys and a $5 bill was included. Campers completed their postcamp surveys at the final day of camp and parents completed them two weeks after their child returned home. Both campers and parents completed the six-month follow-up surveys.</td>
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<td>The study hypothesized that participation in a week or more of organized day or residential camp would result in growth in all four domains (Positive Identity, Social Skills, Physical &amp; Thinking Skills, and Positive Values &amp; Spirituality), as reported by parents, camp staff, and campers themselves. Accredited camps typically possess the essential components of a positive youth developmental delivery system: challenging opportunities in the context of supportive relationships, with elements of agency and temporal arc.</td>
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A pilot-test was initially done on early versions of the survey at 19 camps. The surveys were then field-tested at another 23 camps before creating data collection training videos and research workshops. Using the final version of the surveys, invitations and permission forms were sent to families of participation camps, along with the pre-camp surveys at approximately four weeks prior to camp. The pre-camp surveys were about 50-items long and asked children and parents to rate how much they agreed with statements about ten constructs (Self-Esteem, Independence, Leadership, Friendship Skills, Social Comfort, Peer Relationships, Adventure & Exploration, Environmental Awareness, Values & Decision, and Spirituality). A $2.00 bill was included as incentive. Each camp staff member completed an observational checklist within 48 hours of the campers arrival. A post-camp survey was used, on the last day of camp, campers completed this post-camp survey nearly identical to the pre-camp. Staff also completed a post-camp observational checklist. Parents completed a post-camp survey a week or so after their child returned home, every family was also sent a $5.00 accompanying the survey. Then six-months following camp, a follow-up survey was sent to the families, for both campers and parents to complete. Again, each family was paid $5.00 as an incentive. Using factor analysis, were able to use the statistical technique to choose questions that overlapped as little as possible from the four developmental domains (Positive Identity, Social Skills, Physical & Thinking Skills, and Positive Values & Spirituality).

The ACA is committed to all camper's growth and development and measuring how camps tap that potential is an integral part of ACA's mission. By studying camps' impacts and campers experiences, ACA can provide parents with knowledge on their child and to offer opportunities for powerful lessons in community character building, skill development, and healthy living. ACA wanted to understand how camp enrich the lives of children to help build a better tomorrow for all.
Youth and parents completed questionnaires before the start of the program, every three months during the program, and a six-month follow-up for a total of five data collection periods. The study used the terminology of "standardized behavior checklists," which included observational and outcome measures. All measures used in the survey instrument were selected from the National Longitudinal Survey on Children and Youth (NLSCY). Research assistants also collected observational checklist data six times, twice per term, during the program measuring participants' behavior such as participation, art skills development, prosocial skills development, and task completion. Upon completion of the program, interviews were conducted with youth and their parents for qualitative results supporting the quantitative measures. A total of 30 interviews were conducted across the five program sites. Fifteen youth were interview selected by those with above average attendance rates, with the parents of each selected youth also interviewed. An interview guide was developed by the principal investigator and pilot-tested. Following the pilot-test, semi-structured interviews were conducted at each site, the Long-Interview method was employed and is well-suited for multifaceted processes. All interview were videotaped and/or audio-taped and transcribed verbatim. A line-by-line micro-analysis was used in a five-stage procedure were data was scanned, edited, refined, and reassembled. A coding framework was developed and then the transcribed interviews were imported into N*Vivo software. Themes were reviewed until agreement was reached.

The study reported on an evaluation of the National Arts and Youth Demonstration Project (NAYDP). The NAYDP was created to: (a) determine if community-based arts organizations can recruit, engage, and sustain youth from low-income communities, (b) assess the youths' progress in terms of artistic and social skills development, (c) if community-based arts programs have demonstrated positive results in improving psychosocial outcomes such as conduct and emotional problems, and (d) explore the perspectives of the youth and parents who participated in the program.
Staff checklists on outdoor skills, youth self-reports on life skills (pre & postcamp), and a youth program climate survey (postcamp) were utilized. Campers were given daily time to write in a journal. Each camper was assessed by their cabin staff using a retrospective post-then-pre Life Skills Observation Checklist and journal. The checklists consisted of eight skills: listening, conflict resolution, building friendships, new adventures, independence, connecting to nature, practicing camp traditions, and leadership. Near the end of the camp session, a 30-item Youth Program Climate (YPC) survey using PowerPoint slides and infrared remote clickers. The YPC focused on best practices including safety, support, positive social norms, belongingness, skill-building, self-efficacy, and synergy. Camp staff self-assessed their own competencies before and after the camp season with the Camp Staff Skills assessment. Fifteen competencies representing communication, leadership, teaching, and management skills. An additional fifteen items were administered to camp staff to assess perceptions of the Influence of Camp Staff Experience on factors ranging from desire to help others and career choice. The camp director also completed individual observations on staff skill growth using the same scale. Data scales were analyzed using SPSS-PC, Version 16. Informal notes from weekly staff debriefing conversations were examined for key themes to gain additional insights.

The study wanted to be able to, using the Empowerment Evaluation approach framework, to integrate evaluation with the educational and relational processes in a residential youth camp. This plan used various evaluation tools to clarify the camp's mission, positive youth development through outdoor and life skills programming, and engage staff and campers in annual and weekly "taking stock" and iterative planning activities.
For Phase 1, a qualitative data collection instrument of semi-structured interviews were used to identity outcomes that be highly attributable to camp and important on daily life. Interviews were conducted by phone and were recorded, transcribedm and then coded independently by two researchers using descriptive, axial, and focused coding that identified themes and connections among these themes. The coding resulted in 18 outcome areas. The qualitative stage then informed instrument creation and quantitative data collection and analysis for Phase 2. A survey instrument was designed. A panel of youth development experts reviewed the retrospective questionnaire for content validity, ensuring it accurately measured the intended constructs. The questionnaire was then piloted using 173 undergraduate students, the participants offered feedback on question clarity and response options. The questionnaire was then further improved. The final instrument consisted of questions in three main areas: (a) 10-point rating scale assessing the role of camp in developing these outcomes, (b) 10-point scale assessing the importance of learning outcomes in everyday life, and (c) participants identified the primary setting for developing each outcome (camp, home, school, work, organized sports, church, or other). The survey instrument also included a set of six open-ended questions for qualitative responses. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. First, means were calculated in each outcome area for camp’s role in development and important in everyday life. Second, means were then plotted along two axes. Two cut-points were established for each dimension. This process resulted in four quadrants.

The purpose of this study was to identify learning outcomes that are high attributable to camp participation and to determine whether these outcomes are considered important in everyday life. A related purpose was to identify other learning settings that may contribute to learning outcomes often associated with camp participation. Three main questions were set out to identify: (1) which camp-related outcomes do camp alumni identify as highly attributable to the camp experience as compared to other camp-related outcomes, (2) which camp-related outcomes are identified as highly important to everyday life as compared to other camp-related outcomes, and (3) Among camp alumni who identified given camp-related outcomes as highly attributable to their camp experiences, what was the primary learning setting for that outcome-camp, home, school, work, organized sports, church, or other setting?

The study set out to examine what former camp participants believed they learned at summer camp and identify which of these outcomes remained most salient into adulthood.
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<tr>
<th>Study</th>
<th>What Results did the Study Report?</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Does camp make a difference? Camp counselors' perceptions of how camp impacted youth.</strong></td>
<td>The study found three main pathways for positive youth development, relationships youth formed, a &quot;safe space&quot; for youth to explore activities, and the physical location of the camp on a university campus. Both relationships formed among youth, with peers and staff, promoted growth. It contributed to youths' increased willingness to participate in activities and created positive role-modeling of healthy relationships. The &quot;safe space&quot; attribute help to build youths' self-confidence as it promoted an environment of safe risk taking and freedom to learn. The physical location on the university campus provided an opportunity for youth to envision themselves attending a university. Camp staff believed youths' self-confidence and self-esteem increased as a result from those various pathways. Camp staff stated they saw a growth in youths' developmental over the week-long day camp. The camp activities were important in the youths' development. Overall, camp did make a difference and impacted youth positively.</td>
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<td><strong>Validating, Norming, and Utility of a Youth Outcomes Battery for Recreation Programs and Camps</strong></td>
<td>Battery A outcomes exhibited excellent reliability, however while there was substantial evidence for both convergent validity and reliability, the Battery A outcomes may not be distinct. From this study, it is not clear that youth are able to discern the subtle differences in these constructs. Only FCB seemed to be distinct from the others. It could indicate an issue with the way the items were constructed or it is possible that the camp experience is holistic and youth gain an overall perception of positive or negative effect from camp, which universally influences self-perceptions. Battery B outcomes exhibited excellent reliability as well. It seems more likely that Battery B outcomes are more distinct than those in Battery A. There was evidence for both convergent validity and reliability for most of the subscales, however CC failed to meet the criteria for convergent validity. Overall reliability and convergent validity of the YOB were supported, while discriminant validity was only partially supported from the study. The subscale means (over 3 for all subscales) represented perceptions of growth while at camp and supported current literature on the positive developmental potential of the camp experience.</td>
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<td><strong>Statistical Testing of a Measure of Youth's Perceived Improvement in Life Skills</strong></td>
<td>Results from the KMO and Bartlett's test indicated highly acceptable and statistically significant relationships among variables. The overall Cronbach alpha reliability for the 19-item instrument was 0.88, suggesting highly reliable. Three of the four subscales, Leadership, Basic Life Skills, and 4-H Animal Project, were found to be highly reliable. The four subscale, Workforce Preparedness was only moderately reliable. The results indicate that the Life Skills Improvement Scale is a valid and reliable measure of youth's perceptions of their improvement in life skill areas resulting from their 4-H involvement. The scale can be used with both formative and summative evaluations.</td>
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<td>Youth Sport Development Through Soccer: An Evaluation of an After-School Program Using the TPSR Model</td>
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<td>The program director's field notes provided a rich narrative description of the program. TPSR themes were integrated into the activities allowing the participants to foster a sense of ownership and teamwork to foster within the program. Participants showed empowerment by taking responsibility for resolve own disputes and by selecting own activities. The program provided a positive staff-participant relationship environment. A significant increase was demonstrated by the PSRQ in social responsibility (respecting the rights and feelings of others and helping others and caring). For personal responsibility, the PSRQ showed there was no significant difference. The teacher interviews reported transference was occurring into the classrooms by instances of improved behavior in the classroom. Participants were displaying improved confidence and their relationships with other students from the program. The qualitative data collection tools reported there was significant and consistent applications of the TSPR principles and many instances of participants demonstrating their learning through their behaviors in the program.</td>
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<th>Parental Perceptions of Youth Development Outcomes</th>
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<td>The study reported that in comparing the precamp to postcamp surveys, parents perceived statistically significant increases for each of the ten constructs. The effect sizes were modest but strongest in areas of positive identity, independence, making friends, peer relationships, and adventure &amp; exploration. In comparing the pre-, post-, and six-month follow-up results showed that increases in positive identity, leadership, peer relationships, positive values &amp; decision making, and spirituality from pre- and post-surveys were maintained or improved after six months. Nine of the ten constructs decreased from postcamp to follow-up, with only adventure &amp; exploration falling below the precamp baseline. Leadership was reported as having the highest gain from precamp to six-month follow-up. Camper responses were moderately correlated to parent responses on the ten constructs. Campers only reported increase changes on the precamp to postcamp surveys in five constructs: self-esteem, independence, leadership, friendship skills, adventure &amp; exploration, and spirituality. An open-ended question section was included in the parent postcamp surveys. About 70% of parents reported their children were &quot;different&quot; because they gained more self-confidence or self-esteem by going to camp. Overall, the study showed that parents perceived their child changed positively from the beginning of a camp session to the end of camp in all ten constructs. These positive changes remained relatively stable into the six-month follow-up. The study indicates that parents believe their child demonstrated growth as a result of the camp experience.</td>
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The pre- to postcamp survey results comparison indicated that campers’ reported a statistically significant growth, on average in seven of the ten constructs. Peer relationships showed an effect in the negative direction. Parents’ reported statistically significant growth in all ten constructs. When comparing the pre-, post-, and six-month follow-up results, campers self-reported the gains achieved at camp were mostly maintained. In the case of Independence, Leadership, Social Comfort, and Peer Relationships there were additional gains over the postcamp levels. As well as some of the constructs having regressions to precamp levels. Parents’ reported the gains achieved by their child were mostly maintained. With Leadership showing additional gain from postcamp levels and multiple constructs showing regression to precamp levels. Camp staff reported their campers showed statistically significant growth in all four of the developmental domains. The findings fit nicely with the theories of Positive Youth Development that predict multidimensional growth from a sustained, engaging experience in an environment of supports and opportunities. The study demonstrates, a nationally representative sample of at least one-week camp session duration may provide, to some degree and for most children, the essential ingredients for positive youth development.

In comparison between the pre- and post-camp surveys, campers reported significant increases in six of the ten constructs (Self-Esteem, Independence, Leadership, Friendship Skills, Adventure & Exploration, and Spirituality). In the four developmental domains though, campers experienced growth in all four. However, parents reported significant increases in all ten constructs. Results showed no significant difference in three constructs (Social Comfort, Environmental Awareness, and Values & Decisions). When comparing all three surveys (pre-, post-, and six-month follow-up), four of construct levels were maintained at the six-month follow-up, while Leadership, Social Comfort, and Peer Relationships showed growth at the six-month follow-up. The staff reported significant increases in all four developmental domains. These results suggest a convergence of opinion from campers, parents, and staff that validates long-held beliefs about the positive value of camp experiences.

Sustained attendance was enhanced by youth making new friends and learning about the arts, and being exposed to different activities. Program staff also played an important role in regular attendance. Participation and task completion observational outcomes showed statistically significant improvements. Art skills and prosocial skills developments showed a significant increase as well. Conduct and emotional problem outcomes showed a significant decrease by youth. From the interviews, both youth and parents reported gains from the program that supports the quantitative findings. In terms of artistic skill development, youth reported drawing, filming, and dictation. Whereas the parents reported organizational skills and cleaning up after themselves was mentioned. For prosocial skill development, teamwork was a frequent theme, as well as developing peer relationships. Both youth and parents’ interviews data reported a decrease in emotional problems with youth being happier, less isolated, and more sociable. Conduct problems also were reported decreasing. Overall youth and parents had positive experiences in the program and expressed high levels of satisfaction. Youths’ increase in confidence, interpersonal skills, positive peer interaction, improved conflict resolution, and skill acquisition were corroborated by parents.
Weaving Evaluation into the Fabric of Youth Development

Within the JR and OMK camps, campers arrived with little awareness of safety rules or basic skills. At the conclusion of camp, 90% of youth were able to describe and follow safety rules and complete basic skills. For the FFG camp, campers previous knowledge was not assessed, however all those participated earned the hunter safety certificate. For the Life Skills Observation Checklist, camp staff evaluated eight factors of the camping experience on each camper using pre- and post-camp checklists. The differences were significant for all variables in all camps. The five factors from JR camp with the greatest gains were Building Friendships, Listening, Trying New Things, Independence, and Leadership. For OMK camp, the five factors with greatest gains were Leadership, Building Friendships, Conflict Resolution, Keeping Traditions, and Connecting to Nature. For FFR camp, the five factors with greatest gains were Keeping Traditions, Leadership, Building Friendships, Conflict Resolution, and Independence. The YPC reported that campers’ experiences were overwhelmingly positive. Over 70% of campers agreed that they felt safe, supported, and enabled to build skills. About 75% of campers agreed that camp provided them with opportunities to set goals, learn new subjects, and gain skills. The staff debriefing sessions facilitated mid-course program improvements and re-energizing around the mission which supported quality and continuity of programming. Camp staff outcomes showed that in 11 of the 15 constructs, significant pre-post differences. Staff viewed camp as a major influence on their growth in desire to help others, outdoor skills, practical skills, quality relationships, and safety practices.

Understanding the Role of Summer Camps in the Learning Landscape: An Exploratory Sequential Study

Participants identified appreciation for differences, being present, independence, perseverance, and responsibility as outcomes highly attributable to camp and highly important to their daily lives. Outcomes less attributable to camp but still important to daily life included relationships skills, self-confidence, emotion regulation, self-identity, and organization. Leisure skills, affinity for nature, willingness to try new things, and teamwork fell in Quadrant 3 (highly attributable to camp but less important in daily lives). With participants who rated camp as highly critical to the development of particular outcomes, camp was the primary setting for the outcomes affinity for nature, how to live with peers, leisure skills, willingness to try new things, independence, being present, and empathy and compassion. Findings show that camp was especially effective in promoting an appreciation for differences, being present, independence, perseverance, and responsibility, and that these outcomes were highly important in daily life. Camp is a ripe setting to connect with nature, try new things, work with others on a team, and develop leisure skills.