

Girls Rock Philly

My Pop Studio - Case Study

August 8, 2007

The graphic features a black teardrop-shaped logo with the text "GIRLS ROCK PHILLY" in white, slanted, sans-serif font. To the right of the logo is a white silhouette of a person with spiky hair, wearing a tank top and pants, playing an electric guitar. The background is a gradient of blue and purple with abstract, swirling white lines. The text is arranged in a vertical column on the left side of the graphic.

WHAT IS GIRLS ROCK PHILLY?
Girls Rock Philly
is a non-profit
organization working to
establish Philly's
first and only rock
camp for girls!
August 6-11, 2007
Girard College,
Philadelphia

FOR MORE INFORMATION, please visit www.girlsrockphilly.org
and www.myspace.com/girlsrockphilly.

Case Study Report: Girls Rock Philly!

August 8, 2007

Girard College

Case study type: Specialty Day Camp

Workshop leaders

Sherri Hope Culver (leader)

Kelly Mendoza (helper)

Context: This case study took place at Philadelphia's first annual Girls Rock Philly! week-long day camp. Girls who are interested in music and want to learn how to play different instruments, how to be part of a band, and how to produce music and promote their band pay to attend this camp. Led by alternative, eccentric young women, the camp had a DIY, "girl power" aesthetic.

The workshop took with two different groups of girls, on one day, for one hour per workshop. The setting was a classroom of a Middle School on the campus of Girard College. We were told that we would have no computer/Internet access, however, we were in a classroom with one computer with sound that displayed on a TV screen for the audience to see. The room also had a chalkboard, used to write up key points during discussion.

Materials:

- variety of magazines (for hands-on Truth or Rumor activity)
- MPS postcards (handout as they leave)
- Media Literacy Remote Control (handout as they leave)

Workshop Summary

As listed in the Girls Rock Philly! program, the workshop was titled, "Image and Identity in Music." A summary as listed in the program notes, "In this workshop girls will explore how image and identity are created in music and the effect on the performers themselves. We will explore the impact of lyrics, personal style, music genres, and celebrity culture and how each shapes the value messages of a performer. Using a popular website tool, we'll create our own pop star and imagine the impact of three key groups: the people who work behind the scenes, the audience and the performer themselves."

Two hour-long workshops were presented to girls aged 10-12, and 13-15.

Learning Objectives

1. To recognize that value messages are present in entertainment messages (through the lyrics, the music genre and the performer's image) and that those messages have the power to glamorize certain behaviors and actions positively or negatively.
2. To understand that lyrics express aspects of social and romantic relationships that can have positive or negative values, including gender stereotypes.
3. To recognize that pop musicians are "constructed" (through appearance, fashion, genre and lyrics) to represent a specific image and to appeal to a specific target audience.
4. To learn that media producers make different choices in constructing media messages including musical elements of the song, as well as musician's appearance.
5. To understand that "popularity" has economic value in the media marketplace because the music industry relies on direct sales from consumers. Music is often used to sell products by associating a product with a feeling.

Workshop details

We held two one-hour sessions: the first with an older group ages 12-14, and the second with a younger group ages 10-11. In the Girls Rock Philly! program, the workshop was titled "Image and Identity in Music."

11:30-12:30 Session 1 Older girls, ages 12-14

Girls who attended the sessions varied from shy, outspoken, withdrawn, and many sported a “rocker” image (and for some, rocker attitude)! Most had been attending music-making and song-writing workshops, so the My Pop Studio session was different from these other workshops they attended.

The hour long workshop was broken down into three sections:

1. *Musicians create an "image" that helps to sell their music, and different music promotes different value messages.* For instance, they were shown the many choices a producer could make about her star's look, song, and lyrics in Popstar Producer, and then engaged in a discussion about how image helps to sell a star's music. (20 minutes)
2. *Truth or Rumor!* Girls looked through a variety of music magazines and filled out the Truth or Rumor! written activity from the My Pop Studio Lesson Plans, such as magazines, help to construct a musician's image. It is difficult to tell if something is truth or rumor in the media. How can you tell? What should you look for, in magazines? What are credible sources? What is the agenda of the message maker? These and other questions were discussed with girls. (15 minutes)
3. *There are many decision makers in producing media.* There are many roles played by different key players for a musician to be able to put on a concert, and many choices are made in how a concert is produced. The moderator led a brainstorm discussion getting girls to think about what decisions must be made, and what steps they would have to go through, if they were to put on a concert for the community. Girls learned that there is more to putting on a concert than just the musicians! (20 minutes)

Wrap up: Reviewed what was discussed about music image, image construction, and the music business (5 minutes)

The comments and discussion generated by the girls indicated they enjoyed thinking about the “behind the scenes” of the music industry. Critically analyzing about how a “star” is made helped girls think more broadly about how the music industry is not just about music—but it’s also about marketing.

Overall Comment

Using the one Music Studio module of My Pop Studio worked well for a short, focused workshop on the music industry. The most successful of the three activities above was #3—brainstorming about how being a musician is so much more than the music, but selling an image. The *Truth or Rumor?* written activity was more difficult for girls to understand, and to think about how the media helps to create celebrity image. This may be because it is difficult for girls to separate their immersion and emotional connection with popular musicians from critical thinking about how musician image is constructed.

Girls Rock Philly!
Contact Information
Beth Warshaw, Director
www.girlsrockphilly.org