

Case Study Report: Camp Nockamixon
July 9, 2007

Case study type: overnight summer camp

Workshop leaders:

Sherri Hope Culver
Mike Robb Greico
Kelly Mendoza

Context: Camp Nockamixon is a traditional overnight camp for boys and girls. Typical of most camp settings, there was no computer technology available for campers except for a wireless internet connection. Thus, the goal of this workshop was to adapt the learning goals of My Pop Studio into camp by playing fun, non-technology games suitable for camp.

The workshop took place in a recreation room at camp called the Canteen. The room consisted of a fairly large space with a raised stage-like area attached). The camp office had a wireless internet connection, so workshop leaders brought in their own laptop, projector, and portable speakers in order to showcase My Pop Studio and encourage girls to visit it on their own.

The one-day visit consisted of three one-hour workshops in the afternoon

- 1) 34 girls, 11 years old (3 cabins) and 6 counselors
- 2) 34 girls, 12 years old (3 cabins) and 6 counselors
- 3) 68 girls, 8-10 years old (5 cabins) and 10 counselors

With small variations, the same workshop was conducted for each group. As the leaders moved on the next session, changes were made to accommodate age, the number of girls present, and lessons learned from the immediate previous workshop. The workshop time frame broke down as follows:

5 minutes	Get everyone there...seated...ready
5 minutes	Introduce the team- introduce media, define media, discuss whether they are experiencing "media withdrawal" from being at camp
10 minutes	Shake it Baby! (full group activity)
5 minutes	Find Your Place- divide into groups (3 groups / 12 @ group)
15 minutes	Activity by Group (<i>TV Concentration, Magazine Reporter, Mystery Songsters and Melody Sleuths</i>) – see below
15 minutes	My Pop Studio introduction & showcase
5 minutes	Closing
60 minutes	TOTAL

Workshop Activity Descriptions:

Introductions: The workshop leader introduced herself and the rest of the team, but did not say we were educators or from a University.

What's Media? To get the conversation going, we asked the girls what they thought we meant by "media." Girls shouted out "TV, Radio, Books, Magazines, Cell Phone, and iPod." Older girls clearly understood what media was, but the younger girls (8-10) had more difficulty explaining what they thought media was.

Media Withdrawal? It had been a few weeks since camp started so we asked, "anyone starting to miss their favorite media?" What's the one thing you really miss? For the 11 year old girls, the strongest answer was "cell phone". All of them raised their hand when asked if they send text messages. Most all of the girls did NOT raise their hands for any other item. When specifically asked "what about video games or computer games?" most girls in all age groups gave a lackluster nod or none at all. However, when each group was asked about a specific online game (ie. Club Penguin, Webkinz, Barbie,

Nickelodeon) more girls said “yes, I go there.” Video games / computer games are clearly not they’re preferred media for these girls.

Shake it Baby: The activities began with a game called *Shake it Baby!* The girls were seated on the floor, grouped by cabin, each cabin in a loose circle. The game leader explained that she was going to shake her tambourine and when she stopped, she would point the tambourine at one of the groups and shout out a type (genre) of music. At that point, the group would have 10 seconds to come up with a song that their entire group could sing. (They had to sing at least the first few sentences of a verse or the chorus.)

The categories would be selected from “television theme songs”, “commercial jingles”, “songs you hear on the radio right now”, “Disney songs”, etc. The leader asked, “what do we call these categories of songs?” Genres. Both the 11 and 12 year old girls instantly knew the term and came up with the right answer; but less so for the 8-10. In that case, the word was provided and explained. If a group could not come up with a song to sing, another group could try for the point. Shake, shake, shake...point. TV theme songs. We played the game for about 10 minutes. In no case was a group unable to come up with something within the allotted 10 seconds. In fact, girls often needed no more than 5 seconds to come up with an answer.

At this point each cabin went to a different activity. One group went to TV Concentration, the next to Magazine Reporter, and another to Mystery Songsters and Melody Sleuths.

Activity 1: TV Concentration. One group played a version of the hand game “Concentration,” but specified to be about specific TV shows. First, the group was asked to come up with a simple hand rhythm. (1-2-3-4 / hands smack thighs 2x, then clap hands 2x) The game leader asked, “what elements go into making a TV show?” Girls easily offered—“characters, actors, location, situation, music.” The leader then prompted them to think a little more deeply about what it takes to create a show...think of all the different elements. Girls then offered—“director, writer, costumes, animation.” “OK,” said the leader said, “We’re going to select one TV show and with our hand rhythm going, we each have to come up with one element from that show with each clap.” The group did a sample round to make sure everyone understood how the game would work. The girls easily grasped the game and were eager to begin. Frequent shows picked? Hannah Montana. Full House. Fairly Odd Parents.

Option for game variation: After about 10 minutes (or less) a few girls started to look like they were ready for something else. So the leader switched the game up a bit by asking one girl in the group to leave the circle and hide. At that point, the rest of the girls selected the TV show. When the girl returned to the circle, she had to guess the name of the show by the elements given in the game. This added element was just the kick the game needed. Just about every girl wanted to be the one to leave the circle and do the guessing.

Activity 2: Magazine Reporter. This activity first involved thinking about magazines: who writes them, who edits them, how they get made, etc.. The leader passed out a sheet of paper and pen, having the girls pair up and interview each other as if they were a magazine reporter for “Nockamixon Girl” magazine.

The leader went around the circle and asked girls to say their favorite magazine and why. Most popular answers were Tiger Beat, People, and J-14, and the reasons girls read included “to get info. on fashion, celebrities, and music.” Then, they were asked to role play as if they were writing for “Nockamixon Girl” magazine, and they must do a feature article on another girl. Girls were provided a sheet that asked questions ranging from favorite TV show and favorite movie, but also included the media savvy scale. Girls partnered up and scattered throughout the room. They then returned and shared what they learned about the girl they interviewed, and was asked to speak about how they would frame the article, or what topics they would put the focus on.

Activity 3: Mystery Songsters and Melody Sleuths: In this activity, girls wrote down on an index card the names of any three songs special to them in some way for any reason at any point in their lives. Most kids in each age group had no problem with this part. Then, kids divided into two groups, "sleuths" and "songsters," for a game about music tastes and meanings that might help the group to get to know each other in new ways. Ideally, all kids would play both roles by doing two rounds of the game in 15 minutes. The Sleuths song title cards were collected and put aside for the second round. The Songsters formed a tight circle, standing facing out. The Sleuths formed a circle around them, holding hands, facing out away from the Songsters. Songsters cards were then collected, shuffled and handed out to the Sleuths. The Songsters job was to sing their songs as the Sleuths circled them listening for the songs on their cards, but not looking at the Songsters. The Songsters simultaneously belted out their first songs for the Sleuths first blind lap (holding hands), then the Songsters sang their second song for the second lap, and their third for the final lap. After the third lap, the Sleuths' job was to find the Songster that belonged to the song card they had received; they could look at the Songsters now and run around them at will to hear anyone. The Songsters continued to sing parts of each song from their card to aid the Sleuths' search. The Sleuths ran around the circle until they found the Songster matching their card. When a match was found, the Songster pulled the Sleuth into the inner circle, and the Sleuth picked one of the Songster's songs about which to ask, "Why was that song important to you?" Once the Songster had confirmed that the Sleuth has understood her rationale for her song choice and could communicate it to the group, the pair sat down. It became a bit of a race, and the next phase of the activity went roughly in order of the pairs as they sat down to end this round.

Once all the Sleuth and Songster pairs had found each other and sat down, the Sleuths introduced their Songsters, the song they discussed, and the Songster's reasons for choosing the song. When all finished sharing, we shared a short conversation about the different reasons that songs are important for different people. It became clear that the supposed "intended" meaning of the song does not usually match the meaning that the kid has made for the song; e.g., one girl chose the disco hit *Kung Fu Fighting* because it reminded her of her Bat Mitzvah. The most common reasons for song choices included reminders of friends and family, associations with fun or dramatic events, and associations with favorite TV shows, movies or stories. Each group also had a couple of more unique answers, like the girl who chose a pop song about suicide to remind her that no one is worth getting so worked up about.

Note: Our original plan was for each group to spend a few minutes doing an activity, then rotate to the next activity. In this way, each group would have had the opportunity to do each activity. The girls were very curious about what the other groups were doing and they wanted to do those activities too. Since we had just one hour with the girls, we omitted this rotation. But, it would have been more fun (and ultimately, more educational) to have incorporated all three games. In order to do this, we would have needed another half-hour.

My Pop Studio - Showcase: After the three group activities, the entire group was brought together for an introduction to My Pop Studio. The website and big screen were pre-set to the home page. One of the leaders presented My Pop Studio, where she began by making a connection from the activities they had just played to the modules of MPS (one with TV, Music, and Magazine).

She walked them through the website fairly quickly and then introduced Pop Star Producer. Using some of the information they had previously shared about performers and songs they liked, the leader brought them to the "value message" screen and asked, "what value message do you think (performer) is all about?" Great discussion starter! The basics of Pop Star Producer were demonstrated to girls, and then we browsed the showcase so the girls could see (and evaluate) the Pop Stars on the charts. We screened 1 or 2 and guessed at the value messages. In this way, the girls were able to get an idea of what they were able to do in the activity *and* the fun of watching the Pop Stars created by other girls. (Suggestion: Make sure there are Pop Stars loaded that reflect the diversity of choices in the activity. We screened two popularly-rated Pop

Stars and ended up with two very hip-hop girls. A completely different Pop Star would have helped them to see the ability to create different types of Pop Stars.)

With the last group (the youngest girls) the workshop leader brought a girl up to the computer to play the *Are you a Multitasker? Game*. The girls seemed to really like the game and shouted out answers to the player while she tried to figure out the right answers.

Girls were then encouraged to visit My Pop Studio the next time they were online.

Last minute questions, last minute handouts...and small candy treats...and they were packed up to head to their next camp activity.

Overall comment:

On a positive note, the workshop leaders think there could be a camp program associated with My Pop Studio's goals that would teach media literacy in a fun and worthwhile way. However, such a workshop would be better incorporated into the camp experience through a program that involves the three elements: youth media production, games, and My Pop Studio. These elements should be extended over a multi-day or multi-week program.

Many camps now offer "specialty camps" within the basic camp. (As an example, Nockamixon offers a dance camp within the regular camp.) A Youth Media camp could be marketed as a way to create a video project, but could incorporate the basic elements of media literacy. The final output of a video would also provide a more tangible outcome from the perspective of the campers (and the camp administration).