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Transformative learning and the 4-H camp counselor experience

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Transformative learning and the 4-H camp counselor experience

by

Donna Leff

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Major: Agricultural Education

Program of Study Committee:
Michael Retallick, Major Professor
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Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this work to all former, present, and future campers, counselors, and camp staff at summer camps. My experiences as a camper, counselor, and staff member taught me innumerable lessons about life and humanity and made me a better person. I met many of my closest friends at camp and learned some of my most important life lessons in some of my best and most trying times at camp. The camp experience also led me on my career path and instilled my love of the outdoors.

Camp was probably the place where I learned the most about myself over the years. I hope future campers, counselors, and staff members will have the same life-changing experience as I did at camp. My wish for mankind is for everybody to learn some of the same lessons I did at camp: that any day is better when you start it with a song, to accept others as they are, to pitch in and do your part, to work as a team, that it is perfectly acceptable to act a little bit silly sometimes, to take time for daily reflection, that a nap after lunch can brighten any afternoon, to laugh often, and that you can be the most beautiful when you appear the most soiled...just to name a few.

Time and geographic distance have separated me from some of the friends I made working at camp, but all of us still have that one binding tie that brings us together: we truly are a camp family. Camp and youth development are still careers for some of us, but others have answered different callings in life quite successfully. Regardless of the career path, I believe one quotation depicts the passion of many of those I have been so fortunate to call colleagues: “Don’t ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive and then go do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.” - Howard Thurman

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ABSTRACT

Many studies about the youth development outcomes of the camping experience focus upon the youth who are campers, but relatively few studies examine the outcomes of the experience for counselors. Camping has a strong tradition as a part of the 4-H program, but studies about 4-H camp also focus mostly on campers. This study examines the extent to which 4-H camp results in transformative learning for the older 4-H members who serve as camp counselors. It also examines the perceived changes that occur within counselors and the factors and characteristics of camp that result in personal transformation.

The population for this study was 4-H members who served as counselors at regional 4-H summer camps during the summer of 2012 in Minnesota. Data was obtained using the “Transformative Learning and the Camp Experience Staff Member Survey,” which was administered online. Even though the population was small ($N = 37$), the results add data to the research available about transformative learning among camp counselors and provide baseline data and a framework for future research about the 4-H camping program in Minnesota.

The participants in this study experienced transformative learning as a result of their experience as camp counselors. Returning counselors experienced more personal transformation than first-year counselors, but many of the same aspects of camp resulted in transformative learning for both groups. Major changes involved developing skills for working with children and exposure to new people, activities, and experiences. Factors leading to personal transformation included the opportunity to be role models for children and impact children positively, opportunities for leadership and challenge, and camp traditions. Characteristics of camp leading to personal transformation included counselors feeling accepted, feeling like they belonged, and camp feeling safe and being a place where counselors could trust others and be open.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

The 4-H program offers positive youth development that contributes to the personal growth and development of young people and that will help them to become contributing, self-reliant, and responsible members of society (Deidrick et al., 2004). 4-H is unique from other youth development organizations because it is the only youth organization tied to the research base of our nation's land-grant university system. This connection allows Extension staff and the volunteers they work with to receive training based upon the most recent research about youth development theory and practice (Deidrick et al., 2004).

There are numerous advantages to participation in 4-H. A recent study by Tufts University found that youth who participate in 4-H are more than twice as likely to be civically active and contribute to their communities, have better grades and be more emotionally engaged in school, and are much less likely to engage in risky or problematic behaviors than their counterparts who do not participate in 4-H (Lerner, Lerner, & Phelps, 2009). 4-H members are also better at working with groups, communicating, understanding self, making decisions, and leadership than non-4-H members (Boyd, Herring, & Briers, 1992).

Clubs are the primary structure for 4-H learning. 4-H clubs are groups of youth and adults who meet on a regular basis and together practice positive youth development and cooperative learning. Each club is supported with curriculum, training and development, and access to county, regional, state, and national 4-H experiences. The four basic types of 4-H clubs are community or "traditional" clubs, project clubs, after-school clubs, and site-based clubs (Deidrick et al., 2004).

Clubs are not the only structure for 4-H learning. Short-term learning opportunities and projects about areas of interest to the youth are other methods of education used in 4-H. Projects can be worked on individually throughout the year and showcased during a fair, where the 4-H

member shares his or her learning about the project with a judge and the public. Short-term learning opportunities occur on the county, regional, state, and national levels and can include day camps, project days, workshops, and residential camps.

The 4-H camping program varies immensely between states and even among regions in the same state. Some states own their own campsite and have 4-H members from across the state attend camp there, while other states lease a campsite or have another agreement to use a facility for camp. West Virginia and Nebraska own their own campsites, while Minnesota has facility use agreements with a number of locations throughout the state to host its 4-H camps (Meyer, 2013; University of Nebraska – Lincoln, 2013; Wessel & Wessel, 1982). The length and number of sessions also vary by the age level of campers and among regions and states. Sessions in Minnesota are generally two or three nights, while some sessions in Nebraska can be up to six nights (Meyer, 2013; University of Nebraska – Lincoln, 2013).

Along with differences in camp programs, there is also a considerable amount of variation pertaining to camp counselors. Some states have the same camp counselors provide programming all summer, yet other states have different counselors provide programming for each session. Likewise, different states and regions have different age requirements and requirements about experience in the 4-H program for camp counselors. Minnesota 4-H, for example, requires counselors to be high school aged 4-H members. Different 4-H members are counselors in different geographic locations throughout the state. Minnesota 4-H camp counselors must attend Level I training their first year as a counselor and Level II training in future years. The Level I training covers a great deal of information about ages and stages of youth development, while the Level II training includes more time for the sharing of ideas and experiences among counselors (Meyer, 2013).

The Minnesota 4-H camping program develops leadership and responsibility skills for teen counselors. Camp counselors give leadership to all aspects of the camp program. This includes identifying the needs of campers, finding the resources for planning camp, and implementing all camp activities. Camp counselors in Minnesota enhance their life skill development through participation in training and residential camp (Meyer, 2013).

The training of counselors is another area of divergence among 4-H camps. Camp counselor training is designed to provide the skills and knowledge needed to be an effective camp counselor and leadership team member. Counties and regions offering 4-H day camps and/or 4-H residential camps provide appropriate levels of counselor and staff training to ensure quality camping programs that incorporate experiential learning and the key elements of positive youth development. Training topics include the role of the camp counselor, camp theme and program development, recreation leadership, understanding ages and stages of youth development, group facilitation, conflict resolution, risk management, flag ceremony, song leading, campfire programs, rainy day programs, outdoor environment and nature programming, and more (Meyer, 2013).

Each state and sometimes regions within states take different approaches to the design and duration of camp counselor training. Some camps have an intensive training plan for counselors that addresses all of the major aspects of camp and involves an overnight experience. Other programs break up the training according to topic or focus. One fairly common training framework in Minnesota is to have an initial training that addresses counselor responsibilities, ages and stages of youth development, camper management, and team-building among counselors (Meyer, 2013). A second training (and third if necessary) focuses on more team-building and heavily addresses program planning. A final gathering happens right before camp and involves creating a welcoming atmosphere for campers by preparing for their arrival,

organizing the final details of camp, and unstructured team-building among counselors (Meyer, 2013). Not all regions in Minnesota require the first training for counselors who are returning for a successive year, according to the same author.

Regardless of training plans and other differences among states or regions, teen-aged adolescents help to provide thousands of youth throughout the United States with a 4-H camp experience every summer (Brandt & Arnold, 2006). Research shows serving as a 4-H camp counselor is a positive experience for youth (Carter & Kotrlik, 2008). The American Camp Association (ACA) emphasizes the embodiment of youth development outcomes in every phase of the camp experience (ACA, 2005). One of the benefits of the 4-H camping experience for camp counselors, according to the Minnesota 4-H Camp Counselor Handbook, is for participants to acquire skills that will be valuable to them throughout their life (Cavett, 2003).

Research has identified and measured many of the outcomes associated with the benefits of camp counseling. A study of the outcomes of the 4-H camp counseling experience in Virginia indicated growth in communication, problem solving, self-responsibility, and coping with stressful situations (Garst & Johnson, 2005). Forsythe, Matysik, and Nelson (2004) identified leadership, communication, responsibility, teamwork, problem solving, and planning/organizing as skills developed in the Wisconsin 4-H camp counseling experience. Brandt and Arnold (2006) found leadership, teamwork, responsible citizenship, and problem solving skills enhanced among Oregon 4-H camp counselors. Ohio 4-H camp counselor alumni listed communication, decision making, interpersonal skills, planning and organizing, leadership, and teamwork as the biggest outcomes of the camp counseling experience (Digby & Ferrari, 2007).

All of these studies suggest benefits of the 4-H camp counseling experience for counselors. The studies noted in the previous paragraph point to skill development among camp counselors. While skill development is a noteworthy benefit of the camp counseling experience,

research can also focus upon whether or not transformative learning, or deep personal change, occurs. Transformative learning is the “process by which previously uncritically assimilated assumptions, beliefs, values, and perspectives are questioned and thereby become more open, permeable, and better justified” (Cranton, 2006, p. vi). Transformation takes place when teams, individuals, or other entities develop behaviors and perspectives vastly different from their previous behaviors and perspectives (Mezirow, 2000).

According to the Minnesota 4-H Camp Counselor Handbook, “The Minnesota 4-H Camping program develops leadership and responsibility skills for teen counselors, while providing a safe and fun opportunity for the campers through activities, which allow them to gain knowledge and develop social skills while meeting new friends” (Cavett, 2003, p. 2). While studies have occurred and been documented to determine the effect of the camp counseling experience upon the life skills development of camp counselors, fewer studies have been done about transformative learning among 4-H camp counselors, and no studies about either topic have been found that are specific to Minnesota.

Significance of the Study

Measuring the degree to which transformative learning occurs in Minnesota 4-H camp counselors and the ways camp counselors have been changed by their experience as counselors will help staff and stakeholders identify positively – not hypothesize – how the camp counseling experience affects counselors. This study will help to communicate the impact of the camp counseling program on the transformative learning of 4-H members to stakeholders of Extension programs in Minnesota. Identifying the elements of the camp counseling experience that influence transformative learning will help 4-H staff members improve the camp counseling experience and make it more meaningful and beneficial for camp counselors. Asking open-ended questions about how counselors would tell their friends camp has changed them will allow the

identification of any other factors not included in the survey questions. Understanding the characteristics of 4-H youth who serve as counselors at Minnesota 4-H summers camps will aid in the recruitment of camp counselors and develop a strong pool of camp counselors for future years.

Statement of the Problem

Camping is a popular and important component of the Minnesota 4-H program and is valued among campers and the teenage youth who serve as counselors. As federal, state, and local budget constraints continue to jeopardize 4-H programming, there is more discussion about and intentional focus upon identifying which parts of the 4-H program to keep and which parts of the program to dismiss. These constraints make it increasingly important for 4-H staff to demonstrate the positive effects of programming and identify those programs that are responsive to youth needs. No formal research has been conducted to assess the significance of the camping program upon the teenage youth who serve as camp counselors.

Purpose and Research Questions

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the developmental experiences of 4-H members who serve as youth camp counselors at Minnesota 4-H summer camps. The study sought to examine the extent to which counselors attribute transformative learning to the youth camp counselor experience and to learn more about the characteristics that describe Minnesota 4-H Youth Camp counselors. Objectives that guided research were:

- Determining whether participating in Minnesota 4-H Youth Camp as a counselor has caused deep personal change;
- Measuring the extent to which 4-H youth camp involvement as a counselor has changed counselors in a number of ways;

- Identifying which factors have promoted or influenced the personal transformation or change of youth camp counselors;
- Determining which characteristics of camp have been important for the changes that youth camp counselors attribute to the 4-H camp experience; and
- Identifying characteristics of 4-H youth who serve as counselors at Minnesota 4-H summer youth camps.

Methodology

“Transformative Learning and the Camp Experience Staff Member Survey,” a descriptive survey, was distributed using Qualtrics Survey Software to 75 counselors at 4-H summer camps in Minnesota during the summer of 2012. The purpose of the survey was to examine the transformative learning outcomes of 4-H youth who served as youth camp counselors at Minnesota 4-H summer camps. Questions from the survey examined the characteristics, opinions, beliefs, and behaviors of 4-H youth camp counselors in the state of Minnesota.

A list of Minnesota 4-H camp counselors was compiled by contacting the Extension Educators for Regional 4-H Youth Development Programs in charge of 4-H summer youth camps prior to their camps. A census was conducted because of the small population size. Each participant was at least 14 years of age, was a current or former 4-H member, and had served as a 4-H camp counselor in Minnesota for at least one year. Informed consent statements were collected for those participants under 18 years of age.

Implications

The results will be used to communicate the value of the camp experience from the counselors’ perspective. This could lead to continued or perhaps increased funding if the results are mostly positive. If the results of the survey indicate that the 4-H camp counselor experience in Minnesota does not result in transformative learning, evaluation of the results might reveal

patterns that make the camp counselor experience less valuable for counselors. Staff will be able to make plans for improvement upon any results that are troubling or otherwise in need of improvement. If there are any patterns correlating demographic characteristics among camp counselors with high or low levels of transformative learning, the patterns can be examined to address any deficiencies in an effort to narrow the gap of transformative learning among all counselors. Results can also be examined to identify whether or not there is value in adjusting recruiting measures for camp counselors based upon the feedback of the counselors.

The transformative learning framework may also become a common framework for the evaluation of other 4-H programs. A consistent framework for evaluation is somewhat lacking at this point. Minnesota 4-H is in the process of initiating a quality initiative using the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) model, so the results from this study could also be tied to the quality initiative. The study could also provide momentum in Minnesota 4-H for evaluation of the camp experience for campers, which has not occurred yet.

Definition of Terms

The following section defines terms used throughout this paper. The definitions have been gathered from existing literature.

4-H: the largest non-formal voluntary educational organization for youth development providing real-life experiences and an opportunity for youth to plan their own learning and develop life skills with parents and other caring adult volunteers to guide them and evaluate their accomplishments (Seevers, Graham, & Conklin, 2007)

4-H Camp: outdoor opportunity allowing youth to experience the development of life skills while living in a natural, communal setting that provides abundant opportunities for the development of knowledge, independence, responsibility, self-esteem, self-efficacy, and teamwork (Garst & Bruce, 2003)

Camp: “A sustained ‘camp’ experience that provides creative, recreational, and educational opportunities in group living in the outdoors. It utilizes trained leadership and the resources of natural surroundings to contribute to each camper’s mental, physical, social, and spiritual growth” (American Camp Association, 2013)

Camp counselors: older youth or adults who have accepted the responsibility for teaching, supervising, and caring for younger campers in a camp setting (Garst & Johnson, 2005)

Camping: the act of "camping" by individuals or groups that camp on their own without staff and planned programming (American Camp Association, 2013)

Cooperative Extension: a publicly funded, non-formal education system linking the education and research resources of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), land-grant universities, and county administrative units (Seevers et al., 2007)

Minnesota 4-H Camp Counselor Handbook: manual provided to Minnesota 4-H camp counselors outlining camp procedures, best practices, youth development principles, activity and song ideas, and other helpful information for camp counselors (Meyer, 2013)

Residential camping: an experience consisting of a minimum of four nights when camp staff members are responsible for campers at all times (American Camp Association, 1998)

Transformative learning: “a process by which previously uncritically assimilated assumptions, beliefs, values, and perspectives are questioned and thereby become more open, permeable, and better justified” (Cranton, 2006, p. vi)

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter provides an overview of the literature related to transformative learning, literature pertaining to the history of the 4-H camping program and how it fits within the framework of Extension and 4-H, and previous literature about the effects of the 4-H camp counseling experience upon counselors. The first section defines and describes transformative learning. It discusses the necessary components for transformative learning, the history and origins of transformative learning, how transformative learning has evolved in Extension, and how transformative learning has been applied to environmental and outdoor education. Following transformative learning is a section that gives an overview of 4-H and Extension, positive youth development, and the role of camp in 4-H. The final section discusses the wide-ranging effects of the camp counseling experience from studies in other states. This chapter concludes with a summary of the literature and the connection between transformative learning and the 4-H camp counseling experience.

Transformative Learning

Transformative learning is the “process by which previously uncritically assimilated assumptions, beliefs, values, and perspectives are questioned and thereby become more open, permeable, and better justified” (Cranton, 2006, p. vi). Transformation, or deep personal change, takes place when teams, individuals, or other entities develop behaviors and perspectives vastly different from their previous behaviors and perspectives (Mezirow, 2000). Transformational education recognizes the importance of building the capacity of individuals to engage in problem solving or taking actions with the “creative implementation of a purpose” (Mezirow, 1991, p. 12).

Paulo Freire (1970) and Jack Mezirow (1991) were key leaders in the theory of transformative learning. Much of their work was dedicated to helping the oppressed citizenry by

using education to evoke social and individual change (Courtney, Merriam, & Reeves, 1998; Sokol & Cranton, 1998). These two theorists thought educational theories like transformative learning, which encouraged increased self-cognizance and freedom from suppression, were the only way for actual learning to take place and were vital for social equality for the oppressed (Christopher, Dunnagan, Duncan, & Paul, 2001).

Freire's theory of *conscientization*, which merges action and reflection, or praxis, is a key component of transformative learning theory. Similarly, the theory has roots in Habermas' communicative learning theories (Kerton & Sinclair, 2009; Kerton, n.d.). Transformative learning theory recognizes a distinction between communicative learning and instrumental learning. Instrumental learning assesses truth claims and focuses on controlling and manipulating the environment. Communicative learning involves attempting to understand what a person means when he or she communicates with another person. The developmental logic for instrumental learning is hypothetical-deductive; the developmental logic for communicative learning is analogic-abductive (Mezirow, 2003). Mezirow's theory of transformative learning has been used by scholars in natural resources to study communicative learning, critical self-reflection, and instrumental learning, which in concert create behavioral changes and changes in worldview (Kerton, n.d.).

Freire's theory of conscientization stems from the notion that people have the ability to act consciously. Instead of just having the ability to adapt, they are also capable of integrating. "Integration results from the capacity to adapt oneself to reality *plus* the critical capacity to make choices and to transform that reality" (Freire, 2008, p. 4). Only education for critical consciousness, according to Freire, treats people as the integrated beings they are. Freire describes integrated people as *subjects*, not *objects*. He describes subjects as those who reflect upon their world and attempt to shape it. "In contrast, the adaptive person is person as object,

adaptation representing at most a weak form of self-defense” (Freire, 2008, p. 4). Objects are incapable of reflection about their situation and lack the ability to mold their situation.

The result of people not acting as subjects, according to Freire, is *massification*. Ramos clarifies her translation of Freire and says “a massified society is one in which the people, after entering the historical process, have been manipulated by the elite into an unthinking, manageable, agglomeration” (Freire, 2008, pp. 16-17). In direct contrast to massification is the idea of conscientization (or conscientizacao). “Conscientizacao represents the development of the awakening of critical awareness” (Freire, 2008, p. 15).

Transformative learning is believed to happen when individuals are unable to understand their current situations as viewed from the lens of their old beliefs and assumptions. Through cognition individuals look for new ways to organize their thoughts and beliefs that make their new conditions and situations understandable. Because of this disjunction of experience and constructs, “living systems adapt by transforming themselves, and learning occurs” (O’Sullivan, 2002, p. 3).

The process of transformative learning is believed to occur in three steps. Learners acutely realize how and why their assumptions have come to limit the way they perceive, understand, and feel about their world in the first step. A modification of belief systems happens during the second step; during this time learners alter their current expectations to adopt a perspective that is more unifying, refined, and inclusive. Behavioral adaptation that represents their renewed perspective happens in the final step (Taylor, 1997).

Helping individuals become more self-determined is the desired outcome of transformative learning (Mezirow, 2000). In other words the ultimate goal of transformative learning is for learners to examine their current perspectives and practices and provide an opportunity to change those approaches and perspectives by way of education (Taylor, 1997).

The goal of self-determination makes transformative learning stand apart from other forms of learning. A basic underlying assumption of transformative learning is that a learner's current perspective and life approach are derived from his or her values, knowledge, thoughts, skills, and life experiences (Taylor, 1997). Transformative learning is unique from communicative learning because communicative learning has as its focus the understanding of others. Instrumental learning, by contrast, is technical and skill-based in nature (Kreber & Cranton, 2000; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999).

Transformative learning does not happen by accident; a number of conditions need to be in place before there is a chance transformative learning will occur. There are many ways to promote transformative learning. Creating learning conditions that foster openness, trust, and a sense of safety is one way. Transformative learning can be accomplished through a student-centered approach that includes participation, collaboration, independence of the learner, and reflection (Robertson, 1996).

Conditions promoting transformative learning include the presence of a person different from the learner, mentoring, the opportunity to take action (practice), and reflective discourse. Support from others is especially important for people who are developing new perspectives and undergoing transformative learning. When people with diverse demographics, socio-economic backgrounds, or other characteristics work together toward a common purpose using a similar set of tasks, change is encouraged (Daloz, 2000). Justifying personal assumptions, open discussion and questioning, and reinforcement are all necessary for transformative learning to occur (Mezirow, 2000).

Employing caring, sincere, authentic, and empathetic teachers who have high integrity is another condition that promotes transformative learning (Robertson, 1996). Furthermore, the utilization of teachers as facilitators instead of experts contrasts Freire's description of the

traditional approach to education, the *banking model*. This model deems teachers as experts and learners as empty vessels waiting to be filled with knowledge; its goal is to help learners gather knowledge. Freire also thought the banking model was paternalistic because it viewed knowledge as a gift to the unknowledgeable from the knowledgeable (Christopher et al., 2001). The educator or facilitator needs to create a safe environment for the learner to reflect critically in order for transformative learning to occur (Mezirow, 2000). Extension educators can serve as content resources, facilitators, or both in the capacity-building phase of transformative education (Blewett, Keim, Leser, & Jones, 2008).

There is a minimal amount of questioning, discussion, or other verbal interaction between the learner and teacher in the banking model. Instead of empowering oppressed populations, Freire believed this model sustained oppressing conditions. He believed it to be individualistic because it did not recognize the unique personalities or life contexts of learners (Christopher et al., 2001).

Teaching methods in Extension also acknowledge a patronizing view of education does not yield the most beneficial outcomes. Conditions in Extension education that promote transformative learning include independence with interdependence, stronger learning partner facilitation, critical reflection of assumptions, critical events, and difference guided by common purpose (Franz, Garst, Baughman, Smith, & Peters, 2009).

Since its inception, Extension has historically emphasized teaching about particular topics and delivering research-based information to its audiences. Many university-based Extension systems employ several means of information or content delivery. The intentional involvement of program participants in learning and decision-making processes through a variety of educational methods enhances the process aspect of Extension education. This can be accomplished using a variety of tools that address challenges and using the various viewpoints of

participants, thereby allowing them to learn and act together for more creative solutions to those challenges (Apps, 2002). Merrill Ewert was the first person to portray both content and process (Figure 1) in a matrix (McDowell, 2001; Bethel, 2004). Transformational education can only happen when high levels of content and process alike are present, according to Ewert's matrix.

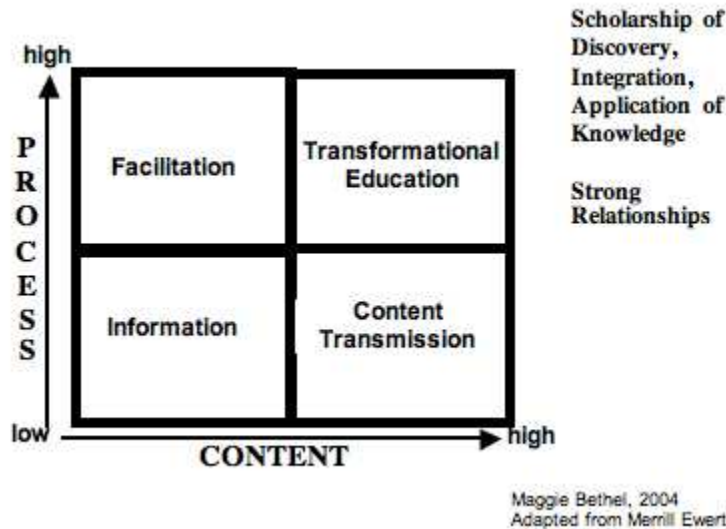


Figure 1. Educational process model for transformational education. Adapted from “Defining a Transformational Education Model for the Engaged University,” by T. Blewett, A. Keim, J. Leser, and J. Jones, 2008, *Journal of Extension*, 46(3). Copyright 2008 by the Journal of Extension.

The Wisconsin Cooperative Extension System (CES) held a conference in 2005 about the importance of linking transformational education to improved communities. Transformational education is necessary when dealing with large-scale, interdisciplinary issues. There was a dual purpose for adopting this emphasis. One reason was to create a niche for Extension programs in Wisconsin. Wisconsin CES acknowledged there were a variety of resources from which constituents could choose to receive information; leaders believed a transformative learning focus would help set Extension programs apart from other informational venues (Blewett et al., 2008). The second reason was to help educators recognize a difference between the education

they normally facilitated and transformative education. Even though many educational programs were of high quality and possessed many elements of transformative education, programs may not have been transformative for the population they were targeting (Blewett et al., 2008). Organizers hoped familiarization with the elements and language of transformative education would help educators design and deliver transformative programs and use such language to describe program impacts (Blewett et al., 2008).

In response to these two goals, Wisconsin CES decided to define a few characteristics that would become a reference to determine whether or not a program was transformative in nature. At first this meant adopting the notion of transformational education depicted in Figure 1. The six characteristics that were refined for definition included complex concerns/issues, communities of interest/location/issue/diversity, capacity building of members of communities of interest, experimentation/examination, evaluation, and success (Blewett et al., 2008).

A community of interest is also associated with transformational education. The community of interest needs to be comprised of members with diverse expertise and interests in the program's success and held together by trust and a group goal for addressing the issue. These members also need the opportunity to improve upon their skills, create an effective leadership structure, and hone their leadership skills. Extension educators can serve as content resources, facilitators, or both in the capacity-building phase. It is also important for research and data collection to occur. Analyzing results can lead to important new questions and realizations. Equally important in transformative learning is for those individuals or entities with vested interest in the program's success to examine evaluation results to allow the opportunity for program improvement. The success of transformational learning is in stimulating individuals or entities to induce positive long-term outcomes upon society (Blewett et al., 2008).

Wisconsin CES took the stance that programs can be high in content and high in process (the two axes from Figure 1) without being transformational. To depict this notion, Wisconsin developed a new model that listed high impact programs as those that are high in content and high in process (Figure 2). In the new model, transformational education exists at a higher place on the diagonal axis of content and process than high impact programs. The six aforementioned characteristics of transformational education defined by Wisconsin CES must be present, along with high content and high process, for a program to be considered transformational in nature (Blewett et al., 2008). Cornell Cooperative Extension also did a review of transformative learning regarding relationships between campus Extension faculty and county Extension staff (Franz, 2003), but Wisconsin was the only CES found in the literature that had extensively focused upon transformative learning system-wide.

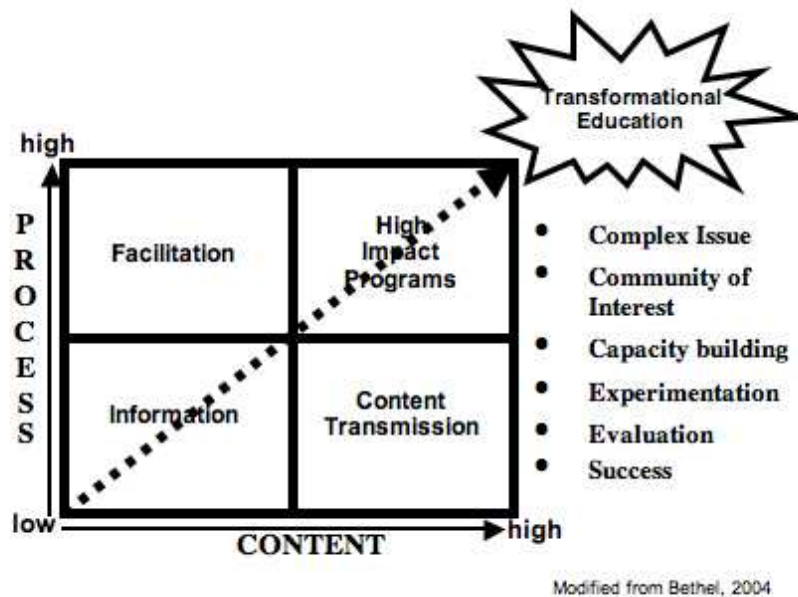


Figure 2. Modified transformational education model. Adapted from “Defining a Transformational Education Model for the Engaged University,” by T. Blewett, A. Keim, J. Leser, and J. Jones, 2008, *Journal of Extension*, 46(3). Copyright 2008 by the Journal of Extension.

Transformative learning is valued in Extension and other educational settings because of the superior outcomes it elicits. Major life changes are evident in learners who take part in educational programs that lead to transformative learning. The result is a metamorphosis to an improved way of doing things for the learner. Transformative learning, according to Clark (1993) “produces [more] far-reaching changes in the learner than does learning in general, and...these changes have a significant impact on the learner’s subsequent experiences. In short, transformative learning shapes people; they’re different afterward, in ways both they and others can recognize” (p. 47).

Social cognitive theory has similar components and outcomes to transformative learning. A key component of social cognitive theory is that not all learning is readily observable immediately after it happens; some learning occurs internally and is stored and used later in life in different situations (Crothers, Hughes, & Morine, 2008). Behavioral, environmental, and personal factors all affect learning and behavior according to social cognitive theory – not just external forces. The outcomes of learning from social cognitive theory can be longer-lasting and more deeply embedded in the individual than learning that occurs as a result of other teaching methods (Crothers et al., 2008).

Several outcomes of transformative learning are well documented. For the learner these include more practical methods and resources for taking control of their lives and taking action, greater empathy, greater self-awareness and self-confidence in unfamiliar relationships and situations, stronger bridges with others, and changes in life assumptions and self-perception (Courtney, Merriam, & Reeves, 1998; Taylor, 1997). Ways of knowing other than logical reasoning was listed as an outcome in a few cases. Other ways of knowing included affective learning, intuition, and learning as a result of relationships. Greater spirituality was another less frequently cited outcome. These outcomes are believed to occur because of social processes in

which learners realize how the outside world has influenced their understanding and impressions (Christopher et al., 2001).

The outdoors is one of many settings in which transformative learning is being carefully studied. Documenting how outdoor adventure education (OAE) connects transformative learning with environmental behaviors after outdoor experiences is just one ongoing goal in the study of transformative learning. This can be accomplished by exploring empirical studies about OAE, social-ecological systems and conceptual frameworks, personal growth and instrumental learning within environmental education, and transformative learning theory within the context of adult education (D'Amato & Krasny, 2011).

Transformative learning has also been studied in direct relationships to environmental education and OAE. OAE can be effective at promoting transformative learning because of its link between a supportive community and a remote setting. Approaching environmental education by asking students to consider their place in nature tends to foster more holistic visions that help learners shift certain principles from outdoor settings to their everyday lives (Gass, 1999; Selby, 2002).

4-H Camp's Role in Positive Youth Development

Positive youth development involves looking at youth as necessary assets to society, not as problems (Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Lerner, Lerner, Almerigi, & Theokas, 2005). Not only do youth need to progress academically, they should also experience changes to progress emotionally, physically, socially, and civically. Organized camp and recreational programs, family, community, and other organizations also contribute to positive youth development (Witt & Caldwell, 2005).

There is a strong interest among youth development researchers and practitioners about how youth occupy their time. Youth who take part in structured activities experience more

positive outcomes academically, mentally, emotionally, and socially than those youth who participate in unstructured activities (Bartko & Eccles, 2003; Mahoney, Larson, Eccles, & Lord, 2005). There is a clear link between contributing positively to society and taking part in structured activities (Hansen, Larson, & Dworkin, 2003; Mahoney et al., 2005). Structured activities favor the growth of initiative because they require focus and effort, but they are also internally satisfying and voluntary (Larson, 2000).

Structure is provided in activities by the use of a youth development model. There is an increasing body of evidence suggesting youth development programs that operate according to a youth development model and are well-designed and implemented have positive outcomes for youth (Nicholson, Collins, & Hollmer, 2004; Baldwin, Caldwell, & Witt, 2005). One plan for stimulating positive youth development is The Community Action Framework for Youth Development (Figure 3) (Gambone & Connell, 2004). The Community Action Framework for Youth Development integrates basic knowledge about youth development and conditions within communities that affect youth development with hypotheses about how to make communities places where youth have the chance to reach their potential. The Community Action Framework for Youth Development seeks to identify five things: basic long-term goals for youth, critical developmental milestones to signify youth are progressing toward basic long-term goals, what youth need to achieve developmental milestones (physical needs and social conditions), changes in community settings necessary to provide supports and opportunities for youth, and ways to create conditions and capacity in communities to make positive youth development outcomes realistic (Gambone & Connell, 2004).

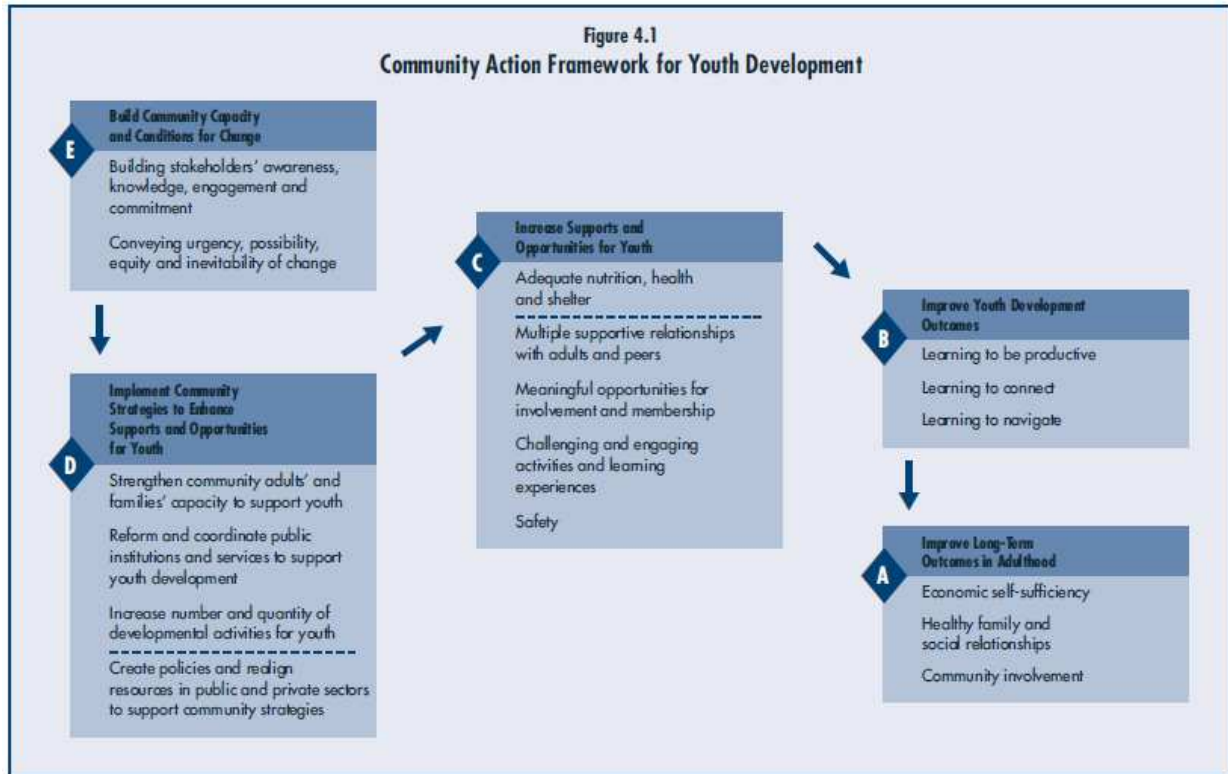


Figure 3. Community action framework for youth development. Adapted from “The Community Action Framework for Youth Development,” by M. A. Gambone and J. P. Connell, 2004, *The Prevention Researcher*, 11, p. 18. Copyright 2004 by the Youth Development Strategies, Inc. and Institute for Research and Reform in Education.

Camp can influence this model in the Supports and Opportunities area (Box C). Camp can create a safe environment for participants, provide meaningful opportunities for youth to be involved and participate, offer challenging activities, provide supportive relationships with peers and staff, and offer healthy food and activities. These components to positive youth development build social and relationship skills, productivity and work ethic, and responsibility in young people. All of these ultimately lead to positive behaviors as adults (Bialeschki & Scanlin, 2005).

The anatomy and features of a program, which can be aligned with a quality youth development model, are directly tied to youth development outcomes. A number of necessary components must be included in a program for positive youth development outcomes to occur (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Some of those pieces include opportunities to belong and make a

difference; the chance for skill-building to occur; physical and psychological safety; the integration of family, school, and community efforts; supportive relationships; a developmental framework; commitment to evaluation; appropriate structure; trained staff; and positive social norms (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Research also indicates the high value of an open and welcoming environment for youth programs (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). It is important for youth to feel involved and at-ease to have a positive experience when they take part in programs.

The Eight Keys to Quality Youth Development is another framework that shares some similarities with the Community Action Framework for Youth Development (Deidrick et al., 2004). All 4-H clubs are developed on the foundation of the Eight Keys to Quality Youth Development. The first of these keys is that youth feel physically and emotionally safe. Youth must experience belonging and feel ownership in the group. Youth must develop self-worth through meaningful contribution to the club. Youth must have the opportunity to discover self. Youth must also develop quality relationships with peers and adults. Youth must discuss conflicting values and form their own values. Youth should feel the pride and accountability that comes with mastery. Finally, youth should expand their capacity to enjoy life and know success is possible (Deidrick et al., 2004).

The 4-H program is a widely-recognized component of the CES that has positive youth development as its focus. 4-H is a leadership and educational program open to school-aged youth throughout the United States. Some states even allow young people to be involved in 4-H during their first year of college. Youth who have started school but are below their state's minimum age requirement can be involved in an introductory program that offers similar opportunities to 4-H but is tailored specifically for younger age groups. 4-H exists in all 50 states, internationally, and on military installations. The mission of Minnesota 4-H Youth Development is "to engage youth, in partnership with adults, in learning opportunities that shape and enable them to reach

their potential as active citizens in a global community” (Deidrick et al., 2004, p. 5). The vision statement for Minnesota 4-H is that “Minnesota 4-H Youth Development is recognized and respected by a broad cross-section of audiences as a leader in the application of positive youth development through educational programs that balance research, design, and practice” (Deidrick et al., 2004, p. 5).

4-H is typically organized by clubs. The clubs may be community-based or can be composed of individuals with similar interests from throughout a county. Members and leaders could organize a dog club or nutrition club, for example. Clubs can also be site-based, meaning they meet in the area where members live (i.e. public housing sites or neighborhood community centers). Likewise, after-school clubs, which meet in the school after class hours, also exist. Regardless of the type of club, all clubs meet regularly, have educational programs, plan and conduct service activities, and hold social functions (Deidrick et al., 2004).

Clubs are a long-term learning opportunity in 4-H, but several short-term learning opportunities also exist. One of these is camping. Camping has played an instrumental role in 4-H historically. The camping movement in 4-H is popular for several reasons. Two of the most commonly listed are the informality of the experience and the relationships that are cultivated at camp. Camp also gives youth the chance to work outside of their community clubs to build leadership skills and address motivation, relationship-building, and team building with a new set of peers (Van Horn, Flanagan, & Thomson, 1998).

The first documented 4-H camp was held for boys in Missouri in 1907 (Rasmussen, 1989). This paved the way for a number of other states to have 4-H camps. West Virginia created a fixed campsite in 1921 that is still in use. The first role of 4-H camp was as an incentive and to provide encouragement for youth leaders. The first documented national 4-H camp was held in 1927 in Washington, D.C., but the camp was requested by state directors of Extension to USDA

leaders in 1925. The purpose of the camp was to help youth learn about the national government, to allow state leaders to meet, and to serve as an incentive leadership development opportunity for junior leaders. It was also held at a time that influenced relevant congressional proceedings (Wessel & Wessel, 1982).

The opportunity for attendees of the first 4-H camp to meet with governmental officials was valuable not only to learn about the government and leadership, but also because the 4-H Youth Development program is a part of the CES. CES goes by different names, such as Cooperative Extension or University Extension, in different states. CES is a non-formal education delivery system that connects the USDA, local research and resources, and land-grant universities to citizens. CES was housed in the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) within the USDA (Cochrane, 1993). CSREES has since changed its name to the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) (USDA, 2012). CES was initially established and supported by the Smith-Lever Act of 1914. State cooperative extension systems still receive a portion of their funding (calculated according to a formula) through Smith-Lever funds.

Land-grant universities were established by the Morrill Act of 1862. This act gave each state a parcel of land that could be used in some way or sold to support the creation of a college. The size of the land parcel was decided by the number of legislative seats the state had in Congress. State-level Extension staff members typically have their offices at the state's land-grant college. Staff at the county level can consult with Extension staff at the regional and state level about topics of local interest. Staff at the regional and state level can also be of assistance regarding educational programs being hosted, informational publications being distributed, and information on state Extension websites. Each county offers different educational services and

programs from the CES. The decision about programs offered is based upon local need, input from a County Extension Committee, and funding levels (Cochrane, 1993).

As varied as Extension programs look among counties, so varied was the structure of 4-H clubs in different parts of the country. State leaders from the north and the south met for the first time at the national camp in 1927 and discussed the structural differences. In the south clubs were primarily based in schools, but clubs took more of a community focus in the north. Instead of deciding one structure was superior to the other, state leaders decided that as long as the two parts of the country could come to a consensus about the purpose and goals of club work, neither structure needed to be abandoned (Wessel & Wessel, 1982).

Young people had the opportunity to meet with government officials, share ideas with each other, and take part in general meetings at the first national camp. It was also at the first camp that state leaders adopted the 4-H pledge, which has barely been changed since then. A number of songs written especially for 4-H originated at the first camp, and more were added to the camp arsenal throughout the years. The camp accomplished its purpose of creating a consistent mission for the 4-H program nationally. In addition to the adopting of the pledge and writing songs, attendees decided to organize more programs intended specifically for older youth who were apathetic toward club work. This was done to address declining enrollment among older 4-H members (Wessel & Wessel, 1982).

Serving as a camp counselor is just one opportunity for older 4-H youth to expand their leadership skills. The camp counseling experience can be characterized by its duration, breadth, and intensity to explain all of its potential benefits (Figure 4). Research has suggested youth will gain more from their experience if there is a higher degree of all three of these elements (Chaput, Little, & Weiss, 2004).

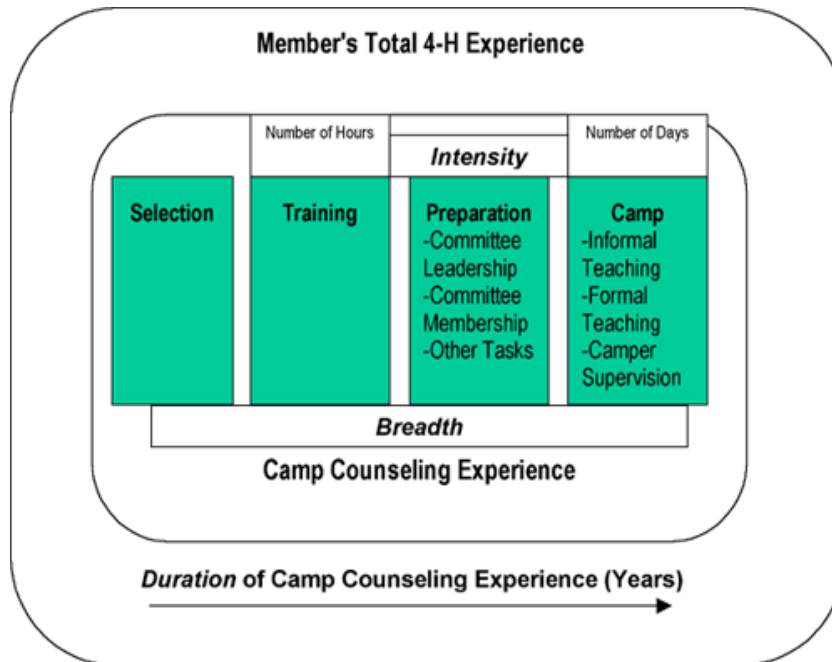


Figure 4. Member's total 4-H experience. Adapted from "Understanding and Measuring Attendance in Out-of-School Time Programs," by S. S. Chaput, P. M. D. Little, and H. Weiss, 2004, *Issues in Out-of-School Time Evaluation*, 7. Copyright 2004 by the Harvard Family Research Project.

4-H camp provides a unique experience for youth campers and counselors alike to undergo personal growth, especially the higher the degree of breadth, duration, and intensity. The goal of all 4-H programs is to aid in the expansion of the life skills of participants (Hendricks, 1996). Camp provides this opportunity in a community-oriented, organic environment with numerous chances to practice and grow independence, self-esteem, knowledge, responsibility, teamwork, and self-efficacy (Garst & Bruce, 2003; Powell, 2003). Additionally, participants often gain a greater respect and awareness of nature from spending time outdoors (Smith, 2001). Camp counselors, who are typically older 4-H members; camp staff; and amiable fellow campers all play an important role in creating an enjoyable and welcoming camp environment where participants have the opportunity to grow (Arnold, Bourdeau, & Nagele, 2005).

A study of 4-H campers in Virginia documented noteworthy growth as reported both by campers and by the parents of campers. Campers were asked to assess the degree to which the camp experience helped them acquire or grow in certain life skills from the Targeting Life Skills (TLS) Model (Hendricks, 1996). Parents were asked to assess the level of different life skills from the TLS Model apparent in campers before and after their camp experience. The eight domains of the TLS Model include working, living, caring, relating, giving, being, thinking, and managing (Garst & Bruce, 2003).

Campers thought the camp experience was most beneficial in assisting them to make new friends, develop new skills in areas they enjoy, be more independent and take care of themselves, learn more about different subjects, and develop closer friendships with people they already knew. According to parents, the highest ranking areas for campers after camp were having a good mental attitude, adapting to change, taking care of his/her own things, and handling successes and failures. The greatest areas of improvement for campers according to their parents were taking care of his/her own things, sharing work responsibilities, taking initiative and being a self-starter, and taking responsibility for his/her own actions (Garst & Bruce, 2003).

ACA Study Findings

The ACA released the findings from its first comprehensive study about the effects of residential camping experiences on youth in 2005 (ACA, 2005). The study, which involved 80 camps and over 5,000 families throughout the country, confirmed what several camp stakeholders have believed for some time: that camping plays a major role in the physical, social, and cognitive development of participants. Even though the results are not surprising to many people associated with organized camps, the study was an important step in documenting and realizing the significance of camping programs upon participants (Arnold et al., 2005).

Youth and parents reported several positive changes during the survey, and even though those positive changes were important and significant to researchers, the study did not shed light on the factors behind the reported positive outcomes. Researchers were then led to search for the programmatic factors that resulted in the positive changes reported in the first phase of research in the study. The second wave of research in this study was to analyze camp structure and program components in search of statistically significant components analogous to the positive changes described by campers and parents. Factors that were analyzed included sponsorship, camper fees, staff and training, developmental frameworks, session length, size of budget, supportive relationships, and day or resident structure (Henderson et al., 2006-2007).

Researchers did not find any differences between short-term camps and residential camps lasting at least one week that were statistically significant related to the training of staff, the degree of supportive relationships, youth development frameworks, or the configuration of camps (ACA, 2005). In other words resident camps lasting at least one week were equally as likely as short-term camps to produce positive outcomes. Likewise, the length of staff training was not statistically significant related to positive outcomes for participants (Henderson et al., 2006-2007).

When interpreting these results, it is important to note all of these camps also met or exceeded ACA accreditation standards. ACA camps are required to meet certain standards regarding operations and programming. Accreditation is approved annually based upon self-reporting, and a site visit to verify standards are met occurs every three years. Finding no differences might mean accreditation standards provide a solid foundation for positive youth development, regardless of the camp format (Henderson et al., 2006-2007). Even so, researchers went on to study how the different aspects of camp operated cohesively to elicit positive youth development outcomes (Henderson et al., 2006-2007).

The four aspects researchers focused upon were a developmental framework, appropriate structure, trained staff, and supportive relationships (Henderson et al., 2006-2007). Nearly 70% of camp directors said they had a strategic plan in place for their camp, with 16% saying they were in the process of developing one. Ninety percent of the directors said their camp had a mission statement; 45% said they thought they were effective at activating their mission statement. Contents of mission statements ranged from providing progression in camp activities to focusing upon the quality of staff and camper interaction to being intentional about the grouping of campers (Henderson et al., 2006-2007).

In terms of structure, more than 50% of the camps had sessions that lasted only one week. Length of sessions ranged from five days to 53 days, with 14 days being the average session length. Over 80% of camps indicated they were a “general camp,” meaning they had a variety of programs, compared to 18% who considered themselves specialty camps. At any given time, the average number of campers at camp was 190; the median was 144 campers. Half of the camps had summer operating budgets of over \$250,000. The average summer operating budget was \$375,430, but the range was from under \$10,000 to over \$2 million. Eighty percent of the directors from the survey said campers had some level of input in planning program activities. All directors said campers had some input in the evaluation process, while 60% said campers had considerable involvement (Henderson et al., 2006-2007).

Over 75% of the camp directors were year-round, full-time employees, and only 9% were seasonal employees. Over 80% of directors were over 31 years old, and the gender split was nearly 50-50. Over 90% of directors had at least a bachelor’s degree, and nearly 40% had attained a master’s degree. Camp directors had been campers themselves for just over five years and camp staff members for around eight years. Most staff members working at camps were 18-24 years old. On average, less than five staff members were under the age of 18 per camp. The

average pre-camp training length for staff was 60 hours per camp season. About one third of directors did not think staff training was long enough, but almost 60% said they thought the amount of time was appropriate (Henderson et al., 2006-2007).

The average size of a camp staff was 42 staff members, but the range was from 2 to 168 staff members. Over 70% of camps had staff members sleeping in the same cabin or building as the campers. ACA standards say the ratio of staff to campers should reflect the age and developmental levels of campers. The staff-to-camper ratio in over half of the camps in the study was 1:3; the average staff-to-camper ratio including only staff assigned to campers – not including office staff, cooks, health supervisors, maintenance personnel, and other support staff – was 1:4 (Henderson et al., 2006-2007).

Benefits of the Camp Counseling Experience

Camp has a special place in the 4-H environment. Unlike many other 4-H activities, camp is in an atmosphere of little competition, unlike county fair or other contests (Digby & Ferrari, 2007). Counselors in a Wisconsin 4-H camp study were asked about characteristics of camp counseling that make it unique. The top three aspects of counseling they listed were understanding and working with children (25%), responsibility (22%), and role modeling (11%) (Forsythe, Matysik, & Nelson, 2004).

There are a number of studies that document the benefits of the camp experience for campers, but relatively few document the benefits of camp for counselors (Digby & Ferrari, 2007). Camping is considered both a delivery mode in 4-H and a valuable atmosphere in which youth development can occur (Garst & Johnson, 2005). Camping has been shown to promote interpersonal skills, communication, and leadership skills, and camp counseling has been shown to develop leadership and life skills in counselors (Thomas, 1996).

A 2006 study of 4-H camp counselor alumni in Oregon investigated the long-term impact of the camp counseling experience upon counselors. The study focused on personal experience as a counselor, the development of life skills from the TLS Model (Hendricks, 1996), and the development of skills for working with youth and groups. On a one (very untrue) to five (extremely true) scale, the highest score was 4.13 ($SD = 1$) in the area of gaining self-confidence by being a camp counselor; the lowest score was 2.62 ($SD = 1.48$) in the area of considering a future career working with youth. These findings were in a part of the survey pertaining to the impact of being a counselor upon personal development (Brandt & Arnold, 2006).

The finding that counselors gained self-confidence is significant because a major developmental charge for adolescents is that of developing their identity. Being entrusted with tasks that require responsibility and having important assignments help adolescents build confidence, define and shape their identity, and develop initiative. Former camp counselors in Ohio also identified personal growth as an outcome of the camp counseling experience. Being charged with the task of leading activities and teaching campers was significant for a number of the Ohio counselors (Digby & Ferrari, 2007).

The second area in the Oregon study was the development of life skills through serving as a camp counselor. On the same one (very untrue) to five (extremely true) scale, the highest score was 4.49 ($SD = 0.7$) in the area of leadership, and the lowest score was 3.66 ($SD = 1.02$) in the area of goal setting. Other high scores were in the areas of teamwork ($M = 4.40$; $SD = 0.75$), contribution to a group effort ($M = 4.40$; $SD = 0.8$), responsible citizenship ($M = 4.12$; $SD = 0.93$), and problem solving ($M = 4.11$; $SD = 0.92$). Other low scores were in the areas of managing feelings ($M = 3.69$; $SD = 1.04$) and self-discipline ($M = 3.67$; $SD = 1.03$) (Brandt & Arnold, 2006).

In the section of the Oregon survey related to skill development pertinent to working with youth, the highest mean score was 4.46 in the area of being a role model to others. The lowest mean score was 3.37 in knowledge of child development. Other high scores were in the areas of how to lead groups, how to encourage and support others, and how to facilitate groups of children. Other low scores were in the areas of how to plan educational activities (3.94) and how to handle emergency situations (3.75). All four of the highest skills were in the “Hands” quadrant of the TLS Model (Brandt & Arnold, 2006).

Participants in the Oregon study also commented about the importance of and satisfaction in the friendships they developed with other counselors during their experience. Other frequent themes were the significant role counselors had taking care of youth and the positive influence they had the chance to make upon those youth. The study indicated that serving as a 4-H camp counselor had a long-term, positive effect upon the counselors (Brandt & Arnold, 2006).

A 4-H camp study in Virginia also listed a number of benefits for camp counselors. The study found that leading campers helped counselors become more responsible for themselves and for youth; manage and problem-solve in stressful situations; communicate effectively with adults, peers, and campers; and overcome shyness. Counselors also appreciated the opportunity to mentor and gain an understanding of campers. Counselors reported learning how to respect campers as individuals, how to communicate and be assertive with campers without misusing their power, patience, and how to vary their strategies with different youth (Garst & Johnson, 2005). Counselors also explained their difficulty talking to their non-camp friends about their camp experience. Camp had a negative connotation among the friends of participants because many of those friends did not realize the value of or reason for camp (Garst & Johnson, 2005).

Counselors appreciate and value the opportunity to accept a leadership role (Digby & Ferrari, 2007). They recognize the value and authenticity of this responsibility within 4-H.

Likewise, counselors also acknowledge the relationships developed at camp among counselors and between campers and counselors are deeper than many other relationships formed in 4-H. Bonds and relationships are augmented by the experience of spending non-stop days and weeks with the same group of people (Digby & Ferrari, 2007).

A Wisconsin study indicated several positive results of the camp counseling experience. In a survey of 274 camp counselors, 36% reported developing leadership skills as a result of their time at camp. People skills/working with youth (27%), communication (19%), patience/tolerance (18%), and responsibility (17%) were the next four highest ranking skills identified. The research team had initially split the skill of leadership development into four elements: communication, planning and organizing, decision-making, and teamwork. Three of those four skills (communication, planning and organizing, and teamwork) were listed in the top eight skills identified by counselors (Forsythe et al., 2004).

The TLS Model is not the only assessment model for evaluating the camp counselor experience. A 2006 census study of Louisiana 4-H camp counselors seeking to understand the developmental experiences of 4-H summer camp counselors used the Youth Experiences Survey (YES) 2.0 to assess the developmental experiences of counselors (Carter & Kotrlik, 2008). Seven scales are included in the YES 2.0 survey: adult networks and social capital, positive relationships, initiative experiences, basic skills, teamwork and social skills, identity experiences, and negative experiences. Survey results indicated that youth had “quite a bit” (grand mean of 2.5-3.49) of experience with the first six of those scales. Counselors had “a little” experience (grand mean of 1.5-2.49) in the negative experiences scale. The teamwork and social skills scale had the highest overall mean (Carter & Kotrlik, 2008).

Counselors in the Ohio study both learned a number of skills and were able to transfer those skills from a camp setting to other aspects of their lives, whether that was as a community

member, as an employee, or as a student (Digby & Ferrari, 2007). Counselors listed leadership as the most important skill they were able to transfer from the camp context to other contexts. They also listed initiative, adaptability, flexibility, and time management as important skills they were able to carry from the camp setting to other settings (Digby & Ferrari, 2007).

In the Wisconsin study, counselors were also asked to identify skills from camp that would be transferred to applicable use in their communities. More than 90% of counselors marked one skill or more they would take from camp and use in their life outside of camp (Forsythe et al., 2004). The top skill listed by counselors was working with children (27%). Other skills listed in the top five were leadership and taking charge (20%), communication/listening (13%), teamwork/working together on a goal (12%), and planning and organizing (11%) (Forsythe et al., 2004).

The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) report was used in the Ohio study to measure whether or not skills gained as a camp counselor could be transferred to the workforce (Digby & Ferrari, 2007). Five competencies: resources, technology, information, systems, and interpersonal are a part of the SCANS report. Three foundation skills: thinking skills, personal qualities, and basic skills are also a part of the SCANS report. Results from the survey indicated that all three foundation skills were met at camp (Digby & Ferrari, 2007). All of the competencies except technology were also met by the camp experience, according to the authors. In the same survey, Digby and Ferrari (2007) found that camp counselors acknowledged the development of life skills throughout their experience as camp counselors. According to the authors, camp counselors reported their decision making, planning and organizing, interpersonal skills, leadership, teamwork, and communication were all enhanced by serving as camp counselors.

Counselors in the Wisconsin study were asked to shed light upon how working at camp would prepare them for future employment. Over 95% of the counselors identified at least one skill they could use from camp in their professional careers. The skill counselors rated highest for this question was communication/communication skills (19%). The next four highest ranking skills were teamwork (17%), leadership skills (16%), planning/organization/being prepared (15%), and how to work with/deal with kids (11%). Not only was the camp counseling experience educational, but it was also gratifying and satisfying for counselors. In addition to the numerous benefits of their camp counseling experience to their communities and future careers, plus their general skill development, over 90% of counselors also reported that they enjoyed their time at camp (Forsythe et al., 2004).

Counselors in the Ohio study also described the camp counseling experience as a chance to learn about potential future careers. The job was an indirect opportunity for those counselors who realized they wanted jobs later in life that allowed them to help people or feel great intrinsic reward. It was a direct opportunity for counselors who learned they wanted to enter a career field that involved working with people or helping people (Digby & Ferrari, 2007). This finding is in opposition to a study that found counselors did not feel their camp counseling experience led them toward a career that involved working with children (Brandt & Arnold, 2006). It supported the findings of another study in which counselors could identify one skill that was developed as a result of camp counseling that would help them in a job they desired in the future (Forsythe et al., 2004).

Research has revealed a number of benefits of the camp counseling experience, but very few issues or problems have been reported. Aside from the Virginia study (Garst & Johnson, 2005) in which 4-H camp counselors admitted having difficulty talking to friends who were not counselors about camp because of the negative connotation those friends associated with camp,

no issues or problems were reported in the studies above. A study of Ohio 4-H youth who were camp counselors in the summer of 2004 used the YES tool to assess the experience of counselors. Though most of the findings were positive, certain statements about negative experiences did have slightly higher frequencies than the rest of the negative statements. Those statements with higher frequencies included higher stress, interference with family activities, the presence of cliques, the presence of controlling adults, and unfair workloads (Ferrari & McNeely, 2007).

Summary

Transformative learning has a critical role in positive youth development. It is different from other types of learning in that its intended result is long-lasting attitude and behavioral change. Transformative learning is a deeply-embedded, individual phenomenon for those who experience it. Just because an Extension program (or any other program) is rich in content and process does not mean transformative learning will occur. Many conditions in Extension programs make them conducive to the transformative learning experience. The five ways Extension can make experiences transformative, according to a study originating at Cornell University, include strong partner facilitation; establishing a common purpose among participants; focusing on critical events and issues; encouraging “independence with interdependence” (a combination of personal thought and working with others to maximize results); and critical introspective, task-oriented, and process-oriented reflection (Franz, 2003).

Many factors of the 4-H camp experience encourage transformative learning. A few examples include the non-artificial and non-ornate outdoor environment, the opportunity to work toward a focused goal, camp traditions, and supportive relationships with peers and adults. Counselors in Virginia reported receiving encouragement for change from their supervisor, practicing independence, leaving their comfort zones, and the notion that camp was a safe place

for personal change to occur (Franz et al., 2009). Other positive outcomes from the camp counselor experience include stronger interpersonal skills, teamwork, leadership, responsibility, and technical skill development (Bialeschki, Henderson, & Dahowski, 1998).

This chapter provided an introduction to transformative learning and its background. It went on to give a brief history of Extension and 4-H, as well as the significance of positive youth development and camp's role in positive youth development. It also included a brief look at the beginning of the 4-H camp movement.

CHAPTER 3: METHODS

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the developmental experiences of 4-H members who serve as youth camp counselors at Minnesota 4-H summer camps. The study sought to examine the extent to which counselors attribute transformative learning to the youth camp counselor experience and to learn more about the characteristics that describe Minnesota 4-H Youth Camp counselors. Objectives that guided research were:

- Determining whether participating in Minnesota 4-H Youth Camp as a counselor has caused deep personal change;
- Measuring the extent to which 4-H youth camp involvement as a counselor has changed counselors in a number of ways;
- Identifying which factors have promoted or influenced the personal transformation or change of youth camp counselors;
- Determining which characteristics of camp have been important for the changes that youth camp counselors attribute to the 4-H camp experience; and
- Identifying characteristics of 4-H youth who serve as counselors at Minnesota 4-H summer youth camps.

This chapter describes the methods used to develop an instrument and collect and analyze the data. The research design, a description of the participants, a description of the instrument, and a description of the procedures are explained. Validity is also included in this chapter, along with assumptions and limitations.

Research Design

To assess the extent to which the 4-H camp counseling experience elicited transformative learning among camp counselors, a descriptive survey design was used. The survey instrument measured the degree to which 4-H camp involvement as a counselor changed participants in a

number of ways. It also assessed the degree to which a number of factors and conditions promoted or influenced the personal transformation or change in participants and the degree to which certain characteristics of camp were important for the changes attributed to the 4-H camp experience. Counselors were also asked to describe their favorite 4-H camp experience as a counselor, how they would tell a friend camp has changed them, and demographic information. Demographic questions included gender, age, ethnicity, summers served as a youth camp counselor, years of camp experience in any role, and location of 4-H camp.

Participants

The target population of the survey was camp counselors at 4-H youth camps in the state of Minnesota. This study was designed to describe high school and college-aged 4-H members through their experience as a 4-H camp counselor. Because of the small number of overnight regional youth camp counselors in Minnesota, all overnight regional youth camp counselors in Minnesota were invited to participate. The population consisted of high school students and college students who served as camp counselors during the summer of 2012. A census was conducted because of the small population size. Each participant was at least 14 years of age, was a current or former 4-H member, and had served as a 4-H camp counselor in Minnesota for at least one year. Camp counselors were not paid for their service as counselors.

Contact information for potential participants was collected from Extension Educators for Regional 4-H Youth Development Programs. The online survey instrument was e-mailed to 75 potential participants. Thirty-seven participants responded, resulting in a 49% response rate. Response rate was calculated by dividing the number of counselors who participated in the survey by the total number of camp counselors in the state. Of the 37 responses, 29 participants completed the survey in its entirety. Nine of the respondents identified themselves as males, and

17 identified themselves as females; three participants did not respond to the question asking about their gender.

Instrument

This study used the “Transformative Learning and the Camp Experience Staff Member Survey.” The survey instrument was originally used in the state of Virginia to assess the camp counselor experience (Franz et al., 2009). The major difference between the Minnesota study and the Virginia study was the duration of the camp experience. Virginia 4-H camp counselors serve as counselors all summer, while Minnesota camp counselors make a three-day commitment.

Questions on the survey instrument were derived from information provided by focus groups there. The survey was conducted in Minnesota in a web-based format using Qualtrics Survey Software. Field testing was not done prior to administering the survey in Minnesota. The survey instrument was piloted before it was administered in Virginia. No reliability statistics on the survey were calculated in the Virginia study because the survey was developed directly from focus group findings; reliability statistics were not calculated in Minnesota either. The survey was shared with members of the state leadership team in Minnesota to help assess face validity and construct validity for the Minnesota 4-H camping program. No changes were made by the state leadership team.

The survey contained a combination of open-ended questions, Likert-scale questions, and demographic questions. The Likert scale (1932) is a common method for measuring attitudes about a topic in surveys. The scale was developed by Rensis Likert and asks respondents to indicate the extent to which they agree or disagree with a statement – *strongly agree*, *agree*, *neutral* or *undecided*, *disagree*, or *strongly disagree*. The levels of agreement are assigned a numeric value, and the scores for each individual for each item are added together to gauge the respondent’s attitude about a topic (Ary, Sorensen, & Jacobs, 2010).

The survey instrument was used in its original form in Minnesota, with the addition of a *neutral* option. Even though there is some controversy among researchers about whether or not to include a *neutral* option in Likert scales, many researchers favor its inclusion because some respondents actually have a neutral feeling toward a statement and do not want to be pressured to agree or disagree (Ary et al., 2010). No staff member or researcher was present when the surveys were taken, so participants were provided written instructions about completion via e-mail and at the beginning of the survey. Because nobody was present to check the surveys for completion and because of the possibility of technical difficulties, not all surveys were completed. Unanswered questions were not included in the statistical analysis.

In Virginia and Minnesota alike, the survey was delivered in a web-based format (Franz et al., 2009). There are a number of advantages to web-based surveys. Compared to mailed questionnaires, web-based surveys tend to be finished sooner and more completely. Open-ended questions generally get more thorough responses in web-based surveys than in mailed surveys. Web-based surveys can also be completed at a pace the respondents choose. Similar to mailed surveys, web-based surveys have a higher response rate if potential respondents receive a letter explaining the survey before they actually receive the survey (Dillman, 2000).

There are more advantages to web-based surveys. They are less expensive to administer than mail, telephone, and directly-administered surveys. There is less effort, time, and cost invested in inputting data for analysis in web-based surveys than mail and telephone surveys and directly-administered surveys (Dillman, 2000).

Not only do web-based surveys have advantages for researchers, but they are also convenient for respondents. As a matter of fact, a University of Colorado study found that 55% of respondents preferred web-based surveys because of ease of use (Cook, Heath, & Thompson,

2000). The key benefit identified by survey participants was that web-based surveys are available around the clock, so respondents can complete them at any time (Cook et al., 2000).

Even though web-based surveys have advantages for researchers and survey participants, there is conflicting information about response rates in web-based surveys. The consensus seems to be that the response rate is lower for web-based surveys than directly-administered surveys. One meta-analysis of web-based surveys resulted in an average response rate of 39.6% (Cook et al., 2000). Another study found an average response rate of 50% for web-based surveys (Dillman & Bowker, 2001). In the same study, Dillman and Bowker (2001) found the average response rate of mail and telephone surveys to be 80%.

Variables were measured by determining the frequencies, percentages, and standard deviations of responses for the questions. Potential changes that result from camp involvement such as increased confidence, improved leadership skills, a better ability to solve problems, more respect for others, and exposure to new experiences were assessed using scaled items. The scale was as follows: “1 – *strongly disagree*”, “2 – *disagree*”, “3 – *neutral*”, “4 – *agree*”, and “5 – *strongly agree*.” Conditions that potentially promote transformative learning in camp staff such as relationships developed with a supervisor, being part of a unified group, camp cultures and traditions, opportunities for leadership, and opportunities to be a role model for campers and other staff were measured the same way. Characteristics of camp that might have contributed to transformative learning, such as the safety of camp and the opportunity to learn and master new skills, were measured this way too.

Open-ended questions were also included in the survey. These questions asked about the participants’ favorite camp experience as a counselor, what they would tell a friend about how camp has changed them, and any other comments they have about how camp has changed them. Responses to these questions were analyzed by noting themes in participants’ responses.

Validity

Face validity, construct validity, and criterion-related validity should all be considered in survey research. Face validity measures the extent to which survey questions measure what the survey is actually meant to assess; face validity focuses on the relevancy of the survey questions. Construct validity can be examined by having individuals familiar with the program assess the appropriateness of the questions for what the survey is trying to measure (Ary et al., 2010). Construct validity was verified by having the survey reviewed by the state leadership team and an evaluation specialist in Minnesota.

Criterion-related validity measures survey response against another variable, such as observed behavior, to determine whether the survey's responses are reflected in the second variable (Ary et al., 2010). Criterion-related validity for the survey was assessed by triangulating data with research team observations, facilitator and observer notes, and focus group transcripts in the Virginia study (Franz et al., 2009).

Data Collection

Informed consent was obtained by distributing a consent statement and assent statement along with the survey. The consent statement was to be printed, signed, and returned to the researcher. The assent statement was the first object in the survey; participants had to agree to it in order to complete the rest of the survey. The informed consent statement was only required for counselors under the age of 18. Qualtrics made it possible to match ages with respondents, so responses by participants under the age of 18 who did not return an informed consent form were eliminated from the final data analysis. The survey was administered in the January and February after camp. There were eight youth camp sites throughout the state that were listed on the Minnesota 4-H website. This number was verified by contacting Extension Educators for

Regional 4-H Youth Development Programs by e-mail and examining year-end data reported from throughout Minnesota in the 4HOnline software program.

The same survey was administered to all participants, and no time limits were set. Four total contacts occurred with potential participants. The first one was an e-mail to explain the purpose and importance of the study, to distribute informed consent statements, and to provide a link to the survey. The second and third contacts were reminders to encourage participation and remind counselors of the purpose and importance of the study. The final contact was to thank participants and invite potential participants one last time to complete the survey.

To encourage a high response rate, Ary, Jacobs, and Sorensen (2010) recommend following up the initial survey with three reminders. The first reminder should be sent approximately a week after the initial mailing, the second follow-up should be sent about three weeks after the original mailing, and the final reminder should be sent six to seven weeks after the initial mailing (Ary et al., 2010). Three reminders were sent after the initial mailing of the Minnesota survey. The first reminder was sent approximately two weeks after the initial mailing. The second reminder was sent six weeks after the initial mailing, and the final reminder was sent eight weeks after the initial mailing.

Another effective way to increase the response rate for a survey is the use of a monetary incentive. A number of studies (Helgeson, Voss, & Terpening, 2002; Jobber, Saunders, & Mitchell, 2004; Newby, Watson, & Woodliff, 2003) found monetary incentives to be an effective way to increase response rates. Unfortunately, there was no budget for conducting the Minnesota survey, so no monetary incentive could be awarded to respondents.

Despite efforts for achieving a high response rate, nonresponse can be a major problem in survey research and should not be ignored. If nonresponse is not random, it can bias research results (Ary et al., 2010). A recent study, however, asserted that low response may not indicate

bias and may not have as serious of an effect on research as once thought (McCarty, 2003).

Another study indicated that investing more time and effort into acquiring a higher response rate was beneficial, but only to a certain point. In other words, there was a point beyond which the cost and efforts of achieving a higher response rate were only marginally beneficial (Teitler, Reichman, & Sprachman, 2003). While neither of these studies endorse a low response rate, they do assert that a low response rate might not necessarily indicate biased results.

Ary et al., (2010) suggests three ways to deal with nonresponse. The first is to compare the demographics of respondents to those of the population. If the two groups resemble each other, then it is acceptable to assume nonrespondents and respondents also resemble each other. The second way is to compare early respondents to late respondents. Nonrespondents generally resemble late respondents, so if early and late respondents appear similar, then it is likely that nonrespondents resemble the rest of the respondents. The last way to deal with nonresponse is to interview a sample of nonrespondents. Nonrespondents can be interviewed using the survey questions. The statistics gathered from nonrespondents can be compared to respondents to determine whether or not there are major differences between the two groups (Ary et al., 2010).

Nonresponse was addressed in the Minnesota study by interviewing five people who did not respond to the web-based survey. Five names were drawn from the list of potential respondents who did not complete the survey. Each of the five respondents was willing to answer the survey questions over the telephone. Data from these five respondents were used as late-response data and compared to the data from respondents. There were no significant differences between the responses from the five surveys conducted by telephone and those conducted in the web-based format, which indicated there were no significant differences between respondents and nonrespondents.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to address all five objectives. Characteristics of youth who serve as 4-H camp counselors were measured in terms of age, number of years as a camp counselor, gender and ethnicity of 4-H camp counselors, years of camp experience (in any role), and location of the camp. Percentages and frequencies by category were calculated. Means and standard deviations were calculated for age, number of summers as a counselor, and years of camp experience (in any role).

An initial question asked whether or not camp counselors had experienced deep personal change as a result of their camp counseling experience; a contingency question asked the extent to which counselors agree or disagree that being a counselor has changed them in a variety of ways. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for each variable, and means and standard deviations of the scale for each variable were also tabulated. Two subsequent questions asked the degree to which certain factors or conditions promoted or influenced personal change and the degree to which certain characteristics of camp had been attributed to the changes credited to the 4-H camp experience. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were also used to measure responses to these two questions.

Open-ended questions regarding the favorite part of camp for counselors, how they would tell a friend camp has changed them, and additional comments about how camp has changed them were also a part of the survey. Written responses to these questions were recorded and included in the data analysis. Themes were ascertained from responses to these questions. The frequency of common answers, the number of answers, and examples of the variety of answers were recorded and included in the data analysis. Correlations between the characteristics of counselors and the prevalence of transformative learning, ways counselors experienced change, factors or conditions that promoted personal change, and characteristics of camp that had been

attributed to personal transformation were also assessed. Qualtrics was used to analyze much of the quantitative data.

Assumptions and Limitations

The following assumptions and limitations of this study should be considered:

- This study applied specifically to 4-H camp counselors in the state of Minnesota, and the findings might not be applicable to other states;
- Teenage years are years of rapid change for adolescents. Though change might be reported, it is difficult to discern whether it was actually because of the camp experience or if it was a result of normal maturing;
- This study focused on camp counselors who served at youth camp, so the findings might not apply to counselors at teen camp. Campers at youth camp are in grades 3-6. Campers at teen camp are in grades 6-8. Counselors at youth camp must have completed grade 9; counselors at teen camp must have completed grade 10; and
- This study included counselors at general youth 4-H camps in greater Minnesota; its findings might not apply to urban camping experiences or specialty camps (i.e. Operation: Military Kids Camp, Winter Nature Camp).

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to examine the developmental experiences of 4-H members who serve as youth camp counselors at Minnesota 4-H summer camps. The study sought to examine the extent to which counselors attribute transformative learning to the youth camp counselor experience and to learn more about the characteristics that describe Minnesota 4-H youth camp counselors. The basis of this study was to gather data that would serve as a starting point for future studies about the 4-H youth camp counseling experience in Minnesota. The findings specific to the objectives in the chapter will be presented by 1) Select demographic characteristics of Minnesota 4-H Youth Camp counselors, 2) Degree to which counselors felt transformative learning occurred, 3) Perceived change as a result of the camp counselor experience, 4) Factors promoting and influencing personal transformation, and 5) Characteristics of camp leading to personal transformation.

The data for each objective were analyzed from three perspectives. The first perspective was that of all camp counselors who responded, which was presented for each section. The second perspective was analysis by gender. Last, comparisons were made between first-year counselors and returning counselors. These perspectives were chosen because they interested the researcher. Many other studies of camp counselors also analyzed results of the total group of respondents and by gender.

Demographic Characteristics

One objective of this study was to identify characteristics of 4-H youth who serve as counselors at Minnesota 4-H summer youth camps. Of 26 survey respondents, 17 (65%) identified themselves as female, and nine (35%) identified themselves as male. One person who responded to the rest of the demographic questions did not respond to the question about gender. Most of the respondents were 18 years of age or older. Ten respondents (37%) were 18 years of

age. Three of those 10 were males, and six were females. The person who did not respond to the question about gender was an 18-year-old. Five respondents (19%) were 19 years of age; two of the 19-year-olds were males, and three were females. Three respondents (11%) were 20 years of age; one was a male, and two were females. Only nine respondents were under the age of 18. Four respondents (15%), or one male and three females, were 16 years of age. Five respondents (19%) – two males and three females – were 17 years of age. The average age of participants in the study was 17.9 years of age. The average age for males was 18 years of age, and the average age for females was 17.9 years of age (Table 1; Figure 5).

Among the polled late respondents, two (40%) were male, and three (60%) were female. One late respondent (20%) was 15 years of age, one (20%) was 16 years of age, one (20%) was 17 years of age, one (20%) was 18 years of age, and one (20%) was 19 years of age. The average age of polled late respondents in the study was 17 years of age. The average age of male late respondents was 15.5 years old; the average age of female late respondents was 18 years of age (Table 1; Figure 5).

Table 1

Frequency and Percentage of Gender of Participants by Response Status

Gender	Respondent		Late respondent		Total Frequency
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	
Female	17	65	3	60	20
Male	9	35	2	40	11

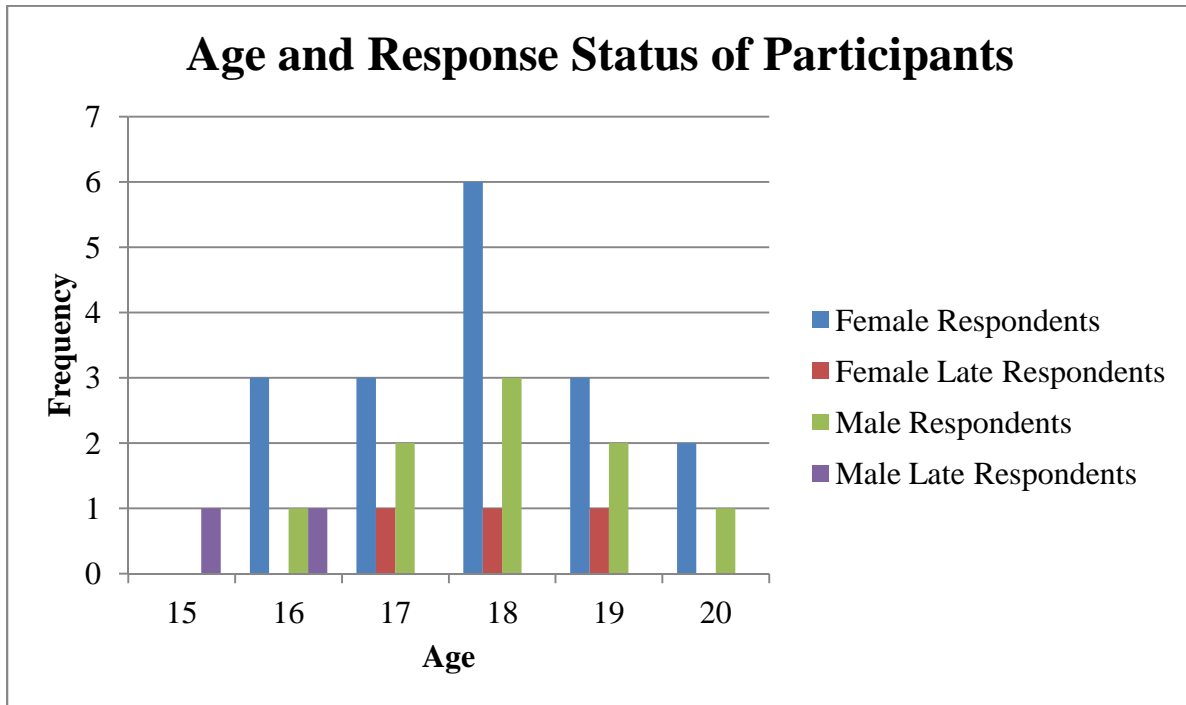


Figure 5. Age and response status of participants ($n = 31$).

In terms of ethnicity, participants in the study were a very homogenous group. Twenty-six participants (96%) identified themselves as white. One participant identified himself as black or African American. All of the late respondents identified themselves as white.

Participants in the study had a wide array of experience as camp counselors. Six respondents (22%) were first-year counselors, and 21 participants (78%) had been camp counselors before. Five respondents (9%) had been counselors for two years. Eight survey participants (30%) had been counselors for three years; four respondents (15%) had been counselors for four years. Four respondents (15%) had been camp counselors for five years (Figure 6). The average counselor who participated in the study had 2.8 years of experience as a camp counselor.

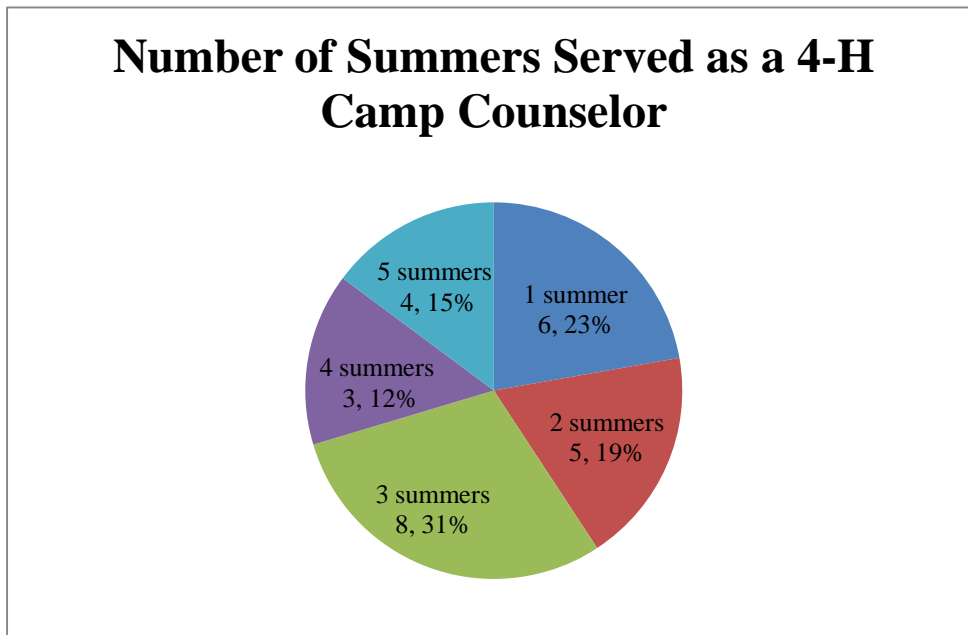


Figure 6. Number of summers served as a 4-H camp counselor ($n = 26$).

By gender, two males and four females were first-year counselors. Two males and three females had been counselors for two years. Three males and five females had been counselors for three years. One male and two females had been counselors for four years. One male and three females had been counselors for five years. Five males (56%) had been camp counselors for three years or longer, and 10 females (59%) had been counselors for three years or longer (Table 2).

Table 2

Frequency and Percentage of Number of Summers Served as a Counselor by Gender

Summers	Female		Male		Total	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	4	15	2	8	6	23
2	3	12	2	8	5	19
3	5	19	3	12	8	31
4	2	8	1	4	3	12
5	3	12	1	4	4	15

Respondents were also asked about their years of camp experience in any role. Years of experience ranged from one year up to 17 years. Nine respondents (33%) reported five or fewer years of camp experience. Six years was the mode for camp experience in any role; seven participants (25%) reported six years of camp experience. One respondent reported 17 years of camp experience (Figure 7). The response of seventeen years seems to be an outlier among the number of years of camp experience for counselors. This response might have been marked by mistake, or the respondent might have interpreted the question to mean the number of years he or she had been camping – not just at 4-H camp. The average amount of years of camp experience in any role was 6.9 years.

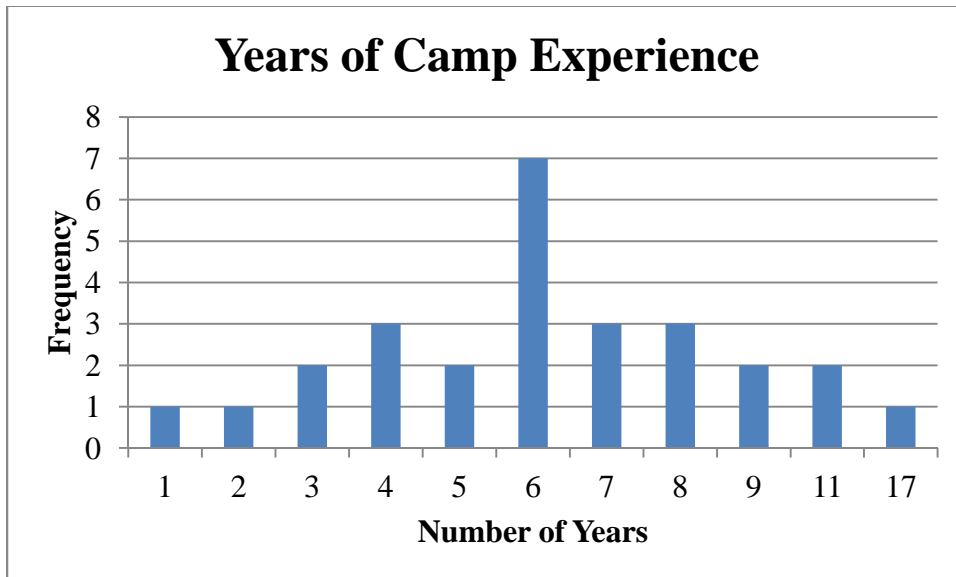


Figure 7. Years of camp experience ($N = 28$).

One male and eight females reported five or fewer years of camp experience in any role. One male and two females reported more than 10 years of camp experience in any role. The average years of camp experience in any role for males was 7.2 years. The average years of camp experience in any role for females was 6.1 years.

In summary thirty-seven (49%) 4-H youth camp counselors in Minnesota took the “Transformative Learning and the Camp Experience Staff Member Survey.” This data represents

a baseline for future studies about the 4-H youth camp counseling experience in Minnesota. The findings in this chapter show some similarities and differences between groups of counselors according to gender and experience as a 4-H camp counselor, but caution should be exercised when interpreting these results. This data is not significantly generalizable beyond the population of 4-H youth camp counselors in Minnesota because of a variety of factors differentiating 4-H camping programs throughout the United States.

Degree of Perceived Transformative Learning

Another objective of this study was to determine whether participating in Minnesota 4-H Youth Camp as a counselor caused deep personal change. Participants were asked to identify the extent to which they agreed with the statement *Participating in Minnesota 4-H camp as a counselor has caused deep personal change*. Participants rated the statement on a 5-point scale of *strongly agree* (5), *agree* (4), *neutral* (3), *disagree*, and *strongly disagree* (1). Of all youth camp counselors in Minnesota who participated in the study, 23 (83%) agreed or strongly agreed the camp counseling experience has caused deep personal change. Four participants (14%) were neutral about this statement, and only one participant (4%) strongly disagreed with this statement (Table 3). The mean value associated with this statement was 4.04 and the standard deviation was 0.88.

Table 3

Frequency and Percentage of Agreement about Personal Transformation among Youth Camp Counselors (N = 28)

Degree of Agreement	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	1	4
Disagree	0	0
Neutral	4	14
Agree	15	54
Strongly Agree	8	29

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Late respondents were also asked the degree to which they believed their experience as counselors resulted in transformative learning. No counselors strongly disagreed, disagreed, or were neutral about this statement. Four counselors (80%) agreed with this statement. One counselor (20%) strongly agreed with this statement (Table 4). The mean value associated with this statement for late respondents was 4.20 and the standard deviation was 0.45.

Table 4

Frequency and Percentage of Agreement about Personal Transformation among Late Respondents (N = 5)

Degree of Agreement	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Neutral	0	0
Agree	4	80
Strongly Agree	1	20

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

By gender, 17 females and nine males responded to this question. Two participants who answered this question did not specify their gender. One (11%) male strongly disagreed with the statement that camp counseling caused deep personal change. One (11%) male was neutral, five (56%) males agreed, and two (22%) males strongly agreed (Table 3).

Of the 17 females who responded, two (12%) were neutral about the statement that camp counseling caused deep personal change. Nine (53%) females agreed with the statement, and six (35%) strongly agreed with the statement (Table 5).

Table 5

Frequency and Percentage of Agreement about Personal Transformation among Counselors by Gender (N = 26)

Degree of Agreement	Female		Male	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0	0	1	11
Disagree	0	0	0	0
Neutral	2	12	1	11
Agree	9	53	5	56
Strongly Agree	6	35	2	22

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

This statement was also assessed based upon number of years as a camp counselor. Two (33%) first-year counselors were neutral about the statement that camp counseling caused deep personal change. Two (33%) first-year counselors agreed with the statement, and two (33%) first-year counselors strongly agreed with the statement that camp counseling caused deep personal change. Among returning counselors, one (5%) strongly disagreed about the statement that camp counseling caused deep personal change. One (5%) returning counselor was neutral about the statement, and 13 (62%) agreed with the statement. Six (29%) returning counselors strongly agreed that camp counseling caused deep personal change (Table 6).

Table 6

Frequency and Percentage of Agreement about Personal Transformation among Counselors by Experience (N = 27)

Degree of Agreement	First-Year		Returning	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly Disagree	0	0	1	5
Disagree	0	0	0	0
Neutral	2	33	1	5
Agree	2	33	13	62
Strongly Agree	2	33	6	29

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Favorite Parts of Camp

At the beginning of the survey, counselors were asked to describe their favorite part of camp as a counselor. Several of the counselors listed more than one aspect of camp as their favorite, resulting in a higher number of responses than respondents.

Sixteen of the responses alluded to the fact that counselors enjoyed working with campers. Variations of those responses included getting to know campers, making campers feel welcome, observing the growth of campers throughout their time at camp, seeing campers learn, watching campers enjoy themselves, and noticing the return of some of the same campers in successive years. Even though campers were listed by most counselors as their favorite part of camp, some counselors also mentioned the relationships they developed with their fellow counselors. Specifically, three counselors listed networking and building friendships with other counselors as their favorite parts of the camp experience (Figure 8).

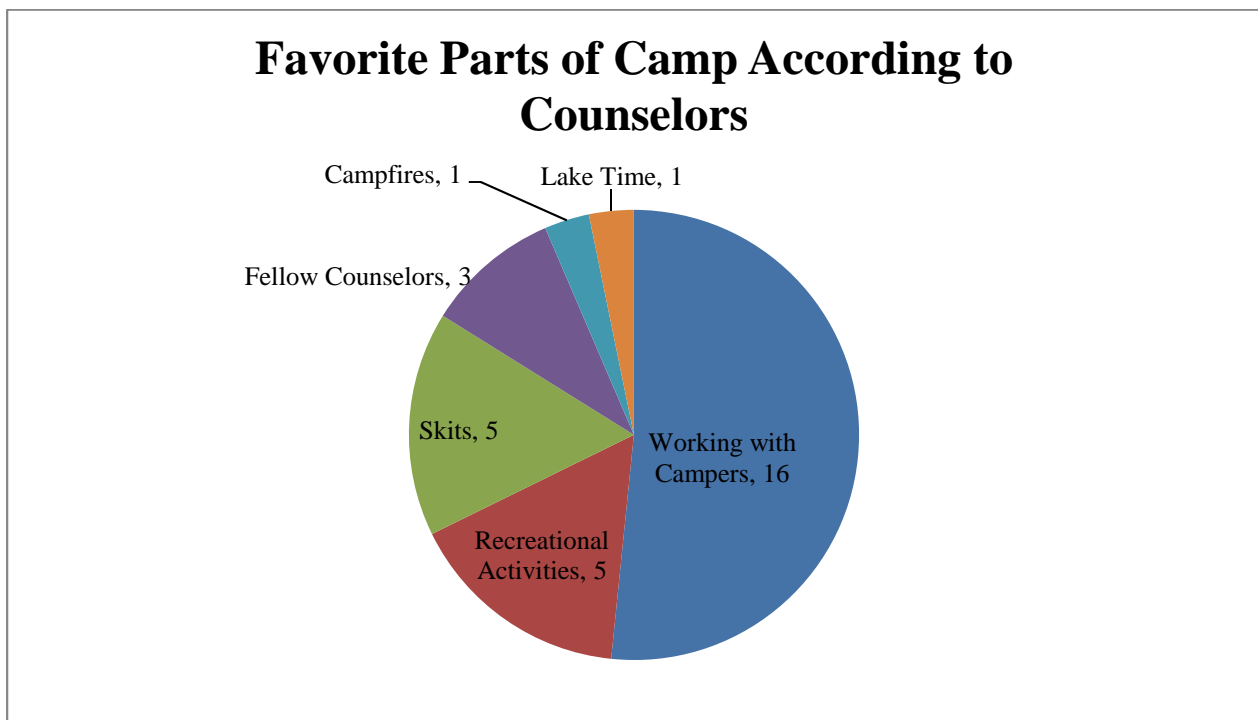


Figure 8. Favorite parts of camp according to counselors ($N = 28$).

One counselor commented, “I can’t really pinpoint one experience, but every time I see the campers have fun or learning something new, it makes me really happy. It’s why I continue to return as a counselor.” Another counselor summed up her camp experience with similar sentiments:

Choosing just one experience is almost impossible...camp is always a highlight of my summer. My favorite part of camp is always the campers, especially the girls in my cabin. Just getting to know them and building relationships with them is such a blessing to me.

A third counselor highlighted the importance of setting a good example for campers. “Seeing how impacted the campers were by my specific actions, and how they followed my examples of good behavior,” was that counselor’s favorite part of camp.

Perceived Change

A third objective of this study was to measure the extent to which 4-H youth camp involvement as a counselor changed counselors in a number of ways. Counselors were asked the extent to which their experience as a camp counselor changed them in a variety of ways. Counselors rated each statement on a 5-point scale of *strongly agree* (5), *agree* (4), *neutral* (3), *disagree* (2), and *strongly disagree* (1).

The highest ranking way counselors changed was by developing skills for working with children ($M = 4.81$). Other top five ways camp counseling changed counselors included being exposed to new people ($M = 4.67$), being exposed to new activities ($M = 4.59$), an improved ability to work with children ($M = 4.56$), and being exposed to new experiences ($M = 4.52$) (Table 7). All of these statements rated as *strongly agree* by participants.

Table 7

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Range of Top Five Ways Camp Counseling Changed Counselors (n = 27)

Statement	<i>n</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max
Developed skills for working with children	27	4.81	0.40	4	5
Exposed to new people	27	4.67	0.48	4	5
Exposed to new activities	27	4.59	0.57	3	5
Improved ability to work with children	27	4.56	0.58	3	5
Exposed to new experiences	27	4.52	0.64	3	5

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

While skills for working with children and being exposed to new people, experiences, and activities rated highly, counselors were less likely to agree with statements related to careers. Being more likely to change what they planned to do for a career ($M = 2.67$) and being more interested in a particular career ($M = 3.37$) both fell within the *neutral* range and had the lowest two means on the scale. Being more aware of what they wanted to do for a career ($M = 3.67$) received the next lowest rating. Being better able to show their identity or "true self" at home and in their community and developing career skills tied for fourth lowest ($M = 3.7$) on the scale (Table 8). The final three statements all fell within the *agree* range.

Table 8

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Range of Bottom Five Ways Camp Counseling Changed Counselors (n = 27)

Statement	<i>n</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max
More likely to change what they plan to do for a career	27	2.67	0.88	1	5
More interested in a particular career	27	3.37	1.01	1	5
More aware of what they want to do for a career	27	3.67	1.11	1	5
Better able to show identity or "true self" at home and in community	27	3.70	0.61	3	5
Developed career skills	27	3.70	0.72	2	5

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

When the data are examined by gender, females ranked developing skills for working with children ($M = 4.88$) as the way they were changed most by working at camp. Being exposed to new people was next ($M = 4.76$), followed by an improved ability to work with children ($M = 4.71$). The next two changes rated highest by females were exposure to new activities and improved people skills ($M = 4.59$). All of these statements rated as *strongly agree* by female participants.

Females rated being more likely to change what they plan to do for a career ($M = 2.71$) as the way they were changed least by working at camp. This statement fell within the *neutral* range. Next lowest on the list was being more interested in a particular career ($M = 3.53$). Being better able to show their identity or “true self” at home and in their community and receiving feedback on job performance ($M = 3.76$) were the next two lowest ranked changes by females. Improved followership skills, developing career skills, being more aware of what they want to do for a career, better understanding their identity, and being more willing or able to reflect upon and challenge their assumptions ($M = 3.82$) were tied for the next lowest rating among females. The eight final statements all fell within the *agree* range.

Males ranked being exposed to new activities and developing skills for working with children ($M = 4.75$) as the two ways they were changed most by working at camp. Four areas – being more willing or able to include and accept others who are different from them, improved leadership skills, exposure to new experiences, and exposure to new people ($M = 4.63$) – were rated equally among males (Table 9). All of these fell within the *strongly agree* range.

Table 9

Mean of Top Five Ways Camp Counseling Changed Counselors by Gender (n = 27)

Statement	Mean
Female	
Developed skills for working with children	4.88
Exposed to new people	4.76
Improved ability to work with children	4.71
Exposed to new activities	4.59
Improved people skills	4.59
Male	
Exposed to new activities	4.75
Developed skills for working with children	4.75
More willing/able to include and accept others who are different from them	4.63
Improved leadership skills	4.63
Exposed to new experiences	4.63
Exposed to new people	4.63

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. More than five statements were included in the table if several statements had equal means.

Like their female counterparts, males rated being more likely to change what they plan to do for a career ($M = 2.5$) as the way they were changed least by working at camp. This statement was rated as *disagree* by males. Being more interested in a particular career ($M = 3.13$) and more aware of what they want to do for a career ($M = 3.38$) ranked the next lowest for males; these statements were rated as *neutral*. Developing career skills ($M = 3.63$) was the next lowest ranked way male counselors were changed by working at camp. Being better able to show their identity or “true self” at home and in their community, being more willing or able to reflect on the behaviors and actions of others, improved empathy skills, more creativity, and more honesty had the next lowest set of ratings ($M = 3.75$) among male counselors (Table 10). Even though these statements received lower ratings by males, they were still rated as *agree*.

Table 10

Mean of Bottom Five Ways Camp Counseling Changed Counselors by Gender (n = 27)

Statement	Mean
Female	
More likely to change what they plan to do for a career	2.71
More interested in a particular career	3.53
Better able to show identity or "true self" at home and in community	3.76
Received feedback on job performance	3.76
Improved followership skills	3.82
Developed career skills	3.82
More aware of what they want to do for a career	3.82
Better understanding of their identity	3.82
More willing or able to reflect upon and challenge their assumptions	3.82
Male	
More likely to change what they plan to do for a career	2.50
More interested in a particular career	3.13
More aware of what they want to do for a career	3.38
Developed career skills	3.63
More willing or able to reflect on behaviors and actions of others	3.75
Improved empathy skills	3.75
More creativity	3.75
More honesty	3.75

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. More than five statements were included in the table if several statements had equal means.

The data from this question were also analyzed on the basis of being a first-year counselor or a returning counselor. Developing skills for working with children ($M = 4.67$) was the highest rated way first-year counselors were changed by working at camp. The next four areas all rated the same by first-year counselors: being better able to show their identity or "true self" at camp, being exposed to new people, being exposed to new challenges, and having more patience ($M = 4.33$). All of these statements were rated as *strongly agree* by first-year counselors.

Being more likely to change what they plan for a career ($M = 2.5$) received the lowest rating by first-year counselors. This statement fell within the *disagree* range. The next four

lowest areas were rated the same by first-year counselors: learning more about specific camp subjects, being better able to show their identity or “true self” at home and in their communities, having a better understanding of their identity, and having a better understanding of themselves ($M = 3.33$). The final four statements all fell within the *neutral* range.

Returning counselors listed developing skills for working with children as the highest ranking factor affecting their transformative learning experience at camp ($M = 4.9$). Next on the list was being exposed to new people ($M = 4.8$). Being exposed to new activities and an improved ability to work with children ($M = 4.75$) were the next highest rated areas for returning counselors. Improved leadership skills ($M = 4.7$) ranked fifth among returning counselors (Table 11). All of these were *strongly agree* statements.

Table 11

Mean of Top Five Ways Camp Counseling Changed Counselors by Experience (n = 27)

Statement	Mean
First-Year	
Developed skills for working with children	4.67
Better able to show identity or "true self" at camp	4.33
Exposed to new people	4.33
Exposed to new challenges	4.33
More patience	4.33
Returning	
Developed skills for working with children	4.90
Exposed to new people	4.80
Exposed to new activities	4.75
Improved ability to work with children	4.75
Improved leadership skills	4.70

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Being more likely to change what they plan for a career ($M = 2.65$) was the lowest ranking way returning counselors were changed by their camp counseling experience. Being more interested in a particular career ($M = 3.35$) ranked next lowest; the first two statements both

fell within the *neutral* range. Being more aware of what they wanted to do for a career ($M = 3.65$) was the next lowest rated area for returning counselors. Next on the list for returning counselors was developing career skills ($M = 3.85$). Improved followership skills and being more willing or able to reflect and challenge their assumptions ($M = 3.95$) also received lower ratings (Table 12). The final four statements all fell within the *agree* range. This section reveals counselors were changed in several ways as a result of their experience at camp. The next section describes factors at camp that promoted or influenced personal transformation.

Table 12

Mean of Bottom Five Ways Camp Counseling Changed Counselors by Experience (n = 27)

Statement	Mean
First-Year	
More likely to change what they plan to do for a career	2.50
Learned more about specific camp subjects	3.33
Better able to show identity or "true self" at home and in community	3.33
Better understanding their identity	3.33
Better understanding of themselves	3.33
Returning	
More likely to change what they plan to do for a career	2.65
More interested in a particular career	3.35
More aware of what they want to do for a career	3.65
Developed career skills	3.85
Improved followership skills	3.95
More willing or able to reflect and challenge their assumptions	3.95

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. More than five statements were included in the table if several statements had equal means.

Factors Promoting Personal Transformation

A fourth objective of the study was to identify which factors have promoted or influenced the personal transformation or change of youth camp counselors. The fourth question on the survey asked participants to rate a number of factors or conditions that may have promoted or influenced their personal transformation or change as a result of 4-H camp. Participants rated

each statement on a 5-point scale of *strongly agree* (5), *agree* (4), *neutral* (3), *disagree* (2), and *strongly disagree* (1). These results were also analyzed overall, by gender, and by status as a first-year counselor or returning counselor.

The highest rated factor overall for promoting personal transformation was the opportunity to be a role model for children ($M = 4.62$). The opportunity for leadership ($M = 4.58$) was the second highest rated factor. Camp traditions and rituals such as singing and song-leading ($M = 4.54$) and camp traditions and rituals such as campfire programs ($M = 4.5$) were the next two highest rated factors. Opportunities to be challenged and opportunities to impact children positively ($M = 4.46$) also rated highly (Table 13). All of these statements fell within the *strongly agree* range.

Table 13

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Range of Top Six Factors Promoting Personal Transformation among Counselors (n = 26)

Statement	<i>n</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max
Opportunities to be a role model for children	26	4.62	0.50	4	5
Opportunities for leadership	26	4.58	0.64	3	5
Camp traditions and rituals such as singing and song-leading	26	4.54	0.58	2	5
Camp traditions and rituals such as campfire programs	26	4.50	0.58	3	5
Opportunities to be challenged	26	4.46	0.76	2	5
Opportunities to impact children positively	26	4.46	0.65	3	5

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Relationships developed with a supervisor ($M = 3.54$) received the lowest overall ranking on the list of factors promoting transformative learning among counselors. It is worth noting, however, this still fell in the *agree* range. Relationships with Extension staff ($M = 3.69$) ranked the next lowest on the list. Opportunities to reflect ($M = 3.77$) and support and encouragement received from a supervisor ($M = 3.81$) were the next two lowest ranking factors

promoting transformative learning. The opportunity to compare home life with camp life ($M = 3.85$) also received a lower score (Table 14). All of these statements fell within the *agree* range. One interesting finding about this question was that late respondents ranked support and encouragement they received from a supervisor ($M = 5$) as one of the top six factors for promoting personal transformation, but respondents rated it as one of the least significant factors for promoting personal transformation.

Table 14

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Range of Bottom Five Factors Promoting Personal Transformation among Counselors (n = 26)

Statement	<i>n</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max
Relationships developed with a supervisor	26	3.54	0.90	2	5
Relationships with Extension staff	26	3.69	0.79	2	5
Opportunities to reflect	26	3.77	0.82	2	5
Support and encouragement received from a supervisor	26	3.81	0.85	2	5
Opportunity to compare home life with camp life	26	3.85	0.97	1	5

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Females rated opportunities to be a role model for children ($M = 4.76$) as the most important factor promoting personal transformation. Three areas – camp traditions and rituals such as singing and song-leading, opportunities for leadership, and opportunities to be pushed outside of their comfort zone ($M = 4.59$) – had the same rating. Camp traditions and rituals that involved meeting campers' needs ($M = 4.53$) also ranked highly among females. All of these statements fell within the *strongly agree* range.

Opportunities to compare home life with camp life and relationships developed with a supervisor ($M = 3.65$) were the two factors that promoted transformative learning the least among females. Relationships with Extension staff and opportunities to reflect ($M = 3.71$) received the next lowest set of ratings. Support and encouragement received from a supervisor

($M = 3.82$) also received a lower rating among females. All of these statements were within the *agree* range.

Camp traditions and rituals such as campfire programs ($M = 4.75$) were the highest rated factor that promoted or influenced personal transformation or change as a result of 4-H camp for males. Opportunities for leadership ($M = 4.63$) was the next highest rated factor promoting transformative learning for males. Opportunities to be challenged, opportunities to impact children positively, being part of a positive group, and camp traditions and rituals such as singing and song-leading ($M = 4.5$) rounded out the top six highest rated factors promoting transformative learning among males (Table 15). All of these statements fell within the *strongly agree* range.

Table 15

Mean of Top Five Factors Promoting Personal Transformation among Counselors by Gender (n = 26)

Statement	Mean
Female	
Opportunities to be a role model for children	4.76
Camp traditions and rituals such as singing and song-leading	4.59
Opportunities for leadership	4.59
Opportunities to be pushed out of their comfort zone	4.59
Camp traditions and rituals that involved meeting campers' needs	4.53
Male	
Camp traditions and rituals such as campfire programs	4.75
Opportunities for leadership	4.63
Opportunities to be challenged	4.50
Opportunities to impact children positively	4.50
Being part of a positive group	4.50
Camp traditions and rituals such as singing and song-leading	4.50

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. More than five statements were included in the table if several statements had equal means.

Males rated relationships developed with a supervisor ($M = 3.38$) as the lowest factor promoting personal transformation at 4-H camp. This statement fell within the *neutral* range.

Camp culture – being part of a diverse group, relationships with Extension staff, and support and encouragement received from a supervisor ($M = 3.75$) were the next lowest rated set of factors for males. Opportunities to reflect ($M = 3.88$) rounded out the bottom five factors promoting transformative learning for males (Table 16). The final four statements all fell within the *agree* range.

Table 16

Mean of Bottom Five Factors Promoting Personal Transformation among Counselors by Gender (n = 26)

Statement	Mean
Female	
Opportunities to compare home life with camp life	3.65
Relationships developed with a supervisor	3.65
Relationships with Extension staff	3.71
Opportunities to reflect	3.71
Support and encouragement received from a supervisor	3.82
Male	
Relationships developed with a supervisor	3.38
Camp culture – being part of a diverse group	3.75
Relationships with Extension staff	3.75
Support and encouragement received from a supervisor	3.75
Opportunities to reflect	3.88

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

First-year counselors ranked the opportunity to be a role model for children and opportunity for leadership ($M = 4.5$) as the top two factors promoting or influencing personal change. Relationships with other staff ($M = 4.3$) was rated third by first-year counselors. These three statements all fell within the *strongly agree* range. Ten factors or conditions received the same rating ($M = 4.17$) from first-year counselors: the opportunity to live simply at camp, opportunities to impact children positively, camp traditions and rituals that involve meeting campers' needs, camp traditions and rituals such as singing and song-leading, and camp traditions and rituals such as campfire programs. Also, camp culture – being part of a team that

works together, camp culture – being part of an accepting group, being part of a positive group, being part of a group serving and helping children, and being around others with similar interests received the same rating ($M = 4.17$). The final 10 statements fell within the *agree* range.

Relationships with supervisors and Extension staff received the lowest ratings from first-year counselors. Rating at the bottom of the list of factors promoting or influencing personal change was relationships developed with a supervisor ($M = 2.83$). Support and encouragement received from a supervisor, relationships with Extension staff, camp culture – being part of a group that doesn't have cliques, and the opportunity to compare home life with camp life ($M = 3.17$) received the next lowest score for promoting transformation among first-year counselors. All of these statements fell within the *neutral* range.

For returning counselors, two factors – opportunities to be a role model for children and camp traditions and rituals such as singing and song-leading ($M = 4.65$) – received the highest rating for promoting personal transformation. Returning counselors ranked camp traditions and rituals such as campfire programs, opportunities for leadership, and opportunities to be challenged ($M = 4.6$) as the next highest factors for promoting and influencing personal transformation or change (Table 17). All of these statements fell within the *strongly agree* range.

Table 17

Mean of Top Five Factors Promoting Personal Transformation among Counselors by Experience (n = 26)

Statement	Mean
First-Year	
Opportunities to be a role model for children	4.50
Opportunities for leadership	4.50
Relationships with other staff	4.30
Opportunity to live simply at camp	4.17
Opportunities to impact children positively	4.17
Camp traditions and rituals that involve meeting campers' needs	4.17
Camp traditions and rituals such as singing and song-leading	4.17
Camp traditions and rituals such as campfire programs	4.17
Camp culture – being part of a team that works together	4.17
Camp culture – being part of an accepting group	4.17
Being part of a positive group	4.17
Being part of a group serving and helping children	4.17
Being around others with similar interests	4.17
Returning	
Opportunities to be a role model for children	4.65
Camp traditions and rituals such as singing and song-leading	4.65
Camp traditions and rituals such as campfire programs	4.60
Opportunities for leadership	4.60
Opportunities to be challenged	4.60

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. More than five statements were included in the table if several statements had equal means.

Like their first-year counterparts, returning counselors also rated relationships with supervisors and Extension staff lowest on the list of factors or conditions promoting their personal transformation. Ranking lowest for returning counselors was relationships developed with a supervisor ($M = 3.33$). This statement fell in the *neutral* range. Next on the list were relationships with Extension staff and opportunities to reflect ($M = 3.85$). Support and encouragement received from a supervisor ($M = 3.9$) and camp culture – being part of a diverse group ($M = 4$) were also among the five lowest rated factors or conditions promoting personal transformation for returning counselors (Table 18). The last four statements all fell within the

agree range. This section reveals a number of factors at camp that promoted or influenced personal transformation. The next section describes characteristics of camp that promoted or influenced transformative learning.

Table 18

Mean of Bottom Five Factors Promoting Personal Transformation among Counselors by Experience (n = 26)

Statement	Mean
First-Year	
Relationships developed with a supervisor	2.83
Support and encouragement received from a supervisor	3.17
Relationships with Extension staff	3.17
Camp culture – being part of a group that doesn't have cliques	3.17
Opportunity to compare home life with camp life	3.17
Returning	
Relationships developed with a supervisor	3.33
Relationships with Extension staff	3.85
Opportunities to reflect	3.85
Support and encouragement received from a supervisor	3.90
Camp culture – being part of a diverse group	4.00

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Characteristics of Camp Leading to Personal Transformation

The final objective of the study was to determine which characteristics of camp have been important for the changes youth camp counselors attribute to the 4-H camp experience. In addition to perceived changes as a result of the camp experience and factors or conditions of camp promoting personal transformation, Minnesota 4-H Youth Camp counselors were also asked about characteristics of camp that were important for the personal changes they attributed to their experience as camp counselors. Counselors rated each statement on a 5-point scale of *strongly agree* (5), *agree* (4), *neutral* (3), *disagree* (2), and *strongly disagree* (1). This question was also analyzed by overall responses, by gender, and by status as a first-year counselor or returning counselor.

Camp being a place where counselors can be accepted ($M = 4.54$) was rated by counselors as the top overall characteristic that was important for personal change. Camp being a place where counselors feel like they belong ($M = 4.5$) was the next highest rated characteristic of camp. Camp being a safe place and being a place where counselors can trust others ($M = 4.46$) were the third and fourth highest rated characteristics by survey participants. Camp being a place where counselors can be open ($M = 4.35$) also rated highly among camp counselors. All of these statements fell within the *strongly agree* range.

Camp being a place to experience isolation was the least important characteristic for personal transformation at camp, according to camp counselors ($M = 3.27$). Camp being a place to experience a rural setting ($M = 3.38$) also received a lower rating among survey participants. Both of these statements fell within the *neutral* range. Camp being a place where counselors can be emotional ($M = 3.54$) was the next lowest rated characteristic of camp attributed to personal transformation by counselors. Camp allowing counselors to escape home life and camp being seasonal ($M = 3.69$) also ranked near the bottom of the list among all counselors (Table 19). The last three statements fell within the *agree* range.

Table 19

Mean, Standard Deviation, and Range of Characteristics of Camp Attributing to Transformative Learning at Camp (n = 26)

Statement	<i>n</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max
A place where they can be accepted	26	4.54	0.65	3	5
A place where they feel like they belong	26	4.50	0.58	3	5
A safe place	26	4.46	0.58	3	5
A place where they can trust others	26	4.46	0.51	4	5
A place where they can be open	26	4.35	0.75	3	5
A place that allows them to develop new skills over time	26	4.23	0.65	3	5
A place where they can practice independence	26	4.23	0.76	2	5
A place that allows them to learn new skills	26	4.19	0.63	3	5
A place that allows them to get away from technology	26	4.08	0.93	1	5
A place that allows them to experience nature	26	4.00	0.75	2	5
A place that allows them to master new skills	26	4.00	0.69	3	5
A place without stereotypical groups	26	3.88	0.95	2	5
A place where people don't judge them	26	3.81	0.80	2	5
A place that is seasonal	26	3.69	1.05	1	5
A place that allows them to escape home life	26	3.69	1.05	1	5
A place where they can be emotional	26	3.54	0.90	1	5
A place that allows them to experience a rural setting	26	3.38	0.98	1	5
A place that allows them to experience isolation	26	3.27	1.08	1	5

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

Females rated camp being a place where they can be accepted ($M = 4.53$) as the most important characteristic for eliciting personal changes attributed to the camp counselor experience. Camp being a place where they feel they belong ($M = 4.47$) was the second highest rated characteristic by female camp counselors. Camp being a safe place and a place where they can trust others ($M = 4.41$) also received higher ratings among female camp counselors. Camp being a place where they can feel open ($M = 4.35$) was rated as the fifth most important characteristic of camp contributing to the personal transformation of female camp counselors. All of these statements fell within the *strongly agree* range.

Females rated camp allowing them to experience isolation and allowing them to experience a rural setting ($M = 3.18$) as the two least important characteristics of camp contributing to their personal change. Both of these statements fell within the *neutral* range. Camp being a place where they can be emotional received the next lowest rating ($M = 3.47$). Females rated camp allowing them to escape home life ($M = 3.53$) as the fourth lowest characteristic of camp eliciting personal transformation, followed by camp being a place where people don't judge them ($M = 3.71$). The final three statements fell within the *agree* range.

The set of camp characteristics males rated as most important to personal change closely resembled those characteristics identified by females as most important. Camp being a safe place, a place where they can trust others, a place where they can be accepted, and a place where they feel like they belong ($M = 4.63$) all received the same rating among males. Males also rated camp being a place where they can practice independence and a place where they can be open ($M = 4.38$) as characteristics that were important to their personal change (Table 20). All of these statements fell within the *strongly agree* range.

Table 20

Mean of Top Five Characteristics of Camp Attributing to Transformative Learning by Gender (n = 26)

Statement	Mean
Female	
A place where they can be accepted	4.53
A place where they feel they belong	4.47
A safe place	4.41
A place where they can trust others	4.41
A place where they can feel open	4.35
Male	
A safe place	4.63
A place where they can trust others	4.63
A place where they can be accepted	4.63
A place where they feel they belong	4.63
A place where they can practice independence	4.38
A place where they can be open	4.38

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. More than five statements were included in the table if several statements had equal means.

Camp being seasonal ($M = 3.25$) was rated as the least important characteristic of camp contributing to personal change by male counselors. Camp allowing them to experience isolation ($M = 3.38$) received the next lowest rating by male camp counselors. These two statements fell within the *neutral* range. Camp being a place where they can be emotional and allowing them to get away from technology ($M = 3.63$) were the two characteristics receiving the next lowest rating by males. Camp allowing them to experience a rural setting ($M = 3.75$) also received a lower rating from males for its contribution to personal change (Table 21). The final three statements all fell within the *agree* range.

Table 21

Mean of Bottom Five Characteristics of Camp Attributing to Transformative Learning by Gender (n = 26)

Statement	Mean
Female	
A place where they can experience isolation	3.18
A place where they can experience a rural setting	3.18
A place where they can be emotional	3.47
A place where they can escape home life	3.53
A place where people don't judge them	3.71
Male	
A place that is seasonal	3.25
A place to experience isolation	3.38
A place where they can be emotional	3.63
A place that allows them to get away from technology	3.63
A place that allows them to experience a rural setting	3.75

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

The characteristics of camp leading to personal transformation rated highest by first-year counselors are identical to those identified by both genders. Camp being a place where they can trust others and a place to get away from technology ($M = 4.5$) received the highest ratings among first-year counselors. First-year counselors also rated camp being a safe place, a place where they can be accepted, and a place where they feel like they belong ($M = 4.33$) as important characteristics to their personal transformation. All of these statements fell within the *strongly agree* range.

First-year counselors rated camp allowing them to experience isolation ($M = 2.67$) as the least important characteristic contributing to their personal transformation. Camp being seasonal ($M = 2.83$) was the next lowest rated characteristic of camp contributing to personal change that was identified by first-year counselors. These two statements fell within the *neutral* range. Five characteristics of camp – camp allowing them to experience a rural setting, camp allowing them to experience nature, camp being a place where they can be emotional, camp being a place where

they practice independence, and camp allowing them to master new skills ($M = 3.5$) – also received lower ratings from first-year counselors. The final five statements fell within the *agree* range.

Returning counselors rated camp being a place where they can be accepted ($M = 4.6$) as the most important characteristic of camp resulting in personal transformation. Camp being a place where they feel like they belong ($M = 4.55$) received the next highest rating, followed by camp being a safe place ($M = 4.5$). Also rating highly among returning counselors were camp being a place where they can trust others, being a place where they can be open, and being a place where they can practice independence ($M = 4.45$) (Table 22). All of these statements fell within the *strongly agree* range.

Table 22

Mean of Top Five Characteristics of Camp Attributing to Transformative Learning by Experience (n = 26)

Statement	Mean
First-Year	
A place where they can trust others	4.50
A place to get away from technology	4.50
A safe place	4.33
A place where they can be accepted	4.33
A place where they feel like they belong	4.33
Returning	
A place where they can be accepted	4.60
A place where they feel like they belong	4.55
A safe place	4.50
A place where they can trust others	4.45
A place where they can be open	4.45
A place where they can practice independence	4.45

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. More than five statements were included in the table if several statements had equal means.

Camp allowing returning counselors to experience a rural setting was the least important characteristic of camp relating to personal transformation according to returning counselors ($M = 3.35$). This statement fell within the *neutral* range. Camp allowing them to experience isolation ($M = 3.45$) received a lower rating, as well as camp being a place where they can be emotional ($M = 3.55$). Camp allowing them to escape home life ($M = 3.7$) was given the next lowest rating by returning counselors. Camp being a place where people don't judge them and being a place without stereotypical groups ($M = 3.85$) were rated next lowest by returning camp counselors for their contribution to personal transformation (Table 23). The final five statements all fell within the *agree* range.

Table 23

Mean of Bottom Five Characteristics of Camp Attributing to Transformative Learning by Experience (n = 26)

Statement	Mean
First-Year	
A place where they can experience isolation	2.67
A place that is seasonal	2.83
A place where they can experience a rural setting	3.50
A place where they can experience nature	3.50
A place where they can be emotional	3.50
A place where they can practice independence	3.50
A place where they can master new skills	3.50
Returning	
A place where they can experience a rural setting	3.35
A place where they can experience isolation	3.45
A place where they can be emotional	3.55
A place to escape home life	3.70
A place where people don't judge them	3.85
A place without stereotypical groups	3.85

Note. Scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. More than five statements were included in the table if several statements had equal means.

What Counselors would tell Friends

Counselors were also asked to describe how they would tell friends camp has changed them. Several counselors listed more than one thing they would tell friends about camp, so there are many more responses than respondents. Responses were grouped according to responses that dealt with working with a group, responses that dealt with individual changes, and responses that dealt with attributes of camp (Table 24).

Table 24

What Counselors Would Tell Friends about how Camp has Changed them (n = 26)

Statement	Frequency
Group	
Improved leadership skills	6
Meeting new people	5
Ability to work with others	5
More outgoing	4
Be a role model	4
Make new friends	3
Meet peers with similar interests	2
Improved people skills	2
Personal	
Be themselves	4
Be more selfless	4
Learn new skills	3
Step out of comfort zone	2
Exercise more independence	2
Embrace diversity	1
Accept new challenges	1
Be prepared for anything	1
Improved life skills	1
Better problem solver	1
Awareness of career path	1
Camp Attributes	
Had fun	2
Made memories	2
Nonjudgmental environment	1

The greatest number of counselors said they would tell friends being a camp counselor improved their leadership skills. One counselor stated,

Camp has played a huge role in helping me developing my leadership skills, giving me opportunities and really forcing me to take charge and step out of my comfort zone. I have seen myself grow from my first year as a camper to the present, becoming more and more confident in myself and my leadership abilities.

One counselor said he or she would tell friends camp was an opportunity to set a good example for campers, while practicing leadership skills and gaining a better understanding of self. The counselor said,

Being a camp counselor has made me a more outgoing, enthusiastic, and accepting person. When I began camp counseling, I didn't know who I was. I didn't really accept who I was, but throughout the years of counseling, I have grown to understand and accept who I am! I've learned that if I am enthusiastic about something, people will catch on to my enthusiasm and have more energy and happiness about participating in an activity they otherwise did not want to do. I have never had trouble talking to people, but I have greatly grown in my confidence that I have in front of people. Having the role of standing in front of a group of people, keeping their attention, and leading them, not only in songs and activities, but in the development of themselves. I have always known the phrase, "Lead by example," and have always looked up to the counselors I had as a camper. I had amazing experiences as a camper. I became a counselor, because I wanted to give those same opportunities and experiences that I had as a camper to the youth of today. Being a counselor has greatly affected and shaped who I am today.

One counselor said camp impacted his or her career path. More specifically,

Being a camp counselor has opened my eyes to the world of children learning. I always thought about being a nurse, but it wasn't until becoming a counselor that I considered being a teacher. I am now attending SDSU and majoring in Early Childhood through Middle School Education.

While counselors noted changes that would improve their abilities to work with groups and changes that would help them as individuals throughout life, counselors also said that they had fun at camp. One respondent even said, "It is probably the funnest three days of summer!"

Other Changes from Camp

Counselors were also asked to reflect upon other ways camp changed them. This item on the survey resulted in a variety of responses. Three counselors said camp made them better leaders. On a similar note, one counselor said camp made that counselor realize the work it takes to put on and plan programs and become a leader; it helped him or her appreciate people who work behind the scenes. Three more said being camp counselors made them more outgoing. One counselor said,

My first year as a camp counselor, I was very shy. Camp taught me that I didn't have to be afraid of what other people thought about me, and that made it so much easier to be myself. I became much more outgoing, both at camp and in everyday life!

Two counselors said camp gave them the opportunity to try new things. Two counselors also emphasized that camp taught them to be themselves and allowed them to learn about themselves. Similar sentiments by counselors included the opportunity to try new things, learn in different ways, broaden their horizons, and develop "thinking outside the box" skills. Learning to

be a team player; becoming more confident in life choices; realizing a future career in teaching because of camp; enjoying camp; and learning how to be humorous, serious, and understanding were all listed as other ways camp changed counselors. One counselor also expressed he or she thought more time with other counselors was necessary for preparing and reflecting.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the developmental experiences of 4-H members who serve as youth camp counselors at Minnesota 4-H summer camps. The basis of this study was to gather data that would serve as a starting point for future studies about the 4-H youth camp counseling experience in Minnesota. The study sought to examine the extent to which counselors attribute transformative learning to the youth camp counselor experience and to learn more about the characteristics that describe Minnesota 4-H Youth Camp counselors. This chapter presents a discussion of the findings and conclusions to represent the baseline data collected based on the study's objectives:

- Determining whether participating in Minnesota 4-H Youth Camp as a counselor has caused deep personal change;
- Measuring the extent to which 4-H youth camp involvement as a counselor has changed counselors in a number of ways;
- Identifying which factors have promoted or influenced the personal transformation or change of youth camp counselors;
- Determining which characteristics of camp have been important for the changes that youth camp counselors attribute to the 4-H camp experience; and
- Identifying characteristics of 4-H youth who serve as counselors at Minnesota 4-H summer youth camps.

The data for each objective were analyzed from three perspectives. The first perspective was that of all camp counselors who responded, which was presented for each section. The second perspective was analysis by gender. Last, comparisons were made between first-year counselors and returning counselors. New and returning counselors were compared to describe any differences that can be explained by experience as a counselor. The returning counselors

were counselors who had previously served as overnight regional 4-H camp counselors. New counselors were those who might or might not have been campers in the past but were never counselors.

Demographic Characteristics

One objective of this study was to identify characteristics of 4-H youth who serve as counselors at Minnesota 4-H summer youth camps. The demographic characteristics represent a small, homogenous population of 4-H camp counselors in a unique situation. The situation involved unpaid teen-aged adolescents operating as adults. Camp was in a rural, outdoor environment with few amenities. The camp experience was three days in length, while training took place in two or three days. This means counselors had a relatively short amount of time to build relationships and camaraderie.

While there are some significant findings in this study, extreme caution should be taken before attempting to apply these findings to other populations. A small population ($N = 28$) was a problem of this study. The response rate of 49%, on the other hand, was respectable. This response rate is fairly common in studies of 4-H camp counselors. Another study of camp counselors (Genson, 2010) had a response rate of 60%. A Wisconsin study with 390 potential participants had a response rate of 70% (Forsythe et al., 2004). An Oregon study of camp counselors that took place in 2004 had a response rate of 40% (Brandt & Arnold, 2006).

Findings of camp counselor studies also vary because some studies such as this one are prospective and deal with current counselors, while other studies are retrospective and deal with the perspective of camp counselor alumni. This study dealt with current camp counselors, who could have been as young as 15 years old and as old as 20 years old. The 2004 study of Oregon camp counselors was retrospective and had participants between 19 and 39 years of age, with an average age of 24 years old (Brandt & Arnold, 2006).

The average age of participants in the study was 17.9 years of age. The average age of male participants was 18 years of age, and the average age of female participants was 17.9 years of age. The majority of counselors who responded were 17-19 years old. This could be because most counselors fall in that age range, but it could also be because of their attachment to camp. Sixty percent of survey participants had been counselors for at least three summers, which would put them in the 17-19-year-old age range. Nineteen of them had at least six years of camp experience in any role, meaning they had likely come to camp as campers. Since they had been there for so many summers, it is highly possible they experienced favorable place attachment with their respective camps. Place attachment is a positive relationship that occurs between individuals and a particular place over time (Williams, Patterson, Roggenbuck, & Watson, 1992).

Of 26 survey respondents, 17 (65%) identified themselves as female, and nine (35%) identified themselves as male. One person who responded to the rest of the demographic questions did not respond to the question about gender. Having a considerably higher percentage of females is fairly common in 4-H camp counselor studies. In the Genson study (2010), 31% of respondents were male, while 66% were female, and one participant did not respond to the gender question. In the Oregon study, only 25% of respondents were male, and 75% were female (Brandt & Arnold, 2006).

Overall, 22% of respondents were first-year counselors, while 78% were returning counselors. The average counselor who participated in the study had 2.8 years of experience as a camp counselor. Of the six first-year counselors, two of them (33%) were neutral about whether or not serving as a camp counselor resulted in transformative learning, two of them (33%) agreed that serving as a camp counselor resulted in transformative learning, and two of them (33%) strongly agreed that serving as a camp counselor resulted in transformative learning. Among

returning counselors, one (5%) strongly disagreed and one (5%) was neutral about whether or not camp counseling resulted in transformative learning. Thirteen returning counselors (62%) agreed that camp counseling resulted in transformative learning; six of the returning counselors (29%) strongly agreed with the statement that camp counseling resulted in transformative learning.

The fact that 90% of returning counselors agreed or strongly agreed that being a camp counselor resulted in transformative learning is a promising statistic. This statistic lends itself to the notion that 4-H camp counselors have favorable place attachment, or positive feelings, associated with camp (Williams et al., 1992). Logical thinking also tells the researcher that it makes sense that returning counselors would strongly associate camp with transformative learning, because it would make little sense for them to return to camp repeatedly if they did not find meaning in the experience.

There were only six first-year counselors who participated in the study, but one focus of future research could be the first year camp counseling experience. This might shed light on the variety of responses from first-year counselors about the degree to which they felt transformative learning occurred as a result of the camp counselor experience. Of the first-year counselors, one reported this being his or her first year of camp experience in any role, one reported this being his or her second year of camp experience in any role, one reported this being his or her fourth year of camp experience in any role, two reported this being their sixth year of camp experience in any role, and the final first-year counselor reported this being his or her 11th year of camp experience in any role.

The average number of years of camp experience in any role for first-year counselors was five years; the average number of years of camp experience in any role for returning counselors was 6.4 years. This difference might explain some of the variation in the degree to which first-

year and returning counselors experienced transformative learning. Returning counselors might have experienced more place attachment or had more 4-H camp counseling experience, which led them to feel greater personal transformation. The experience in a leadership role (being a counselor in prior years), the advantage of knowing what needs to be done and how at camp, and relationships with fellow returning counselors all could have enhanced transformative learning for returning counselors. Future research could focus upon the needs of first-year counselors and how to make the camp counseling experience more transformative for them.

Degree of Perceived Transformative Learning

Another objective of this study was to determine whether participating in Minnesota 4-H Youth Camp as a counselor caused deep personal change. Of all youth camp counselors in Minnesota who participated in the study, 23 (83%) agreed or strongly agreed the camp counseling experience caused deep personal change. Four participants (14%) were neutral about this statement, and only one participant (4%) strongly disagreed with this statement. All five of the late respondents agreed or strongly agreed that serving as a camp counselor resulted in deep personal change.

It is a significant finding that over 80% of counselors agreed or strongly agreed transformative learning occurred at camp. This finding means many counselors are experiencing a high level of personal development and a number of other positive outcomes. These positive outcomes include practical methods to take action and take control of their lives; greater self-confidence, self-awareness, and empathy; changes in self-perception and life assumptions; and stronger relationships with others (Courtney et al., 1998; Taylor, 1997). Counselors are also establishing a personal identity and a strong sense of self (Slater, 2003).

When this question was examined by gender, 88% of females agreed or strongly agreed serving as a camp counselor resulted in transformative learning. Of the male respondents, 78%

either agreed or strongly agreed that being a camp counselor resulted in deep personal change. Though the percentage of females that agreed or strongly agreed was somewhat higher, it is also worth noting almost twice as many females as males responded to the statement.

The question was also assessed based upon number of years as a camp counselor. Six survey participants were first-year counselors, and 21 participants were returning counselors. Two thirds of first-year counselors agreed or strongly agreed that serving as a camp counselor resulted in personal transformation. On the other hand, 92% of returning counselors agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

While the percentages of first-year and returning counselors that agreed or strongly agreed mean over half of the counselors in each category believed serving as a camp counselor resulted in deep personal change, there is a considerable difference in the numbers. There are a few different possible explanations for this. One explanation could be the small number of first-year counselors that responded. Over three times more returning counselors responded to the survey than new counselors, meaning the percentages would not have been equal in this case even if all except one of the first-year counselors would have agreed or strongly agreed. Another explanation is that returning counselors have probably returned because they have found the experience to be meaningful and/or beneficial. Therefore, it would only make sense that more returning counselors would agree or strongly agree that the experience was transformational. A third explanation can be found in the work of Chaput, Little, and Weiss (2004). According to the authors, the camp counseling experience can be characterized by its duration, breadth, and intensity to explain all of its potential benefits. Research has suggested youth will gain more from their experience if there is a higher degree of all three of these elements (Chaput et al., 2004). The longer duration for returning counselors could result in a deeper, more meaningful

experience. In the Minnesota study, it appears as though more transformative learning occurs the longer counselors are on staff.

Perceived Change

A third objective was to measure the extent to which 4-H youth camp involvement as a counselor changed counselors in a number of ways. Counselors were asked the extent to which their experience as a camp counselor changed them in a variety of ways. Counselors rated each statement on a scale of *strongly agree* (5), *agree* (4), *neutral* (3), *disagree* (2), and *strongly disagree* (1).

The highest rated way counselors changed was by developing skills for working with children. Being exposed to new people, being exposed to new activities, an improved ability to work with children, and being exposed to new experiences also rated highly.

While skills for working with children and being exposed to new people, experiences, and activities rated highly, changes related to careers rated near the bottom of the scale. Being more likely to change what they planned to do for a career, being more interested in a particular career, and being more aware of what they wanted to do for a career received the lowest mean scores from camp counselors. Being better able to show their identity or “true self” at home and in their community and developing career skills also received low ratings from counselors.

Two ways counselors were changed by the camp counseling experience showed up in the top five for each group that was analyzed: overall, males, females, first-year counselors, and returning counselors. Counselors in all categories rated improved skills for working with children and exposure to new people highly as ways they were changed by working at camp. This supports a study by Roark (2005), which found the opportunity to meet people and make new friends as one of the five most important considerations to those individuals who choose to

work at a camp for summer employment. All of the groups except first-year counselors also ranked exposure to new activities as an aspect of camp resulting in transformative learning.

One common theme, regardless of how this question was analyzed, was that skills related to careers received a low rating from all groups: counselors as a whole, male and female counselors, and first-year and returning counselors. This finding validates that of an earlier study in which 4-H camp counselors did not feel their camp counseling experience led them toward a career that involved working with children (Brandt & Arnold, 2006). The effect of the camp counseling experience on career skills, however, is unclear. Counselors in an Ohio study described the camp counseling experience as a chance to learn about potential future careers (Digby & Ferrari, 2007), a finding that is not supported by this study. A different Ohio study found that the camp experience highly influenced the career choice of counselors (Genson, 2010). Another study found that counselors could identify one skill that was developed as a result of camp counseling that would help them in a job they desired in the future (Forsythe et al., 2004).

Factors Promoting Personal Transformation

A fourth objective was to identify which factors have promoted or influenced the personal transformation of youth camp counselors. The question asked participants to rate a number of factors or conditions that may have promoted or influenced their personal transformation or change as a result of 4-H camp. Participants rated each statement on a scale of *strongly agree* (5), *agree* (4), *neutral* (3), *disagree* (2), and *strongly disagree* (1).

The highest rated factor overall for promoting personal transformation was the opportunity to be a role model for children. The opportunity for leadership was the second highest rated factor. Camp traditions and rituals such as singing and song-leading and camp traditions and rituals such as campfire programs were the next two highest rated factors.

Opportunities to be challenged and opportunities to impact children positively also rated highly.

According to Mezirow (2000), there is often a critical event that causes transformative learning and forces the learner to examine his or her thoughts or worldview. No comments made in response to the open-ended questions on the survey and nothing from this question in particular indicates what one might consider a “critical event” actually happens during camp. Responses to this question, however, do indicate the opportunities to be a positive role model and exercise leadership are significant for counselors. The expectations of responsibility and some degree of maturity outside of their home, school, workplace, or everyday life with a new set of peers might be “critical” and relatively new for some counselors.

Females, males, first-year counselors, and returning counselors all listed opportunities for leadership as a top five factor promoting personal transformation. Likewise, each group listed traditions and rituals such as singing and song-leading as one of the five major factors for promoting personal transformation. All of the groups except males put the opportunity to be a role model for children in the top five for its effect upon promoting personal transformation. Males did, however, list the opportunity to impact children positively as a top five factor.

Findings from this question support the notion that camp is an opportunity for older 4-H youth to expand their leadership skills beyond the club level (Chaput et al., 2004; Van Horn et al., 1998). Counselors in Ohio, Wisconsin, and Oregon all listed improved leadership skills as a major outcome from the camp counseling experience (Brandt & Arnold, 2006; Digby & Ferrari, 2007; Forsythe et al., 2004). Findings from this question also support the work of Roark (2005), who found the opportunity to be a role model for youth to be one of the five most important considerations to individuals who choose camp counseling for summer employment. The other four considerations included personal satisfaction and enjoyment, the opportunity to meet people and make new friends, the opportunity to work with youth, and the opportunity for personal

growth (Roark, 2005). Traditions such as singing and song-leading rising to the top of the list supports the finding in a Virginia study that camp traditions are one factor of the 4-H camp experience that encourages transformative learning (Franz et al., 2009).

Females, males, first-year counselors, and returning counselors also agreed upon several factors that rated low for promoting or influencing transformative learning. All four groups placed relationships developed with a supervisor, relationships with Extension staff, and support and encouragement received from a supervisor in the bottom five of factors for promoting or influencing transformative learning. All four of the groups except first-year counselors also listed opportunities to reflect in the bottom five of factors promoting or influencing transformative learning.

The finding that opportunities to reflect was not viewed as a major factor for promoting transformative learning at camp seems counter-intuitive to the researcher because reflection is a major component of transformative learning according to the research (Kerton & Sinclair, 2009; Robertson, 1996). One possible explanation is that even though reflection occurs at camp, it does not occur often enough to have a major impact upon counselors. Another possible explanation is that the reflection that occurs at camp has more to do with camp itself than it does with the counselors. Counselors are asked to reflect about things that happened during the day, but they are not given the formal opportunity to do a lot of introspective reflection. The importance of reflection to the transformative learning process also depends upon the individual; some people are naturally more reflective than others.

The lack of introspective reflection at camp could be changed by using the experiential learning cycle as a framework for discussion during counselor meetings. The first step of the experiential learning process – the experience – will have already happened. Counselor meetings presently focus on the next step of the process: sharing. Sharing involves discussion of what

happened. The final three steps of the experiential learning model – processing, generalizing, and applying – would add a more introspective component to reflection during counselor meetings. Processing involves identifying common themes and discovering what was most important (possibly the life skill) about what happened. Generalizing involves identifying how to use what has been learned in everyday life. Applying involves helping counselors realize they have gained new knowledge and practiced the life skills learned rather than focusing solely on the events that happened.

Characteristics of Camp Leading to Personal Transformation

The final objective of the study was to determine which characteristics of camp have been important for the changes youth camp counselors attribute to the 4-H camp counseling experience. In addition to perceived changes as a result of the camp experience and factors or conditions of camp promoting personal transformation, Minnesota 4-H Youth Camp counselors were also asked about characteristics of camp that were important for the personal changes they attributed to their experience as camp counselors.

Camp being a place where counselors can be accepted was rated by counselors as the top overall characteristic that was important for personal change. Camp being a place where counselors feel like they belong was the next highest rated characteristic of camp. Camp being a safe place and being a place where counselors can trust others were the third and fourth highest rated characteristics by survey participants. Camp being a place where counselors can be open also rated highly among camp counselors.

Four characteristics of camp that led to perceived change were present on all five lists – overall, females, males, first-year counselors, and returning counselors. Those characteristics included camp being a place where counselors felt accepted, camp being a place where counselors felt they belonged, camp being a safe place, and camp being a place where counselors

felt they could trust others. Another characteristic of camp – camp being a place where counselors can be open – showed up on all of the lists except for the list from first-year counselors.

Camp being a place to experience isolation was the least important characteristic for personal transformation at camp, according to camp counselors. Camp being a place to experience a rural setting also received a low rating among survey participants. Camp being a place where counselors can be emotional was the next lowest rated characteristic of camp attributed to personal transformation by counselors. Camp allowing counselors to escape home life and camp being seasonal also received low ratings from counselors.

Three characteristics of camp that rated low in eliciting personal transformation showed up on the overall list, as well as the list for females, males, first-year counselors, and returning counselors. Those characteristics included camp being a place to experience isolation, a place to experience a rural setting, and a place where counselors could be emotional. There are almost always several people around at camp, whether it is at a meal, in cabins or sleeping quarters, or in other settings, which would make it difficult to experience isolation; it would be rare for a counselor to be alone. Camp might also be a difficult place to experience a rural setting because many of the counselors are from rural areas; most respondents were from greater-Minnesota, where there are few metropolitan areas. Counselors might perceive camp as a difficult place to be emotional for a couple reasons. One reason is that the connotation of the word *emotional* could be perceived negatively. Another possibility is that counselors might be withholding expressions of fear, self-doubt, or other negative feelings for fear of being judged by campers or their fellow counselors, despite the fact that counselors said they felt like they could be open at camp.

Conclusions

In general 4-H youth camp counselors are experiencing transformative learning as a result of their experience as camp counselors. There seems to be a difference between the experiences of first-year and returning counselors regarding the degree to which transformative learning occurs as a result of their experiences as camp counselors. Considering the experience of returning 4-H camp counselors, the favorable place attachment, and relationships developed among returning counselors, this difference could be expected. Many of the same aspects of camp, however, seem to lend themselves to transformative learning, regardless of gender and experience as a 4-H camp counselor.

The baseline data collected from Minnesota 4-H Youth Camp counselors in 2012 generally appears consistent with current literature about camp counselors. One area that seems inconclusive in current literature is the degree to which the camp counseling experience affects career choices. The findings in this study support those studies which found serving as a camp counselor had little effect upon career choices.

The baseline data collected from the survey follows the objectives for this study. The conclusions drawn from the data are as follows.

1. The majority of 4-H youth camp counselors in Minnesota agreed or strongly agreed transformative learning occurred as a result of their experiences as counselors.
2. Returning counselors experienced more transformative learning than first-year counselors, but many of the same aspects of camp resulted in transformative learning for both groups.
3. Developing skills for working with children, along with exposure to new people, new activities, and new experiences were major changes experienced by camp counselors.

4. Being a role model for children, opportunities to impact children positively, opportunities for leadership, opportunities to be challenged, and camp traditions such as singing and song-leading and campfire programs were major factors promoting personal transformation. The inclusion of leadership and camp traditions on this list is very consistent with existing literature.
5. Counselors feeling accepted, feeling like they belong, and camp feeling safe and being a place where counselors can trust others and be open were the characteristics of camp that counselors felt were most important to the personal transformation attributed to camp.
6. Relationships with supervisors and Extension staff and support and encouragement from supervisors were not major factors for promoting transformative learning; the same can be said for opportunities to reflect at camp.
7. A higher percentage of returning counselors reported agreeing or strongly agreeing that serving as a camp counselor resulted in personal transformation than new counselors.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

The primary purpose of this study was to examine the developmental experiences of 4-H members who serve as youth camp counselors at Minnesota 4-H summer camps. The basis of this study was to gather data that would serve as a starting point for future studies about the 4-H youth camp counseling experience in Minnesota. The study sought to examine the extent to which counselors attribute transformative learning to the youth camp counselor experience and to learn more about the characteristics that describe Minnesota 4-H Youth Camp counselors. This chapter presents a summary of the findings, in addition to recommendations for the Minnesota 4-H camping program and possible directions for future research. The summary of findings concisely interprets the baseline data collected based upon the study's objectives:

- Determining whether participating in Minnesota 4-H Youth Camp as a counselor has caused deep personal change;
- Measuring the extent to which 4-H youth camp involvement as a counselor has changed counselors in a number of ways;
- Identifying which factors have promoted or influenced the personal transformation or change of youth camp counselors;
- Determining which characteristics of camp have been important for the changes that youth camp counselors attribute to the 4-H camp experience; and
- Identifying characteristics of 4-H youth who serve as counselors at Minnesota 4-H summer youth camps.

These objectives were specific to camp counselors at 4-H summer camps throughout greater-Minnesota. These participants were chosen because they were camp counselors during the summer of 2012. Camp counselors who participated in the study were counselors at youth

camps and were 16-20 years old because youth in Minnesota can be 4-H members the year after they graduate from high school, therefore making them eligible to serve as counselors.

A link to the online survey instrument was e-mailed to 75 potential participants. Thirty-seven participants responded, resulting in a 49% response rate. Of the 37 responses, 29 participants completed the survey in its entirety. The findings of this study were reported in five sections: degree of perceived transformative learning, perceived change, factors promoting personal transformation, characteristics of camp leading to personal transformation, and demographic characteristics. Descriptive statistics were provided for all five sections, including ranges, standard deviations, percentages, means, and frequencies.

The survey was originally used in the state of Virginia to assess the camp counselor experience. Questions on the survey were derived from information provided by focus groups there. The survey was conducted in Minnesota in a web-based format using Qualtrics Survey Software. No reliability statistics on the survey were calculated in the Virginia study because the survey was developed directly from focus group findings. The survey was shared with members of the state leadership team in Minnesota to help assess face validity and construct validity for the Minnesota 4-H camping program. No changes were made by the state leadership team.

While analyzing the data, some differences were seen when comparing the responses of first-year and returning counselors regarding the extent to which they experienced transformative learning. These results, however, should be interpreted with caution because the number of participants was small; the results are not generalizable to larger populations or the 4-H camping program in other states.

In general 4-H youth camp counselors are experiencing transformative learning as a result of their experience as camp counselors. Two thirds of first-year counselors agreed or strongly agreed that serving as a 4-H camp counselor resulted in transformative learning, and

90% of returning counselors agreed or strongly agreed that the camp counselor experience resulted in transformative learning. The average counselor who participated in the study had 2.8 years of experience as a camp counselor. The average number of years of camp experience in any role for first-year counselors was five years, and the average number of years of camp experience in any role for returning counselors was 6.4 years. The difference in the percentage of counselors who agreed or strongly agreed that the camp counselor experience resulted in personal transformation was the only significant difference between genders or between new and returning camp counselors. Eighty-eight percent of females and 78% of males agreed or strongly agreed that being a camp counselor resulted in deep personal change. This 10% difference could be because almost twice as many females participated in the study compared to males.

Regardless of gender and experience as a new or returning counselor, counselors reported experiencing many of the same changes as a result of being camp counselors. They also cited many of the same factors and characteristics of camp as being important to their transformative learning. Major changes involved developing skills for working with children and exposure to new people, activities, and experiences. Factors leading to personal transformation included the opportunity to be role models for children and impact children positively, opportunities for leadership and challenge, and camp traditions. Characteristics of camp leading to personal transformation included counselors feeling accepted, feeling like they belong, and camp feeling safe and being a place where counselors can trust others and be open.

Recommendations

Through the process of compiling baseline data about the 4-H camp counseling experience of Minnesota 4-H Youth Camp counselors, there are a few recommendations for 4-H Extension Educators and other staff who work with camp counselors. One recommendation is to be intentional about the inclusion of introspective reflection for camp counselors. This might be

in the form of required journaling or sharing reflections verbally in counselor meetings during camp; personal reflection would add a professional development component to counselor meetings. This sort of reflection is often included in camper evaluations, but counselors in all camps are not given this same opportunity. Reflection is a major component of the transformative learning process (Kerton & Sinclair, 2009; Robertson, 1996), but it did not rate highly as a factor for promoting transformative learning among camp counselors who participated in the survey.

Applying the experiential learning model to the camp counseling experience would be one way to assure reflection occurs. The experiential learning cycle is a model for using an activity to teach life skills and learning to apply those life skills to other situations (Norman & Jordan, 1999). The process has five steps: experience, share, process, generalize, and apply. The first step involves experiencing the activity; the second and third step involve examining what participants did and the steps they took to accomplish the activity. The fourth step is a more personal reflection of how the activity affected the participant and the life skills they developed. The final step asks participants to apply what they learned about life skills to their everyday lives (Norman & Jordan, 1999). Personal observation from the researcher is that the first two steps generally occur for camp counselors throughout the day and during daily counselor meetings, but the last three steps tend to happen much less often.

A second recommendation would be to develop a performance evaluation for counselors and use it at all camps. One uniform evaluation could be used for all counselors, or 4-H Extension Educators could work with State 4-H Evaluation Specialists and Human Resources personnel to develop a performance appraisal for each individual camp, based upon the uniqueness of each camp. Relationships developed with a supervisor, relationships developed with Extension staff, and support and encouragement received from a supervisor all received low

ratings as factors for promoting personal transformation. Structured feedback from supervisors and 4-H Extension Educators and staff might provide a meaningful basis to improve these relationships. The experience of the researcher shows that some camps, but not all camps, across the state conduct performance evaluations for counselors. Existing literature does not indicate whether or not performance reviews of 4-H camp counselors are done in other states, but performance reviews are conducted at some camps in Minnesota and at residential non-4-H camps across the country. The performance reviews would also serve as an opportunity for reflection for counselors and add an element of professional development to the learning opportunity.

If performance reviews are conducted, job descriptions for camp counselors should be written and shared with potential counselors when applications are distributed. This would ensure applicants knew what was expected of them before they applied. It would also provide a meaningful basis for the performance review. Job descriptions could vary among camp locations and sessions based upon the expectations of staff. Since job descriptions do not currently exist, input for items to include could come from Extension staff, camp counselors, job descriptions from 4-H camps in other states, and job descriptions written by the ACA.

A third recommendation would be to form some sort of system for resource sharing. Each camp across the state has its own particular attributes. Some camps are very intentional and have a strong protocol for camper and counselor evaluation and counselor training, while others are strong in learning tracks and educational programming, while others yet place a heavy emphasis on recreational and nature-related programming. A system for sharing all of these resources and ideas could only stand to strengthen each camp, and more importantly, benefit youth who attend camp as campers and counselors throughout the state.

Resource sharing has implications for transformative learning. Specifically, camping sessions and locations that are intentional about building introspective reflection into their camp counselor meetings or into the camp counselor experience in other ways could share their methods and tools with other camps throughout the state. This would be beneficial to camps where introspective reflection does not happen and camps that are looking for new ideas about how to incorporate this sort of reflection into the camp counselor experience.

Future Research

To enhance and explain the baseline data that was collected from this study in greater detail, recommendations for future research are provided. The purpose of this study was to examine the developmental experiences of 4-H youth who serve as youth camp counselors at Minnesota 4-H summer camps. The basis of this study was to gather data that would serve as a starting point for future studies about the 4-H youth camp counseling experience in Minnesota.

This data can be utilized and better show the effects of the camp counseling program upon camp counselors by administering the survey again in future years. Administering the survey in the future might result in the identification of a trend of factors and characteristics of camp that enhance or weaken the experience of first-year counselors. Another possibility would be to follow a cohort of first-year counselors throughout its career as camp counselors. This would measure the changes in counselors over time to determine whether or not place attachment and additional experience do in fact result in higher levels of personal transformation.

The difference in the percentage of males and females who agreed or strongly agreed that transformative learning occurred as a result of their experience as a camp counselor should continue to be studied. It would be interesting to follow this trend to see if more females continue to agree or strongly agree transformative learning occurs, even in years when approximately the same number of males and females participate in the study.

The difference in the number of first-year respondents and returning respondents should also continue to be studied. Logic dictates there will be more returning counselors than first-year counselors, because returning counselors represent second, third, and fourth-year counselors, while first-year counselors only represent one year. Attracting more first-year counselors to the study, however, would produce more meaningful results.

Another focus of future research could be to assess the counselors in each 4-H camping group in Minnesota individually. Instead of having general results for counselors across the state, this would separate the results by camping groups. Extension staff and Educators could examine results from their camp to determine the strengths of each camping group. Likewise, each camping group across the state could devise an improvement plan or have State 4-H Evaluation Specialists devise an improvement plan individualized to the camping group.

A different area of exploration for future research could be to examine the relationship between camp counselor training and the transformative learning experience. While some basic characteristics of camp counselor training are similar, there are considerable differences in the degree to which camp counselors are trained. Some counselor trainings only cover basic youth development principles – ages and stages – and camp schedules, procedures, and protocols. Other counselor trainings, on the other hand, are more extensive and actually involve counselors in planning the camp schedule and train counselors to design and teach learning tracks with the guidance of a staff member. Research could focus upon whether or not the counselors who attend longer and more extensive counselor trainings experience a greater degree of personal transformation.

Future research could also focus upon the role of camp in developing career skills and influencing career direction. The results of this study indicated career skills and direction rated near the bottom of the list of changes participants experienced as a result of serving as camp

counselors. Data found in current literature about the relationship between being a 4-H camp counselor and developing career skills and discovering a potential future career is inconsistent. Developing a study that focused solely on the role of 4-H camp counseling related to career skills development and career direction would add to the body of literature.

Yet another potential focus of future research could involve comparing the results of this survey with the camp YPQA tool. The YPQA tool is a new tool Minnesota 4-H is in the process of using as part of its statewide focus upon quality to assess educational programs throughout the state. It aligns with Maslow's hierarchy of needs and is a pyramid model in which programs must fulfill basic youth needs in order to achieve higher levels of youth development. At the bottom of the pyramid is a physically safe environment, followed by an emotionally safe environment, followed by interaction, and ending with engagement at the top of the pyramid (*Youth Program Quality Assessment [YPQA] Overview*, 2011). The camp YPQA tool has not yet been released to the entire 4-H Extension staff, but it is being used for the first time this year by Extension Educators focusing on program quality to assess 4-H camps. Comparing the results of the camp YPQA tool for each camp with the results of the transformative learning survey taken by counselors at each camp could determine whether or not there is a correlation between the quality of the camp experience and the extent to which counselors reported experiencing transformative learning. Comparing the results of the two studies could determine whether or not counselors who felt they experienced deep personal change created a higher quality experience for campers.

Implications and Educational Significance

Implications of this study can be drawn from relating the degree of transformative learning among camp counselors to perceived changes that occurred within counselors, different factors of camp promoting personal transformation, different characteristics of camp leading to

personal transformation, and the demographic characteristics of counselors. The 4-H Extension staff in the state of Minnesota has the opportunity to improve the camp counselor experience for 4-H camp counselors based upon the findings of this study, as well as a baseline and framework for conducting future studies of camp counselors.

Transformative learning is relevant because it augments the personal development of camp counselors. Erik Erikson developed a chart of the psychosocial development of individuals throughout their lifespans (Slater, 2003). Minnesota camp counselors – most being between the ages of 12 and 18 – fall in Erikson’s adolescent stage of development. Identity and social relationships are important events for individuals at this life stage. According to Erikson it is imperative for individuals in the adolescent stage to establish a personal identity. Doing so helps individuals stay true to themselves, but failure creates a weak sense of self (Slater, 2003).

Staff members associated with camp can examine a variety of factors and characteristics of camp to maximize the potential for transformative learning to occur for counselors. Even if several factors and characteristics of camp are improved based upon findings from the study, there is still no guarantee all counselors will experience transformative learning. To have a transformative learning experience would require counselors to have a change of beliefs based upon their experiences at camp. If counselors come to camp or enter the camp counseling experience with a healthy worldview, they might not have a transformative learning experience at camp, even if every aspect of camp is outstanding.

Transformative learning requires individuals to have an experience resulting in a deep change in their thought processes. Camp counselors have other influences in their lives outside of camp and 4-H. The social cognitive theory, which suggests there is an interaction between behavioral, personal, and environmental factors that influences behavior, combined with transformative learning theory provides an environment for counselors to shape new ideas and

ways of thinking and believing (Crothers, Hughes, & Morine, 2008). A strong and intentional camp counseling experience can benefit 4-H camp counselors, 4-H campers, and the communities beyond 4-H in which 4-H camp counselors exist. The results of this study and future studies provide support for and describe changes that occur in older 4-H youth as a result of the camp counselor experience.

APPENDIX A: SURVEY

THANK YOU for taking the "Transformative Learning and the Camp Experience Staff Member Survey." Understanding how 4-H camp has made a difference in your life will help us to better communicate the importance of the camp experience for young adults. Transformation can be identified as "deep personal change."

This survey will take approximately 20 minutes. The information you provide will help improve the Minnesota 4-H camping program. You will receive access to a summary report from this survey.

We will not connect your personal identity with your comments in any written or verbal report. Participation in this survey likely has no more than minimal risk, is voluntary, and you may discontinue participation at any time without penalty. If you have questions about this survey, contact Donna Leff at leffx017@umn.edu or 507-526-6241.

Thank you for your participation!

Introduction

1. Describe your favorite 4-H camp experience as a counselor.

Changes that Result from Camp Involvement

NOTE: The next several questions explore transformation/changes young adult counselors attribute to the camp experience.

2. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement, "Participating in Minnesota 4-H camp as a staff member has caused personal change"? (Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree)

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Neutral

Agree

Strongly Agree

(If you indicated "Disagree" or "Strongly Disagree," skip to question #6)

3. Describe the extent to which you agree or disagree that 4-H camp involvement as a counselor changed you in the following ways. (Check all that apply.)

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Increased confidence					
Less fear/ Overcome fears					
More social/Less shy					
Improved Public speaking skills					
Improved Leadership skills					
Improved Followership skills					
Improved Listening skills					
Improved Empathy skills					
More patience					
Improved Self-responsibility skills					
Improved Problem-solving skills					
Developed Career skills					
Improved Reflection/thinking skills					
Developed Skills for working with children					
Improved People skills					
Closer relationships (in general)					
Closer relationships with campers					
Closer relationships with camp staff					
Closer relationships with volunteers					
Closer relationships with supervisors (program director, other)					
Closer relationships with Extension staff					
Improved ability to work with children					
Better understanding of myself					
Better understanding of my identity					
Better able to show my identity- my "true self" at camp					
Better able to show my own identity- my "true self" at home/community					
Better able to solve problems					
More creative					
More open to new ideas					
More honest					
More willing or able to challenge myself and engage in challenging experiences					
More respectful of myself					
More respectful of others					
More willing or able to trust others					
More willing or able to include and accept others who are like me					
More willing or able to include and accept others who are different from me					
More willing or able to hold myself to higher standards of behaving and talking					

More willing or able to reflect on my life					
More willing or able to reflect on my behaviors/actions					
More willing or able to reflect on the behaviors/actions of others					
More willing or able to reflect and challenge my assumptions					
Exposed to new experiences					
Exposed to new people					
Exposed to new activities					
Exposed to new places					
Exposed to new challenges					
Practiced "adult-life"					
Practiced job skills					
Received feedback on my performance in a job					
Learning more about specific camp subjects					
Learning more about specific camp activities					
Learning more about children					
Helped me enjoy learning					
More mature					
More responsible					
More independent					
More aware of what I want to do for a career					
More interested in a particular career					
More likely to change what I plan for a career					

Conditions that Promote Transformative Learning (Deep Change) in Camp Staff

NOTE: The next questions explore what it is about the camp experience that creates transformation/change in young adult staff.

4. Considering your previous Minnesota 4-H camp experiences, which of the following factors or conditions have promoted or influenced your personal transformation/change?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Relationships you developed with a supervisor					
Support and encouragement you received from a supervisor					
Relationships with other camp staff					
Long-term friendships with other camp staff					
Relationships with adult volunteer staff					

Relationships with Extension staff					
Being around others with similar interests					
Being around others who have similar high standards (of acting/behaving)					
Being part of a group working towards a common goal					
Being part of a group serving and helping children					
Being part of a unified group					
Being part of a positive group					
Camp culture- feeling welcome					
Camp culture- being part of a group that respects me					
Camp culture- being part of an accepting group					
Camp culture- being part of a diverse group					
Camp culture- being part of a group that supports new ideas and openness					
Camp culture- being part of a team that works together					
Camp culture- being part of a group that doesn't have cliques					
Camp traditions and rituals such as campfire programs					
Camp traditions and rituals such as singing and song-leading					
Camp traditions and rituals that involve meeting campers' needs					
Opportunities for leadership					
Opportunities to be challenged					
Opportunities to be pushed outside your comfort zone					
Opportunities to reflect					
Opportunities to positively impact children					
Opportunities to be a role model for children					
Opportunities to be a role model for other staff					
Opportunity to solve problems					
Opportunity to live simply at camp					
Opportunity to compare home life with camp life					
Opportunity for decision-making					
Opportunity for creativity					

5. Considering your previous Minnesota 4-H camp experiences, which of the following describe characteristics of camp that have been important for the changes that you attribute to the 4-H camp experience?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Camp allows me to develop new skills over time					
Camp is a safe place					
Camp is a place where I can trust others					

Camp is a place where I can be open					
Camp is a place where I can be accepted					
Camp is a place where I feel like I belong					
Camp is a place without stereotypical groups					
Camp is a place where I can be emotional					
Camp is a place where people don't judge me					
Camp is seasonal					
Camp allows me to escape home life					
Camp allows me to experience nature					
Camp allows me to experience a rural setting					
Camp allows me to get away from technology					
Camp allows me to experience isolation					
Camp allows me to learn new skills					
Camp allows me to master new skills					
Camp is where I practice independence					

6. If you were telling a friend about how camp has changed you, what would you say?

7. Other comments about how camp has changed you:

About You

8. Gender

- a. Male
- b. Female

9. Age

- a. 14
- b. 15
- c. 16
- d. 17
- e. 18
- f. 19
- g. 20

10. Ethnicity

- a. American Indian and Alaska Native
- b. Asian
- c. Black or African American
- d. Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander
- e. White
- f. American Indian *and* Alaska Native *and* White
- g. Asian *and* White
- h. Black or African American *and* White

11. Years (i.e., summers) served as a 4-H Youth Camp counselor (including this year)

- a. 1
- b. 2
- c. 3
- d. 4
- e. 5

12. Years of Camp Experience (in any role)

- a. 1
- b. 2
- c. 3
- d. 4
- e. 5
- f. 6
- g. 7
- h. 8
- i. 9
- j. 10
- k. 11
- l. 12
- m. 13
- n. 14
- o. 15
- p. 16
- q. 17
- r. 18
- s. 19
- t. 20

13. Location of 4-H Camp (name of county or region): _____

APPENDIX B: HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Institutional Review Board
Office for Responsible Research
Vice President for Research
1138 Pearson Hall
Ames, Iowa 50011-2207
515 294-4566
FAX 515 294-4267

Date: 7/18/2012

To: Donna Leff
823 S Galbraith St
Blue Earth, MN 56013

CC: Dr. Michael Retallick
206 Curtiss Hall
Dr. Chuck Morris
3630 Ext 4-H Bldg

From: Office for Responsible Research

Title: Transformative Learning and Camp Experience of Minnesota 4-H Youth Camp-Counselors

IRB ID: 12-321

Approval Date: 7/17/2012 **Date for Continuing Review:** 7/16/2014

Submission Type: New **Review Type:** Expedited

The project referenced above has received approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Iowa State University according to the dates shown above. Please refer to the IRB ID number shown above in all correspondence regarding this study.

To ensure compliance with federal regulations (45 CFR 46 & 21 CFR 56), please be sure to:

- **Use only the approved study materials** in your research, including the recruitment materials and informed consent documents that have the IRB approval stamp.
- **Retain signed informed consent documents for 3 years after the close of the study**, when documented consent is required.
- **Obtain IRB approval prior to implementing any changes** to the study by submitting a Modification Form for Non-Exempt Research or Amendment for Personnel Changes form, as necessary.
- **Immediately inform the IRB of (1) all serious and/or unexpected adverse experiences** involving risks to subjects or others; and (2) **any other unanticipated problems involving risks** to subjects or others.
- **Stop all research activity if IRB approval lapses**, unless continuation is necessary to prevent harm to research participants. Research activity can resume once IRB approval is reestablished.
- **Complete a new continuing review form** at least three to four weeks prior to the **date for continuing review** as noted above to provide sufficient time for the IRB to review and approve continuation of the study. We will send a courtesy reminder as this date approaches.

Please be aware that IRB approval means that you have met the requirements of federal regulations and ISU policies governing human subjects research. **Approval from other entities may also be needed.** For example, access to data from private records (e.g. student, medical, or employment records, etc.) that are protected by FERPA, HIPAA, or other confidentiality policies requires permission from the holders of those records. Similarly, for research conducted in institutions other than ISU (e.g., schools, other colleges or universities, medical facilities, companies, etc.), investigators must obtain permission from the institution(s) as required by their policies. **IRB approval in no way implies or guarantees that permission from these other entities will be granted.**

Upon completion of the project, please submit a Project Closure Form to the Office for Responsible Research, 1138 Pearson Hall, to officially close the project.

Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have questions or concerns at 515-294-4566 or IRB@iastate.edu.

APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT

Title of Study: Transformative Learning and Camp Experience of Minnesota 4-H Youth Camp Counselors

Investigators: Donna Leff, Michael Retallick, Ph.D.

This is a research study. This form has information to help you decide whether or not you wish for your young person to participate. Research studies include only people who choose to take part; your young person's participation is completely voluntary. Please feel free to ask questions at any time.

Your young person is being asked to take this survey because he or she is a Youth Camp counselor at a 4-H camp in Minnesota. The purpose of this survey is to examine the developmental experiences of 4-H youth who serve as Youth Camp counselors at Minnesota 4-H summer camps.

If your young person agrees to participate, he or she will be asked to answer questions on a survey at the end of camp. The survey will ask your young person questions about his or her favorite camp experience as a counselor, the degree to which the camp counselor experience changed him or her in a variety of ways, which social factors at camp influenced personal change, and the degree to which certain characteristics of camp contributed to the changes that were attributed to being a camp counselor. Questions related to gender, age, ethnicity, years of 4-H camp counselor experience and camp experience in any role, and camp location will also be asked. No names or other identifying information will be collected.

If you decide to let your young person participate in this survey, there will be no direct benefit to you or your young person. However, it is hoped that the information gained from this survey will help improve the 4-H Youth Camp counselor experience in future years.

There is no cost to your young person for participating in this study. Your young person will not be compensated for participating in this study. Participating in this study is completely voluntary. Your young person may choose not to take part in the study or to stop participating at any time, for any reason, without penalty or negative consequences.

Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by applicable laws and regulations. Records will not be made publicly available. However, federal government regulatory agencies, auditing departments of Iowa State University, and the ISU Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies with human subjects) may inspect and/or copy your records for quality assurance and analysis. These records may contain private information.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent allowed by law, access to study records will be available to members of the research team only and will be contained in a locked cabinet. If the results are published, your young person's identity will remain confidential.

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study. For further information about the study, contact Donna Leff, 412 N. Nicollet St., P.O. Box 130, Blue Earth, MN 56013; 507-526-6241; leffx017@umn.edu or Dr. Michael Retallick, 206 Curtiss, Ames, IA 50011-1050; 515-294-4810; msr@iastate.edu. If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the IRB Administrator, 515-294-4566; IRB@iastate.edu or Acting Program Manager, Office for Responsible Research, 1138 Pearson Hall, Ames, IA 50011-2200; 515-294-3115.

Consent and Authorization Provisions

Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to let your child participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read this document, and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered.

Parent/Guardian's Name (printed) _____

(Signature of Parent/Guardian or
Legally Authorized Representative)

(Date)

Youth Consent

I am willing to participate in this study about my experience as a Minnesota 4-H Youth Camp counselor. I am aware that I am volunteering to participate and answer questions about how I feel about the camp counseling experience. I know that my answers will be collected and that they will not have my name attached.

Participant's Name (printed) _____

(Signature of Youth Participant)

(Date)

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