

# CAMP ENOR: CAMP EVALUATOR AND EDUCATOR JEFFERSON COUNTY

## PROJECT INTRODUCTION

Camp ENOR is an environmental education day camp out of Jefferson County for students in grades 4<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup> grade. I was an educator with the 5<sup>th</sup> grade students.

As an extension intern, I was hired to be complete an evaluation as a participant observer on an aspect of my choosing. I decided to look for professional development that the staff experience throughout the camp and if they saw a personal increase in nature relatedness.

Camp ENOR had not completed a staff evaluation for a few years and by looking at their individual perspective on their own professional development, the outcomes could be used by the program directors to hire in the future.

I also gained experience working as an educator for a group of 10 students. I have never been in the role of a teacher, so jumping into such a role allowed for me to personally learn about educating youth in an outdoor setting.

## INTERNSHIP GOALS

To develop, implement and find outcomes of a staff evaluation looking for professional development and how they relate to nature.

Also to be able to provide the camp director with insights on the training process and if there could be improvements to the camp from the perspective of the staff.

## HOW DOES THIS APPLY TO YOUR EDUCATION

The process of evaluation has been a personal focus during my time in the Masters of Public Health program and being able to apply these skills taught me a lot about implementing evaluations.

Also, while being a participant observer gave me many skills in educating youth which is a core public health skill when considering population wide behavior change.

## WHAT YOU DID

I was granted the opportunity to attend the Collective for Nature Immersion Science and Practice (cNISP) evaluation training this past May which pushed us to look at how nature effects mental health using their preselected surveys (which I used but could not submit to their larger scientific study).

With the use of this direction along with the desire to understand how the camp impacted the staff rather than the campers themselves, I developed a pre/post camp survey and weekly journals for the staff to complete.

The pre and post surveys focused on the staff’s personal change in relationship with nature and camp processes like training and potential changes that could be made to improve the camp. The pre and post surveys included quantitative and qualitative data collection methods.

The weekly surveys were given on Monday and Friday mainly looking at the specific week looking at how the camp educators/supervisors handled conflict and, from a positive perspective, any fun stories they had from the week.

I then spent a full week going through all the data, coding themes as they presented themselves naturally in the written responses.

Along with the evaluation, I was a Camp Educator, which gave me the opportunity to learn skills in teaching a group of 5<sup>th</sup> graders about the local environment and history. Taking campers on weekly trips around the Front Range of Golden, Colorado

Figure 1. (image)

Question	Pre (14 responses)	Post (9 responses)
Vacation spot	85%	66%
Personal actions	85%	88%
Spiritual connection with nature	86%	66%
Take notice of nature	92%	100%
Relationship to nature is important	100%	100%
Connection with living things	86%	100%

Found through adding together agree and strongly agree data points to get the sum and then find the average of those who said agree or strongly agree compared with those who indicated neutral or disagree.

## WHAT YOU LEARNED

Staff self identified professional development opportunities 3-4 times a week which was discovered through the use of the weekly journals.

Staff nature relatedness levels increased from the beginning and end of the camp which could be seen in the differences between the outcomes of the pre and post camp nature relatedness scale.

The benefits of using quantitative and qualitative data to find stronger outcomes when it came to individual professional development and a slight increased relatedness with nature

Only a slight increase due to the nature of the camp being an environmental day camp, meaning that most of the employees should have some desire to be outside in nature already.

Survey burnout is very real and even in an organized setting like this you will see a decrease in responses when collecting data from the same respondents over time. I was lucky to have a normal response rate of around 10/14 but I received only 9 responses for the final survey.

### Notable quotes

“I think this camp experience tested my ability to teach”

“Responsive teaching”      “experimental, hands-on teaching”

“The strong... framework that exists, combined with the freedom and flexibility given to the education teams to adjust modify and add what is needed”

## NEXT STEPS

I suggested to the camp director to utilize some of the positive outcomes that the staff evaluation found to be utilized to hire staff for next summer.

With the outcome on the curriculum Sharon and I discussed the positive and negative aspects of telling the staff to follow the program step by step or to use it as an outline. There is the potential for some to not follow the curriculum at all which would not be following all the goals of the education camp.