Exploring Positive Emotionality through Poetical Inquiry of Student Voices

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INTRODUCTION & SITUATION

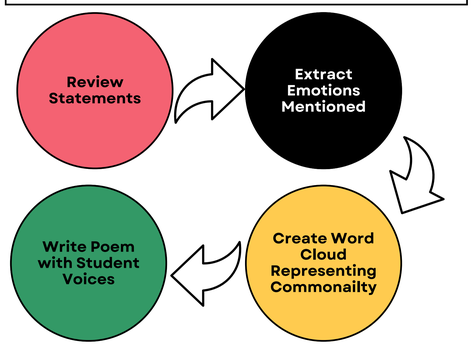
The Georgia 4-H Camping Program is a phenomenon which thousands of youth experience each summer. In an effort to make sure students were prepared for a successful week of summer camp, Elbert County 4-H implemented "Living Together Peacefully at Camp" lessons and contract in 2023. Students were asked to write their emotions at the end of their first full day of camp to align with the 4-H Thriving Model's indicator of positive emotionality. Anonymous responses were analyzed by the researcher using the qualitative method of poetical inquiry. Brown, et al. (2021), wrote, "Poetry is essential to phenomenological thought" (p. 258), and therefore fits nicely for exploring positive emotionality through student voices regarding a camping experience.

Elbert County 4-H committed to piloting the "Living Together Peacefully at Camp" (LTP@C) program for the 2023 camping season. Students registered to attend Cloverleaf Camp at Wahsega 4-H Center were invited to attend an afterschool meeting where 4-H Staff members presented information prepared by the LTP@C Committee. During the Parent/Camper Summer Camp Orientation Meeting, 4-H Staff presented the LTP@C Contract for campers to sign. Once at Camp, the 4-H Agent posed a question to the female Elbert County campers nightly, related to a LTP@C topic. Female campers were chosen due to the proximity to the researcher and served as a purposive convenience sample; as the boys were across camp. Female students comprised a strong majority of 88% of the Elbert County camper population. Students were provided pens and index cards. They had the option of writing an anonymous response to the question, and dropping their card in a box. This study analyzes the responses from the question asked Tuesday night, the first full day of camp, and after being exposed to the first high ropes element (the climbing wall) and a river tubing trip. The question was, ***"What emotions did you experience today and why?"***

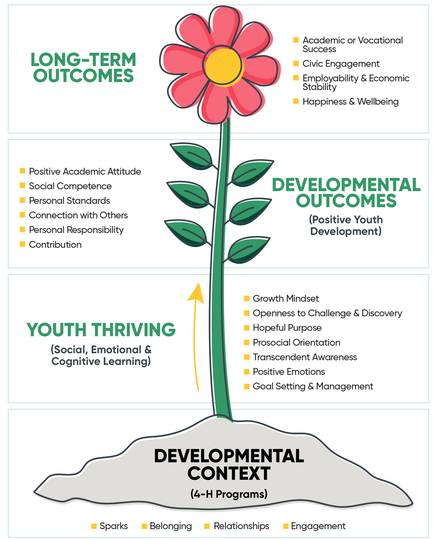
DATA COLLECTION & METHODOLOGY

Data Collection & Method:

- Implement the 4-H Thriving Model in all Programming
- Living Together Peacefully at Camp Afterschool Meeting
- Hold Parent/Camper Orientation Meeting; Discuss LTP@C Contract & Expectations
- Implement Conversations & Ask Daily Question at Camp for Reflective Writing
- Collect Anonymous Responses; Enter into Database
- Extract Each Emotion/Feeling Through Coding Analytic Technique; List of 58 Emotions
  - "Happiness" Mentioned 13 Times; "Scared" Replicated 8 Times
- Create Word Cloud
- Understand Meaning Behind Each Feeling
- Review Responses with Poetical Inquiry Methodology
- Write Poem Using Each Emotion as a Described by Campers
  - Insert Researcher Experience & Field Notes in Absence of Student Reasoning
- Present Collective Student Voice Camp Memoir Poem
- Have Work Reviewed by Camping Participants
  - "YES! That sounds just like camp at Wahsega!"



4-H THRIVING MODEL



For this particular study, the indicator of positive emotionality was used to allow students an opportunity to express their emotions. Daniel Goleman wrote in Emotional Intelligence, "The emotional brain responds to an event more quickly than the thinking brain. If you are not able to manage your distressing emotions, if you can't have empathy and effective relationships, then no matter how smart you are, you are not going to get very far." Students need to understand all emotions are important and should be expressed in an appropriate manner. "A key component of emotional and social intelligence is being able to recognize and manage your own emotions as well as knowing how to recognize and respond to others' emotions" (Hughes & Terrell, 2007, p. 17). Summer Camp produces a myriad of emotions. Youth are exposed to a variety of experiences and different people. Furthermore, for 4th-6th grades campers, this may be the first experience away from home for an extended night stay.

THE POEM & WORD CLOUD

On the second day of 4-H Cloverleaf Camp, I **LOVED** the activities and felt like a champ! But swimming in the pond made me **NERVOUS**, And I was so **SLEEPY** after a long day of service. Today was very full and definitely a lot of **FUN.** True **HAPPINESS** was found with friends in the sun, Not to mention the **HAPPINESS** of canteen candy. The lines were **BORING** though and not so dandy. Tubing the river was cool and made me **HAPPY**! But people can be **FRUSTRATING** and I got a lil snappy. I miss my home, so at times I was a little **SAD**. Yet camp has been an experience for which I am **GLAD**. I was **HAPPY** for adventure and to try something new! I climbed the rock wall which caused **PAIN**, & to the top there were few, Which also gave me a new sense of **PRIDE**. I felt **RELAXED** while the sun my wet clothes dried. This was to be a week where the **FUN** would not stop! I felt **PRIDE** when at the rock wall I made it to the top. Though waiting and rec time could be a little **BORING**. Adrenaline pumped I was **SCARED** on high ropes soaring. I found **HAPPINESS** being there in the mountains, And **HAPPINESS** playing in nature's water fountains. Yes, camp was truly overall a **HAPPY** event, Even though I still knew what **SADNESS** meant. I was still **EXCITED** for what was to come in the week. And **EXCITED** for those bears to play hide and seek. I **LOVED** being up there at Wahsega 4-H Center. The counselor made me **HAPPY**, such a good mentor. I was **HAPPY** to have survived another great day. **FUN** was had by everyone during our unrestricted play. I am still **SCARED** to overcome challenging heights. I am also very **TIRED** and ready to turn out the lights. People not paying attention so we can move along is a **BORE**, People sometimes make me **MAD**; please be kind more! My parents aren't here to watch me and that is a little **SAD**. I got a little **ANGRY** at the other students who act so bad. I was very **NERVOUS** to get on the difficult high ropes. I was **SCARED** but did not let down any of my hopes. I was **RELAXED** as I floated down the scenic river. **HAPPY** though the cold mountain water caused a shiver. It was a really **COOL** time of chilling with friends in fresh air. However, the deep water and a wild snake did cause a **SCARE**. Then we were in a line, waiting and **BORED** once again. As we watched **FUN** counselors disappear to the Bear's Den. I am **HAPPY** to be here with some of my favorite classmates. Although I will say I was still **TERRIFIED** on the wall lifting my weights. Meeting new people and making new friends while there was **FUN**. Still, the river, the rock wall, the pond and falls **SCARED** me a ton! At the bathhouse with not enough showers, I felt very **RUSHED**. My cheeks from the sun and being **SCARED** at times were flushed. At the end of the day, we have had plenty of time to **RELAX**. **SADNESS** will not stay so camp I can enjoy to the fullest max. Watching the high ropes to come made me somewhat **SCARED**. From the hiking and playing games, **PAIN** in my ankles flared. The wilderness is sometimes **SCARY**, especially the snakes. But I really was **HAPPY** with all our fun recreational breaks. And I am so **PROUD** of myself for getting out of my comfort zone. I was **HUNGRY** at every meal, though the food there is well known. Gosh, I cannot help but be **HORRIFED** by that tall rock wall! I still know Cloverleaf Camp at Wahsega is going to be a ball!!!

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