Defining and Describing Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competencies

Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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Abstract

Camp counselors are one of the factors that contribute to a quality camping experience and therefore it is crucial to understand what contributes to their successful performance. Because they work directly with campers 24 hours a day, they are the individuals who have the greatest impact on the learning environment. Ohio 4-H camp counselors need to know how to perform their multi-faceted role, and the 4-H professionals who train them need to be able to evaluate their competencies. By developing a competency model, a set of guidelines would be in place to assist in having a better selection process, counselor training modules, and counselor evaluation. However, no such model currently exists.

The purpose of this study was to develop and validate a competency model for 4-H camp counselors in the state of Ohio. Specific objectives included: (a) identify and describe competencies required for 4-H camp counselors in Ohio to be highly effective; and (b) construct a competency model that includes these core competencies. This study used a mixed method research approach, with an emphasis on qualitative approaches, including reviews of existing research and gathering data from employees through interviews and group processes. Peer debriefing and survey research were used to validate and further refine the results. The research design included data gathering, analysis, integration, and peer debriefing in four phases: (a) review of literature,
document review, and idea generation; (b) new model development; (c) model validation; and (d) final refinement and confirmation.

The findings of this study are represented by two documents, the *Roles and Responsibilities of Ohio 4-H Camp Counselors* and *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Model*. Sixteen key points were identified as roles and responsibilities. The Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Model identifies and describes a set of 15 core competencies that are relevant across Ohio 4-H camp counselors. The core competencies identified were: child and adolescent development knowledge; communication; cultural awareness; health, wellness and risk management; personal commitment; professional development; professionalism; program planning; role model; self-direction; supportive relationships; teaching and facilitating; teamwork and leadership; thinking and problem solving; and understanding organizational and camp environment. Each competency identified was further described using three to seven key actions. The competency model represents organizational preferences, is customized to the organization, and has high face and content validity.

Recommendations are provided for the Ohio 4-H camping program related to using the model and applying results to the camp counselor training process. Implications for practice are shared that focus on the research process, methods used, and replication by other youth worker or camping organizations. In addition, the competencies identified can assist organizations that aspire to prepare youth workers for the workforce. The model can also be used to enhance the quality of a camping program by training camp counselors to enhance the identified competencies. This research documented a process from initial information gathering through validation that could
serve as a model for other organizations to create, update, or refine their competency models.
Dedication

This work is dedicated to:

My family, who gave me a strong work ethic
and instilled a love for education at a young age.

and also to

4-H camp counselors that I have had the pleasure to know
and work with while sharing wonderful memories in our 4-H camp bubble.
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Vita

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Fields of Study

Major Field: Agricultural and Extension Education

Major focus areas: Extension Education
                  Research Methods and Statistics

Minor focus area: Informal Adult Learning
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The first chapter of the dissertation provides background information and identifies the research problem and specific research questions. The chapter includes definitions of key terms that were used for the research, assumptions, delimitations, and limitations. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the professional significance of the study.

Background of Study

Ohio 4-H had 15,113 youth participate in a camping experience in 2012, making it one of the largest programs conducted by Ohio 4-H in the state (Ohio 4-H Youth Development, 2012). In addition to the campers, each year there are approximately 1,875 teens who serve as camp counselors at both day and resident camps that are held in most, but not all, of Ohio’s 88 counties (T. Grody, personal communication, November 1, 2013). The Ohio 4-H camping program was established in 1919 (Ohio 4-H Youth Development, 2006) and currently conducts camp at 15 different residential camping facilities, which vary from each other in a number of ways (McNeely, 2004). Even though the various camping facilities throughout the state of Ohio differ in size, scope, and amenities, camp counselors are used in some capacity. Ohio 4-H camp counselors have a multi-faceted role. They are volunteers who are supervising, leading, delivering, conducting, directing, and teaching a 4-H program for the campers who are learning and having the opportunity for positive youth development (McNeely, 2004).
This opportunity for a positive youth development experience is largely
determined by the quality of the camping program. There are many factors that
contribute to a quality camping experience. These factors include the expectations from
parents and campers, camping standards and accreditations, overarching goals of the
camp, age and development of campers, camp curriculum, camping context, roles and
duties of counselors, and the involvement of counselors. Among these, the camp
counselor is of utmost importance. This is due in part because in the Ohio 4-H camping
program, the teen camp counselors serve in an adult role and are responsible for
supervision of the campers. Campers’ interactions with counselors can make or break the
camping experience. A conducive learning environment is one of the hallmarks of a high
quality youth development program, and staff are largely responsible for creating such an
environment (Grossman, Goldsmith, Sheldon, & Arbreton, 2009). At camp, counselors
are the individuals who have the greatest impact on the learning environment as they
work directly with the campers 24 hours a day.

Typically, counselors are responsible for monitoring campers, leading events and
programs, teaching skills to campers, and working as a team toward the positive impact
of the camping program. These roles vary from county to county throughout the state,
depending on the staff duties and county expectations. Regardless of their particular
roles, however, the counselors are directly responsible for the safety of the campers,
while ensuring that campers have an educational and enjoyable experience. The need for
camp counselors to be responsible individuals is a common theme throughout all counties
in the state.
To ensure success in performing their roles, camp counselors are trained how to interact with the campers and perform various duties at camp. It is crucial to have a counselor training program in place, as this component of the camping program may be viewed as the most important to the success of a campers’ positive camping experience. Galloway, Bourdeau, Arnold, and Nott (2013) found that the time invested in development of a comprehensive staff training package that focuses on camper outcomes was beneficial.

In addition to training the counselors prior to camper arrival, the camp counselor experience also includes counselor selection and evaluation. Because counselors are the individuals with the greatest impact regarding the quality of the camping program, it is crucial to understand what contributes to their successful performance. Counselors need to be able to not only know how to perform, but actually put their knowledge into action. In order to evaluate counselors on whether or not they have the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and characteristics that are desirable for someone serving in their role, a model needs to be in place to define and describe these items, which are also known as competencies. These competencies can be identified in a competency model.

Competency models were proposed to predict human performance and reduce the bias of traditional intelligence and aptitude testing (Mirabile, 1997). Competencies are useful for determining the probability of effective performance of individuals, and in turn impact the outcome of an organization or program (McClelland, 1973). Core competencies, then, are specific components of the model that are the foundation for high-quality performance in the workplace (Astroth, Garza, & Taylor, 2004).
If a set of competencies was developed, professionals would have guidelines in place to assist in having a better selection process, counselor training modules, and counselor evaluation. Expectations would be given prior to and during camp counselor training to ensure the end result was known. Not only would the model give clear expectations to the counselors of what skills and traits to work toward achieving and succeeding in at camp, but also campers would be interacting with individuals who are committed to contributing to a quality camping experience. A competency model would also assist with recruiting, selecting, training, and evaluating the counselors’ performance. Using a competency model to guide work with counselors would, in turn, provide a better experience for the campers and counselors, as it would assist counselors in developing the competencies necessary to successfully carry out their job. Furthermore, if a model were developed, it could serve as the basis for developing additional models in other organizations throughout the nation.

At present, there is no existing competency model that identifies the skills and competencies that 4-H camp counselors need to enable them to contribute to a quality camping experience. There is, however, research that has been conducted on topics that can be related to 4-H camp counselors. The American Camp Association (ACA, 2010a) has a set of camp competencies that focuses on the overarching camping program. These competencies include items ranging from program planning to youth and adult growth and development to business management and practices. Because it relates to the camp setting, it is a foundation for what could be developed for camp counselors or the individuals who directly work with the campers. Ohio State University (OSU) Extension also has a current competency model in place (Cochran, 2009) that focuses on
employees’ performance. This model includes items such as communication, teamwork and leadership, customer service, knowledge of Extension, and understanding stakeholders and communities. Similar to the ACA model, the OSU Extension model has components that may apply to 4-H camp counselors, because they are serving clientele (i.e., campers) and working as a team to have a successful camping program, but the Extension model is geared toward a broad set of individuals instead of a smaller niche group. Starr, Yohalem, and Gannett (2009) reviewed existing frameworks related to youth workers and found that important competencies include connecting with families; child and adolescent development; and health, safety, and nutrition. These identified competencies are applicable to adults who work with children and youth, but they are not necessarily applicable to teens.

These competency models are just a few of the many that have been developed in the last few decades. The use of competencies has become widespread in businesses (Astroth et al., 2004; Athey & Orth, 1999; Marelli, Tondora, & Hoge, 2005; Ricciardi, 2005; Sanchez & Levine, 2009), education (Hartje, Evans, Killian, & Brown, 2008; Scheer, Cochran, Harder, & Place, 2011; Starr et al., 2009), and Extension organizations (Boyd, 2004; Cochran, 2009; Scheer et al., 2011). These competency models have been used as a foundation for evaluating employees, and their developers have cited benefits such as improving effectiveness and productivity, staff retention, and staff development (Astroth et al., 2004; Athey & Orth, 1999; Hartje et al., 2008; Marelli et al., 2005; Ricciardi, 2005; Sanchez & Levine, 2009). Because Ohio 4-H camp counselors are hired as volunteer workers who are supervising, conducting, and teaching a 4-H program for the campers at 4-H camps, it is likely that the benefits from developing a model would be
similar. In addition, developing the competencies necessary for counselors to successfully carry out their job would contribute to a quality camping experience for both the counselors and the campers.

**Problem Statement**

In order to determine what makes a successful counselor according to Extension professionals, research needs to be done to identify and verify the most beneficial competencies. These competencies are in regard to how counselors impact the campers and camping program as a whole. The problem is that no set of competencies is in place in Ohio for 4-H camp counselors. Little research has been conducted related to what competencies are needed for camp counselors to be successful in their jobs. In order to identify the skills and competencies that camp counselors need to enable them to contribute to a quality camping experience, a model of core competencies needs to be determined. This will enable 4-H professionals to have an end goal of developing 4-H camp counselors with specific skills and competencies that lead to a safe and successful camping program.

**Purpose of Study**

The purpose of the study was to develop and validate a competency model for 4-H camp counselors in the state of Ohio. Specific objectives included:

1. Identify and describe competencies required for 4-H camp counselors in Ohio to be highly effective when serving as camp counselors.

2. Construct a competency model that includes these core competencies, which includes describing what they look like in practice.
Definitions of Terms

The following definitions were used in this study:

4-H camp is an Extension planned educational experience in the out-of-doors. It includes a variety of age-appropriate activities that might focus on a specific subject matter such as a space camp, science camp, or sea camp. It may also be of a general variety including activities such as crafts, games, nature education, physical activity, and other forms of recreation. 4-H camp is also used to describe a physical place where the educational experience is conducted (McNeely, 2004).

4-H camp counselors are male and female adolescents, age 14 to 19, who are selected to serve as volunteers at camp. They stay in cabins with the campers (at residential camps), plan programs for the campers, and teach formal and informal sessions and topics during the camp (McNeely, 2004). In addition, they are responsible for the well-being of campers throughout the camping experience and largely contribute to camper satisfaction with camp.

4-H professionals may be 4-H Extension educators, program assistants, program coordinators, and other staff who are employed by Extension. They are the individuals who also serve as the director of their county-based camp, regardless of their specific job title (Risch, 2012).

High performers are individuals who are performing at an above average level. They are considered to be a productive worker.

Competencies are observable elements including the knowledge, individual skills, attitudes, and other characteristics that are associated with high performance (Astroth et al., 2004; Athey & Orth, 1999; Mirable, 1997)
Core competencies are “the ‘demonstrated capacities’ that forms a foundation for high quality performance in the workplace” (Astroth et al., 2004, p. 27). This workplace may include campsites or camping programs in Ohio.

Competency models are the output from analyses that differentiate high performers from average and low performers (Mirable 1997). They are used as decision tools including recruitment and selection, training and development, performance management, and succession planning (Cochran, 2009).

Competency title and definition is a term and associated description of the knowledge, skills, abilities, and observable behaviors that represent the competency identified (Cochran, 2009).

Key actions are general descriptions of behaviors that illustrate a competency (Cochran, 2009).

Skills are the ability for one to do something well. This may be learned or developed following training.

Trait is a distinguishing quality or characteristic that makes one person different from another.

Assumptions

For the purpose of this study, it was assumed that:

(1) It is possible to identify competencies that predict performance. This possibility is based on the literature from previous studies that have developed competency models.
(2) The respondents answered all questions honestly and truthfully and did not hold back information. They were encouraged to do so in written and verbal communication prior to their involvement.

(3) The developed model will be a true depiction that accurately represents what is needed for Ohio 4-H camp counselors. By incorporating opinions of 4-H professionals throughout Ohio, a wider array of information could be captured on the needs for Ohio 4-H camp counselors.

Delimitations

Recognized delimitations of this study included:

(1) Roles and responsibilities of camp counselors may affect the competencies required. Because roles and responsibilities may differ from state to state and from organization to organization, this study focused only on Ohio 4-H camp counselors.

(2) This study included only Ohio 4-H professionals and not camp counselors, campers, or parents. It was not deemed feasible to undertake such an exhaustive process. Future studies could be conducted to expand this knowledge base.

Limitations

The following limitations were acknowledged when undertaking this study:

(1) Because identified competencies will be based on opinions of camping directors and 4-H professionals, the findings of the study will be limited to Ohio 4-H camp counselors. As well, the quality of the data and resulting model will be limited by the information provided by the participants.
However, these individuals are assumed to be in the best position to provide their opinions.

(2) The results of the study are limited to the current roles and responsibilities of Ohio 4-H camp counselors. If the roles and responsibilities change, it may be necessary to revisit the competency model.

**Significance of the Study**

A study that describes and defines 4-H camp counselor core competencies is important for several reasons. A competency model does not currently exist, so conducting a study and developing a model would fill this void. Initially, the results of the study will assist professionals to focus camp counselor training modules in areas that will enhance teen competencies when working with campers. This model will be put directly into practice throughout the state when 4-H Educators have guidelines as to what prescribed competencies of counselors should be. Having this knowledge will assist 4-H Extension Educators in planning and implementing the required counselor training. In turn, campers would have a positive experience while at camp and want to return in following years. In addition, professionals would be able to assess counselors on the competencies and have a common benchmark for evaluation. These counselors would also have a gauge for appropriate expectations of the counselors and would know the importance and meaning of attending the training meetings and monitoring the campers during the camping program.

Because counselors would have expectations for their role and a set of standards or competencies to work toward enhancing, the campers benefit, too. The quality of the camping experience relies largely on the counselors and their roles, engagement, and
designed curriculum, among other things. When counselors work toward enhancing the competencies, better counselors will be used throughout the camping program and the campers will benefit in the end.

Additionally, this study could be the foundation for future studies of developing competency models for camp counselors in camp programs run by other organizations beyond 4-H throughout Ohio and even the United States. Researchers and camping professionals would be able to use the model as a springboard to enhance their own camping programs. Because counselors serve in similar roles at camps throughout the nation, the modification would closely align with national standards. Campers would benefit tremendously, as counselors would be able to provide a quality camping experience.

A secondary outcome of this study is that a focused set of competencies could lead teens who serve as camp counselors to be better prepared for the workforce. Counselors will have an understanding of the importance of their role and would likely be more attuned to the competencies they are developing. This is due in part to the evaluation component when the professionals examine what competencies have been enhanced and areas where the counselors need to continue improving. Along with the discussions of the specific competencies enhanced, teens will put them into action when serving as a camp counselor. These skills gained will directly impact the likelihood of success upon entering the workforce.
Chapter 2: Review of Literature

This chapter begins with the rationale for why a competency model for 4-H camp counselors needs to be developed. This is depicted in a conceptual model for a quality camping program. Because camp counselors have a major role in the success of a camping program and the achievement of camper outcomes, it is crucial they develop the competencies that enhance the camping experience. Exploring camp as a youth development vehicle is the next component covered in the literature review. This includes outcomes for campers, components of a quality experience, and the roles of camp counselors. Camp counselors can be considered a subset of youth workers. Therefore the final section of the review includes an explanation of the skills and competencies that pertain to desirable youth worker competencies. In addition, the competencies and how they relate to the 21st century skills necessary for teens entering the workforce is covered, as it is a secondary reason to develop the competency model.

Conceptual Model for a Quality Camping Program

Competencies and competency models have become a popular way to provide organizational focus and serve as a method for certifying attainment of job skills (Byham & Moyer, 2005) rather than testing for intelligence (Mirable, 1997). These models give specific expectations for what the individual should accomplish. They also assist in recruitment and selection, professional development, and evaluation of employees (Athey & Orth, 1999). Currently, there are competency models in place for youth workers that
relate to desirable skills necessary for adults who work with youth (Astroth et al., 2004; National Collaboration for Youth, 2004; Starr et al., 2009), and also a competency model in place for staff working in camping programs (American Camp Association, 2010a). There is not, however, a competency model related to teen camp counselors.

In order to understand the basis for developing the competencies for teen camp counselors, it is necessary to explore background information of competency modeling and approaches to developing one, including the basis of the competency models developed for youth workers and camping programs. In addition, having knowledge of the specific components related to the model is crucial to having successful development and implementation of the model. This background includes evaluating the elements that go into a quality camping program, the counselors’ roles and responsibilities in a camp setting, how camp serves as a youth development vehicle, and the specific camping program - Ohio 4-H - where the model will focus. Also, it is important to know what the necessary skills are for adult workers who work with youth because they serve in a similar capacity as the teens who are the focus of this model. Each of these items is explored more in depth later in this review, as there are numerous factors that affect each of them.

Upon selection, counselors bring with them the skills they have developed through various youth development experiences, their personal qualities, and even their prior experience as a camper. These elements serve as the building blocks that determine how the counselors will perform and develop through the counseling process. These skills and attributes, along with undergoing training by Extension professionals, can further enhance the performance of a camp counselor. In turn, these skills and qualities
lead to specific competencies that contribute to the outcome of the camper experience and counselor job performance.

The conceptual framework for this study gives a pictorial image explaining the needs of a quality camping experience (Figure 2.1). The concepts on the left side of the model illustrate the competencies available and the concepts on the right illustrate the competencies needed for a quality camping program. The skills and attributes on the far left of the model are outside the boundary of the quality camping program because they are items that are dependent on items outside the camping realm. These items may include the counselor’s upbringing, experiences in school or work not related to camping, personal motivations, and interests and are what the counselor already possesses prior to being a part of the camp counseling process. The training of camp counselors is largely pictured in the quality camping program because 4-H professionals have an impact on this the most. 4-H professionals can determine what information to share with counselors to prepare them for the camp setting, and in turn, impact the competencies of camp counselors.

The shaded section in the middle is the ideal spot where competencies available and those needed for a quality camping program overlap. The concepts Schippmann (1999) used in his competency model were used as a reference when developing this conceptual framework. These available competencies align with the competencies required to have a quality camping program. Many items affect these required competencies and therefore they are illustrated in this model. Items include camping standards, environmental factors, overarching goals of camp, age and development of campers, roles and duties of counselors, involvement of counselors, camp curriculum,
and camping context. These items are representative of specific requirements of the local, state, and national camping requirements or beliefs. For example, if a counselor is expected to lead the entire camp in a session along with working in small groups, he or she will have more involvement with campers than if just expected to lead only a small group of campers and not the entire camp. In addition, the camp setting determines the activities that can be offered and the goals of the camp determine the focus area for programming and involvement of counselors and campers.
The triangular items included in the conceptual model that are directed toward the circle of competencies required illustrates how these items affect the competencies.
required to create a quality camping program. However, the competencies available for camp counselors are not all necessarily the same as those that are required. The overlap of the available and required competencies is the focus area of a competency model. If more is known about the competencies that are required for counselors to contribute to a quality camping program, 4-H professionals can learn more about the training needed, preferred experiences, and other key factors when determining who to select as camp counselors. However, before examining the specifics of camping and quality camping programs, it is important to understand competency modeling to ensure there is a foundation for the developed model.

**Competency Modeling**

Mirabile (1997) noted that the idea of testing for competence rather than intelligence was first proposed in the early 1970s by David McClelland, a former Harvard psychologist, when he was asked to find new research methods that could predict human performance and reduce the bias of traditional intelligence and aptitude testing. In the last several decades, more organizations have been implementing competency models in the workplace to assist them in their recruitment and selection of employees, training and professional development opportunities, and performance evaluations. A competency model is a framework for arranging a set of observable skills, behaviors, and attitudes demonstrated by employees of an organization. It describes what individuals need to know in order to execute their responsibilities accordingly. Employees then have the opportunity to enhance the specific competencies described in a competency model to improve performance in their given field.
Defining Competencies

Competencies are defined as a set of observable elements, consisting of individual skills, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors that are associated with high performance (Athey & Orth, 1999). They are the “demonstrated capacities’ that form a foundation for high-quality performance in the workplace” (Astroth et al., 2004, p. 27). Competency models, then, are a collection of competencies that are represented in different formats and describe the output from analysis that differentiates high performers from average and low performers (Mirabile, 1997). They serve as the foundation for important employment functions such as recruitment and hiring, training, and performance evaluation (Byham & Moyer, 2005).

Benefits of Using Competencies and Competency Models

When defining competencies, an organization can improve employee performance by providing training and development resources (Byham & Moyer, 2005). By developing a model for 4-H camp counselors in Ohio, those responsible for the camping program will be able to improve upon the efficiency of the training programs so that counselors will be able to focus on ways to be high performing individuals and enhance the impact they have on the camping program and the campers. In turn, the quality of the camping program will increase and campers will have the desire to return in future years.

When organizations identify what is necessary to have high functioning employees, they can focus on these areas and enhance productivity and impact. When administrators have a framework in place for evaluating personnel, they can identify when individuals are being successful. In addition, identifying high functioning
performers allows for a framework to be developed that assists in designing staff development strategies, including training, supervision, and personnel evaluation (Astroth et al., 2004). It is also noted that competency models are beneficial for creating a feedback instrument for workers and also to assist employees with strengthening each competency area (Marelli et al., 2005).

Athey and Orth (1999) summarized the advantages that McClelland identified of the competency approach. The reasons identified include (a) actually observing what individuals do to be successful instead of relying on assumptions about attributes, (b) having people perform what you want to be measured instead of administering a test, (c) being able to learn and develop the competencies over time instead of relying on inherent traits, (d) allowing for individuals to understand and develop the required level of performance, and (e) having competencies that are linked to meaningful life outcomes. The competency approach enables the worker to improve skills and also enables the organization to have quality performance.

In addition, when competencies are identified, individuals are aware of expectations for the workplace and evaluators have a baseline for performance appraisals. Training programs can be developed to further enhance the competencies so the employees are meeting desirable standards. This training can be conducted prior to individuals serving in their role or even after they have taken on the position and strive to improve upon a particular area.

These expectations and appraisals of the work being conducted could be applied to the 4-H camping program. 4-H professionals would have information about the areas that are necessary to provide a quality camping program for campers and could ensure
that training is conducted in these areas. Counselors would have knowledge of what is expected of them in their role as a camp counselor and could set goals to improve particular areas. Youth and the professionals who educate and train them would be able to work together to enhance the necessary competencies, which would benefit the camping experience for the campers. In addition, it would better prepare the counselors for the future workforce.

**Methods and Approaches to Develop Competency Models**

There are steps that should be taken when developing a competency model. Once the objectives for developing a competency model are determined, buy-in needs to be sought from sponsors and stakeholders in the organization (Marelli et al., 2005). This communication with individuals enables them to be educated on the benefits of the model and also for them to critique any steps that are mentioned. Next, the methodology for creating the model should be explored. Rothwell and Lindholm (1999) noted that multiple approaches, including the borrowed approach, borrowed and tailored approach, and the tailored approach, have been used to develop competency models. The tailored approach is essential to use when the purpose of using the competency model is as a basis for making employment decisions such as selecting, terminating, or promoting individuals (Rothwell & Lindholm, 1999).

In order to ensure that the appropriate competencies are being analyzed, Mirabile (1997) provided recommendations regarding methods for building a competency model. These methods include job analysis interviews, focus groups, questionnaires, job descriptions, and competency model formats. The job analysis interview is speaking one-on-one with someone to determine specific tasks, responsibilities, duties, knowledge,
skill requirements, and any other standards for successful job performance. Focus groups are not as time-consuming, but can still provide significant information. Questionnaires (Culp, McKee, & Nestor, 2007; Hatala & Hisey, 2011; Karbasioun, Mulder, & Biemans, 2007) may be sent to many individuals at a time, asking them to list and rank competencies, and are even less time consuming than focus groups. Additional approaches have also been used to develop competency models. These include the Delphi method (Boyd, 2004; Reynolds, 2011), which requires use of a jury of experts to develop consensus among the group regarding what the competencies are, and literature searches that seek out previous information on what is used by other organizations (Ng & Feldman, 2010). Many authors share the importance of using two or more methods to develop a list of competencies (Byham & Moyer, 2005; Cochran, 2009; Cochran, Ferrari, & Chen, 2011; Hartje et al., 2008; Marelli et al., 2005; Mirable, 1997). These methods may include literature reviews, focus groups, questionnaires, interviews, and group meetings.

Regardless of the method selected, a representative sample should be used to ensure individuals are selected from all levels of the organization (Marelli et al., 2005). After the methodology is selected, Marelli et al. (2005) recommended that the competencies should be identified and the model created, and then put into action.

Byham and Moyer (2005) discussed three common approaches to defining competencies. These include paragraph definitions, behaviorally anchored rating scales, and comprehensive three-part definitions. The paragraph definition allows for the competency to be discussed in general terms, but does not provide specific details. Behaviorally anchored rating scales (BARS) describe the various degrees of competence
and give more information, but can be too specific or too generic. The comprehensive three-part definition, which uses a paragraph definition, key actions, and a representative example, is the most comprehensive approach to defining competencies (Byham & Moyer, 2005). Reasons for using the comprehensive approach include having a definition that is easy to use and key actions that contribute to evaluating performance and providing effective feedback. The final reason Byham and Moyer (2005) list is that the definition provides specific information on how the competency is relevant to the given role. The important component of using the competency-based approach is to acquire an accurate depiction of the individual’s abilities required for success (Byham & Moyer, 2005).

In order to ensure the model that has been developed is accurate for its intended setting, it must be validated. Several authors note the importance of using multiple methods when defining competencies (Marrelli et al., 2005; Patterson, Ferguson, Lane, Farrell, Martlew, & Wells, 2000). This assures a competency is not missed altogether and also brings to light how some of the competencies can compliment one another. One suggested method is to use surveys that confirm the results of observations. Another is to conduct structured interviews and then use the data to construct a survey questionnaire (Marrelli et al., 2005). The questionnaire is then sent to a group of respondents to rate the importance of each specific job element or competency. In order to assure the organization’s managers are able to evaluate the competencies accordingly, examples should be given for the varying ranges of performance - low, moderate, and high, for example (Marrelli et al., 2005).
In addition to defining the competencies, determining the approach to evaluate individuals’ performance, and validating the model, the number of actual competencies included in a model must be examined. The number of competencies found in literature has not been consistent. Some authors recommend having 20 or fewer competencies (Marrelli, Tondora, & Hoge, 2005), while others suggest having eight to twelve as a target (Kanaga, 2007). It is likely that the more competencies included in the model, the more diluted it becomes; however having too few listed creates a one-size-fits-all mentality that does not allow for the flexibility needed to address individual and situational differences when determining performance evaluations (Kanaga, 2007). So the model should have the appropriate amount to ensure individuals can be evaluated accordingly, but is not reduced to the point that there is similar meaning across the competencies. Pickett (1998) noted that a guideline in deciding how many competencies to use is to focus on the most critical areas of competence that will really have an impact on performance. By evaluating the most crucial areas that will impact performance, managers will be able to assess the competencies of their employees. In the camp setting, these managers are referred to as camp directors; they are the professionals who select, train, and evaluate the counselors and strive to have a quality camping experience for the campers.

**Context of Camping**

There are numerous types of camps throughout the United States (Bennett & Bialeschki, 2013). These include residential and day camps and range from agency camps, governmental, religiously affiliated, independent nonprofit, and for-profit. Each
youth who attends camp likely gains new experiences even though the specific programs for each camp vary across each context.

What Is Camping?

Organized camping celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2011 (American Camp Association, 2010c). Many organizations, including 4-H, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Campfire, sports institutions, and religious associations conduct camp programs each year. Over 10 million children and youth attend camp each year nationwide (American Camp Association, 2010b), and in 2013 approximately 28,000 staff members (which includes adult staff and counselors) worked with these campers (American Camp Association, 2013). These campers will engage in teachable moments throughout camp, which is an extension of a traditional teaching setting (American Camp Association, 2010b). Camps have experiential, hands-on approaches, which enable the campers to be successful while participating in the offered activities. The benefits to the campers are numerous in size and scope and are discussed later in this chapter.

The purpose of camp varies in that some camps are for educational, art, cultural, or sports advancement. In the 4-H program, camps are typically devoted to educating youth about nature, leadership, developing relationships, and a sense of self-worth. Typically, residential camps are open to youth campers who are 8-14 years old. While at camp, they are supervised by counselors as they engage in a variety of activities including swimming, fishing, teambuilding, and challenges.

In general, counselors are young adults in their late teens or early twenties who are responsible for the campers. However, in the 4-H program the age and role of the counselor varies from state to state. For instance, Georgia’s counselors must have
graduated from high school and are staff members throughout the entire summer at one of their 4-H centers. The Virginia 4-H program also has 4-H centers throughout the state for the campers, but they use teens and adults as camp counselors. Oregon’s 4-H program has various campsites throughout the state and uses teens and adult camp counselors. Regardless of the age and amount of time counselors spend at the campsites or centers, they have roles that are crucial to the success of having a quality camping program.

**Roles of Staff as Camp Counselors**

Camp counselors serve in numerous roles throughout the camping experience. Johnson, Goldman, Garey, Britner, and Weaver (2011) shared a comment from an interview conducted with a counselor that exemplifies this multifaceted role: “You take on every role sometimes, you’re the mother, and the sister, and the teacher, and you’re everything sometimes (p. 275).” This intricate role is due largely because the counselors at resident camps are responsible for the campers from the time they wake and need to get dressed and brush their teeth until the time they go to sleep at night, and even take campers to the restroom or nurse’s quarters if they wake in the middle of the night.

Risch (2012) found the roles of counselors are multifaceted and complex. Teens learn new skills and try new roles when serving in their capacity as a camp counselor. Caring for children in an adult-like role is one of the roles mentioned in Risch’s (2012) findings. In addition, the counselors serve as leaders and manage groups, which may involve being a committee chair during the camp planning process. They also serve in programming roles and as a planner when preparing camp activities and determining what events the campers will be involved in.
In the research of Johnson et al. (2011), it was also found that counselors served in many roles at different times throughout camp. With regard to campers, they were found to be a caregiver, disciplinarian, entertainer, and facilitator. As a caregiver they are responsible for making sure the campers woke up, brushed their teeth, and were safe. They, too, referred to counselors as being a type of surrogate parent. When being a disciplinarian, counselors make sure campers are on task and at the proper location. The role of the entertainer, then, is more enjoyable for the counselors. They provide games and fun activities for campers, while being creative in the planning and implementation of camp. By encouraging discussions and the organization of activities, counselors serve in the facilitator role.

The counselor’s role does not stop with the campers, though. They also have responsibilities with staff members and other counselors. These teens take on programming roles where they serve as leaders and manage groups (Risch, 2012). Being a friend and team member fit into this aspect of the counselor role. Counselors have the opportunity to interact and develop relationships with others including adult staff, other counselors, and campers (Digby, 2005). By working together and making decisions, counselors develop friendships, along with creating a sense of team. Even if counselors are not necessarily close friends with another counselor, they work toward a common goal of providing a positive camping experience for the campers. For both the campers and staff members, counselors serve as a mentor and role model. Typically the more experienced counselors serve in these roles for younger counselors, by sharing experiences and insight from previous years and leading the group toward a common goal. However, the majority of counselors, if not all, serve in this capacity for campers.
They teach and encourage development in skills and activities. Campers look up to individuals who take interest in their growth, especially when they are being entertained and having an enjoyable time. Counselors also enjoy being role models to the campers (Digby, 2005; Digby & Ferrari, 2007).

According to Schafer (2007), specific factors increase the influence role models have on children. These factors include proximity, similarity, likeability, and authority. Counselors are physically near to children throughout camp, thus having a close proximity for a period of time. Having the same gender, ethnicity, or resemblance to other significant people in a child’s life, such as a parent or peer, leads to connecting with the child. A likeable role model then, is someone who is attractive in personality, appearance, and mannerisms. Finally, because counselors are the individuals in charge of campers, they serve in the authority role, as they guide, instruct, and educate campers.

This research literature is complimented by trade publications (e.g., Camping Magazine published by the ACA). Much of this information is based on prior experience and investigations from camping specialists. For instance, Ditter (1999), a licensed clinical social worker specializing in child, adolescent, and family therapy, describes the role of counselor in a variety of ways. One of these is by serving as a camper’s best friend. This role does, however, have its limitations such as setting restrictions with campers, as this task may be challenging for a friend to achieve. Another limitation of the friend role is that counselors should not share certain pieces of their personal life with the younger campers. Serving as somewhat of a surrogate parent and as a coach roles are also mentioned by Ditter (1999). Counselors observe and protect the campers, while encouraging them to try new activities and enhance their skills.
Another way Ditter (1999) describes a counselor’s role is as a wise, benevolent, and caring older brother or sister. In this sense, the older sibling is protective of the younger sibling and would intervene if risky behavior were occurring. They also take an interest in the younger siblings and have fun with them. They do not, however, confide aspects of their private, more adult-like life with the younger siblings.

However, it was noted that there are drawbacks to the roles of being a camp counselor. Ditter (1999) commented that part of the responsibility of being a counselor is setting limits for the activities and actions of the campers. Additionally, counselors may be questioned on many topics, but are encouraged to not share too much personal information with campers, or even receive advice from campers. Because counselors serve as role models, only appropriate information and advice should be discussed. Furthermore, counselors should participate in appropriate activities, which are not necessarily the same ones they would participate in with their friends, as it is likely campers will mimic their behaviors.

Because it is likely counselors will be confronted with undesirable camper behavior, they must also have skills to handle these situations. Ditter (2004) shared insight about how to accomplish this. Initially, he encourages counselors “don’t pick up the rope!” meaning when a camper challenges the counselors, they should remain calm and not enter into a power struggle. Along with not entering into a power struggle, counselors should give clear expectations and rules. If challenged, the expectation should be restated and then the counselor should detach from the situation, thus not entering into an argument. When campers avoid a task by engaging in an argument, Ditter (2004) encourages counselors to make campers “right” about what they are “right” about. This
may be as simple as acknowledging the heat: if a camper complains about being too hot
to perform chores, counselors should agree that it is hot but also reinforce that all parties
involved need to assist in cleaning up the cabin. Another method is to simply separate
the camper from his or her audience. By doing this, the spectators are out of the picture,
and the camper has time to settle down.

Ditter (2004) goes on to share that counselors may also prevent camper issues by
entering the camper’s world of interests, concerns, and thoughts, and simply giving
campers attention. In addition, counselors may redirect campers from a risky activity to
one that is more desirable, eliminating safety concerns that may arise. Finally, counselors
are encouraged to be respectful to campers in their requests. When they remind the
campers of this respect, they are processing the information and not reacting to a situation
immediately.

To be able to fulfill the various roles of a counselor, counselors must attain
particular skill sets and possess certain characteristics. Withee & Husted (2006) shared
desirable characteristics of camp counselors. These include being affirming, available,
open, sensitive, honest, confidential, accountable, and encouragement. Affirming is
described as being encouraging and respecting someone’s point of view, even if it is not
the same as one’s own. Available, then, is when a counselor gives time and attention to
the campers. By being genuine and transparent in their actions and expectations, a
counselor is being open. Because campers have a variety of needs, counselors should be
sensitive toward understanding them, while striving to hear, see, and feel their point of
view. Being honest and confidential entails counselors telling and knowing the
importance of the truth, while keeping information private when shared. If gossip
circulates in conversations, the counselor should smother it at its onset. Because the
counselors serve in a leadership role, they should be accountable for their actions toward
adults, campers, and their fellow counselors. Encouragement, then, is supporting others
on a regular basis.

The characteristics of counselors tie into the desired performance of a counselor. These characteristics include specific personality traits and particular skills. Loveland, Gibson, Lounsbury, and Huffstetler (2005) conducted a study on how personality
dimensions correlated with the performance of camp counselors. Variables that were significantly related to performance included conscientiousness, emotional stability,
agreeableness, nurturance, and work drive. Conscientiousness relates to being reliable,
trustworthy, and dependable when working within an organizational structure. Having emotional stability allows for individuals to handle stress and pressure while on the job. Because of the nature of counselors’ responsibilities, they are constantly placed in stressful situations. Being agreeable and cooperative allows for counselors to work as a team with staff members and other counselors when planning and implementing camp programs. Nurturing campers and taking an interest in their well-being allows for campers to be supported while at camp. Finally, having a work drive enables counselors to put in long or irregular hours to meet the demands of the position while facing unexpected emergencies.

Knowing the characteristics and desired qualities of counselors will assist in multiple avenues. Staff members will be able to recruit someone with these qualities and then properly train them to achieve high in the desired areas. Additionally, counselors will enhance these traits when developing their roles as a counselor and in turn will
impact the camping program. When there is a quality camping program, campers will want to continue returning to camp each year. As the counselors’ roles develop, more opportunities are created for their skills to increase. The proficiencies improve their current well-being and will also assist them as they move into the future when they are attending school, preparing for the workforce, and being caring and competent citizens.

**Ohio 4-H Camping and Camp Counselors**

Ohio’s 4-H camping program was established in 1919 (Ohio 4-H Youth Development, 2006). In the nearly 100 years these camps have been in place, thousands of youth have benefited from what they have to offer. The majority of these encounters are at residential camps. The American Camp Association (1998) defines a residential camp as an experience consisting of a minimum of four nights where the camp staff is responsible for the campers 24 hours a day. There are currently 15 different residential camping facilities used by Ohio 4-H throughout Ohio, which vary from each other in a number of ways (McNeely, 2004). Not only do they have varying amount and types of sleeping quarters and other facilities, but programs differ, too. Regardless of the location or programs offered, 4-H residential camping provides abundant opportunities for youth to experience growth of numerous skills in a natural, communal setting. Even though the various camping facilities vary throughout the state of Ohio differ in size, scope, and amenities, camp counselors are used in some capacity.

In Ohio, these residential camp programs are typically county based, that is, the county plans and conducts the camps for its members at a designated facility during a particular week, rather than having members attend any camp during any week of the summer (Ferrari & McNeely, 2007). Teens selected and trained by the county 4-H
professional are the individuals who are responsible for the campers’ well-being throughout the camping experience rather than seasonal staff who are hired by the camping facility. These 4-H camp counselors are male and females, typically between 14 and 19 years old, and have been selected to serve as volunteers. Counselors are responsible for campers throughout the camping experience, which includes sleeping in and monitoring living quarters at residential camps, planning programs and activities, and instructing campers at sessions or group activities.

Having teens serve as counselors is a major component of Ohio’s camping program. McNeely (2004) conceived of the counseling experiences as having four components. These components include (a) the counselor selection process, (b) counselor training and camp planning, (c) preparation for camp, and (d) fulfilling counselor roles and responsibilities during the camp session. County 4-H professionals are the individuals who provide this training and then facilitate the camping experience (Ferrari & McNeely, 2007).

Although many of these components differ in how they are specifically implemented from county to county, the process is still essentially the same. Ferrari and Arnett (2011) also conducted research related to the Ohio 4-H camping program and discussed the counseling experience as having five components. These components include (a) application, (b) interview, (c) planning and training, (d) performing role as a camp counselor, and (e) performance appraisal. The fifth component is one that is conducted by some of the counties in Ohio, but not all of them. In part, this component was instituted to document workforce skills gained by camp counselors. The remaining four components are typically offered at most of the counties in some capacity.
The process of being a camp counselor parallels what is used in the workforce, which emphasizes the importance of the counselor role and also provides a workforce preparation experience for teens. The counselor selection process is the first step one must take to become a counselor. A study by Schmiesing and Henderson (2001) indicated that volunteer screening provides an increased comfort level for parents and youth participants, along with enhancing the importance of responsibilities. This screening of individuals who will be working with youth participants demonstrates the importance of the counselor selection process. Initially, camp directors and professionals provide a job description for camp counselors, along with an application to complete. Counselors are asked to provide references so professionals can gain insight about how the individuals have behaved in similar settings. After the initial interest in expressed, applications are reviewed. Along with the application, teens sign a standards of behavior form and expectation agreement. Professionals also check the online sex offender quick search, which ensures there are not any allegations against the volunteers who will be working with the campers. Many professionals have an additional component of an interview or skill stations to observe how teens react in particular situations.

Once the counselors are selected to be camp counselors, they go through counselor training and plan for camp. This component may be viewed as the most important to the success of the camping program. Its purpose is to orient staff members to content areas while creating a sense of community among staff members (Baldwin et al., 2010; Powell et al., 2003). To meet the current ACA (2012) accreditation standards, counselors must undergo five to six days of this training. Items covered throughout the training may include topics such as ages and stages of youth development, safety
precautions, and counselor expectations. Although there are recommended topics, it does not necessarily mean the counselors are receiving the same type of training. The training varies in that it is conducted in different formats, such as once a week for two hours for two months or one to two weekends for several hours at a time. In addition, the activities that are used to address the topics differ. Some 4-H professionals may focus on making sure counselors are prepared to handle situations that unexpectedly arise while at camp, including thunderstorms, speakers who cancel at the last minute, or a program that does not take as long to conduct as expected. Other individuals may not train their counselors at all in this area and would focus more on the ages and stages of youth development and the activities that correspond of the camper’s development should be planned while at camp. The training styles may also differ in the way the teaching occurs. Some 4-H professionals might incorporate hands-on engagement, while others have discussion about activities, and others may give a presentation or lecture of the content.

In addition to attaining a certain number of training hours, counselors are responsible for planning the activities that occur throughout camp. When counselors plan for camp, they will determine the activities that will engage the campers while keeping them safe. These may include educational sessions, adventures, team building, games, or community service activities. Not only does this planning give the counselors ownership of what they will be implementing while at camp, but also it enhances their problem solving skills (Powell, 2004). They must anticipate what will be age appropriate for the campers, along with the aspects that will be engaging for the youth.

Along with planning for camp events, counselors must prepare the facilities and prepare for camper arrival. This might include getting supplies ready, decorating cabins,
or testing to ensure a program is ready for use. The final preparations are made just prior to camper arrival, when the counselor assumes the role of fulfilling their duties as a camp counselor. During the camp session, counselors are responsible for monitoring campers, leading events and programs, teaching skills to campers, and working as a team toward the positive impact of the camping program. These roles may vary from county to county throughout the state, depending on the staff duties and county expectations. Regardless of the particular role, the counselors are ultimately responsible for the safety of the campers, while ensuring that campers have an educational and enjoyable experience.

**Camping As a Youth Development Vehicle**

Camps are ideal settings for promoting positive youth development because camps tailor their programs to target key camper outcomes, which highlight the child’s assets, are age appropriate, and are outcome focused (Bialeschki, Lyons, & Ewing, 2005). These types of programs are designed to focus on skills necessary to make youth successful. Numerous components go into having a superior camping program, and attention to these components is more likely to lead to positive youth development. Refer back to Figure 2.1 that includes aspects of a quality camping program. One of these components is training and staff development, because the camp counselors, like other youth workers, play such a significant role in the lives of the young individuals in their care (Barcelona, Hurd, & Bruggeman, 2011). When these counselors have clear expectations, campers are more likely to have positive outcomes and be satisfied with their camping experience.

Guerra and Bradshaw (2008) describe five competencies that lead to positive youth development. The competencies that lead to a positive youth development are
similar to what those of a counselor would be because the competencies for positive youth development and those of camp counselors strive to enhance performance in youth. The competencies Guerra and Bradshaw (2008) list are a positive sense of self, self-control, decision-making skills, moral system of belief, and prosocial connectedness (Table 2.1). By having a positive sense of self, one has self-awareness or accurate assessment of physical, psychological, and behavioral attributes and can judge self-worth. Self-control, then, is the ability to regulate and manage affect and behavior in a controlled versus automatic fashion. When focusing on decision-making skills, autonomy of participants and opportunities for choices independent of adults are the concentration for development. The moral system of belief is in regard to how people in a society should behave in relation to others. Finally, prosocial connectedness is the state of belonging where individual youth perceive that they and others are cared for, acknowledged, trusted, and empowered within a given context. The authors suggest that taken together, these five competencies play an important role in the promotion of positive youth development and prevention of risk. Because these competencies are related to positive youth development, they are relatable to that of competencies for counselors. They are related because the competencies for each work to increase skills of the youth to make them better contributors to society.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Core Competency</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Positive Sense of Self</td>
<td>Self-awareness (accurate assessment of their physical, psychological, and behavioral attributes), agency (a sense of volition over self-generated acts), and self-esteem (associated with life satisfaction)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Control</td>
<td>The ability to regulate and manage affect and behavior in a controlled versus automatic fashion in accordance with situational and normative demands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decision-Making Skills</td>
<td>The capacity to make effective decisions; imagining future outcomes in the present, coordinating independent pieces of information, and understanding the likelihood of various consequences occurring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral System of Belief</td>
<td>Judgments about moral issues such as harm, fairness, integrity, and responsibility, and engages psychological process such as perspective taking and empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosocial Connectedness</td>
<td>An overarching focus on a psychological state of belonging where individual youth perceive that they and others are cared for, acknowledged, trusted, and empowered within a given context</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* From Guerra and Bradshaw (2008)

Table 2.1 Competencies Leading to Promotion of Positive Youth Development

**Outcomes for Campers and Youth Development**

There are many facets of the camping experience that contribute to camper enjoyment and development. The camp setting itself sets the stage for skills to be enhanced. Nature has been shown to have a personal restorative value while reducing stress, arousal, and anxiety (Arnold, Bourdeau, Nagele, 2005b; Berman, Jonides, & Kaplan, 2008; Garst, Browne, & Bialeschki, 2011; Herzog, Black, Fountaine, & Knotts, 1997; Kaplan & Kaplan, 1989). Individuals who engage in these nature experiences may have a sense of calm wash over them as they take in the sights, sounds, and smells of nature. In addition, by being at camp participants develop a sense of being away as they escape from the busy activities of daily life. These daily happenings vary from person to
person, as they have diverse backgrounds, financial needs, support systems, and prior experiences. However, by simply being at camp, the context is equalized for all youth (Garst et al., 2011). They all eat the same food, participate in the same activities, sleep in the same shared spaces, and oftentimes wear the same type of clothing. The difference between the haves and the have-nots are minimized.

Along with equalizing the context for youth, the structural components of camp can also influence participant development (Garst et al., 2011). Group norms and group organization become well known, and so do the traditions or rituals of how a camp operates. The behavioral expectations are shared, giving consistency and commitment to camp policies within a particular camp year after year. One of the expectations is offering various activities. By leading new and challenging events, positive peer pressure occurs throughout camp, as campers and counselors are encouraged to try them. In turn, this stretches their comfort level and provides more growth opportunities when they make decisions on their participation in the activities. Having a choice in activities allows for experiential learning to occur, because youth actually make decisions and learn from the experience (Garst et al., 2011).

An additional way campers learn from experience at camp is by sharing common space. In this group living concept, campers, counselors, and staff members eat, sleep, play, and work in social groups while they are at camp. This fosters a sense of community among them, and has a positive influence on campers’ self-identity (Garst et al., 2011). Developing this sense of community is just one of the ways camper’s self-identity is enhanced, as there are many opportunities throughout the camping experience that encourage this development. By participating in camp, campers generate a positive
identity, build character, and attain a sense of independence (Burkhardt, Henderson, Marsh, Thurber, Scanlin, & Whitaker, 2005; Garst et al., 2011; Garst & Bruce, 2003; Hedrick, Homan, & Dick, 2009; Henderson, Bialeschki, Scanlin, Thurber, Whitaker, & Marsh, 2007; Thurber, Scanlin, Scheuler, & Henderson, 2007). A large contributor to why campers enhance these skills is because campers are responsible for their own actions. They must take initiative on their own to clean up their space, make their own choices in activities, and even determine what foods to consume. Because they are making choices about some of the basic needs of life, campers are also increasing their basic living skills. They are responsible for their own actions and behaviors. Throughout camp, campers are encouraged to try new things and have a support group of counselors, other campers, and adults. By attempting new activities and succeeding, campers feel good about themselves and their accomplishments. This also enhances a camper’s self-esteem, as they feel confident in their abilities and believe they are an important person (Burkhardt et al., 2005; Garst et al., 2011; Hedrick et al., 2009).

By deciding to partake in these activities and making choices about their behaviors, campers also enhance decision-making skills. These skills are used when choosing which craft to create or whether or not they will learn a new dance. The counselors and adults who work with the campers encourage them to make these decisions. By having counselors and adults present, campers build a positive relationship with a caring adult (Garst et al., 2011). These relationships go even further, as campers learn positive values from both the adults and the camp experience (Burkhardt et al., 2005; Garst et al., 2011; Hedrick et al., 2009; Henderson et al., 2007; Thurber et al.,
This is largely because the adults are concerned with the campers’ well-being and are making sure they have an enjoyable experience.

Having a relationship with a caring adult assists campers to feel emotionally safe and included in the camp environment. When there is emotional security, campers are more apt to like each other and feel accepted. Garst et al. (2011) discuss this element as one of the positive benefits of the camping program. Camps do not, however, stop at ensuring only emotional safety. They must also be physically safe environments (Garst et al., 2011). Campers should have proper shelter and living quarters and engage in physically safe activities. The physical and emotional safety of campers is crucial to having a positive youth development experience. When a camper feels safe, he is more likely to expand his horizons and try new tasks.

One of the horizons expanded is the social skills of campers. They develop these skills at camp by meeting new individuals and making new friends (Arnold et al., 2005b; Burkhardt et al., 2005; Garst et al., 2011; Garst & Bruce, 2003; Garton, Miltenberger, & Pruett, 2007; Hedrick et al., 2009; Henderson et al., 2007; Thurber et al., 2007). Campers come together in their cabin and share common experiences. Additionally, they are all thrust into new settings that encourage growth and development. By having these common situations, campers enhance their peer relationships. Because campers are given the opportunity to learn in a variety of social settings, social anxiety may be reduced or eliminated.

Campers are not just learning social skills at camp. They also learn thinking and physical skills (Burkhardt et al., 2005; Garst et al., 2011; Henderson et al., 2007; Thurber et al., 2007). They are put into new settings and gain new knowledge about a variety of
subjects. Campers may be hiking, zip lining, or participating in physically challenging experiences. Campers can develop a sense of adventure or exploration when in a natural setting. Trees, birds, and other creatures surround them. Exposure to the outdoor environment generates an environmental awareness. Witnessing a slithering snake or a flying bat leaves a much greater impression on a camper than simply viewing pictures in a book or watching a movie.

Along with actually witnessing nature and the environment, campers are thrust into situations that encourage growth and development. By actually having to decipher and work through problems at camp, campers learn life skills (Arnold et al., 2005b; Garst & Bruce, 2003; Garst, Nichols et al., 2011; Garton et al., 2007). Social and life skills align in that campers are learning to talk to others and must work through disagreements that might occur. Additionally, when working toward their goals, they are cooperating with team members and are learning the importance of teamwork. Beyond their immediate usefulness, gaining these skills will assist campers later in life, whether it is in a school or work setting.

All of the skills gained have a common theme for what camp provides the campers. This is an opportunity for self-determination and mastery (Garst et al., 2011). Campers make choices throughout camp and learn information that will be useful to them in the future. They try harder to achieve their goals and have a sense of accomplishment when they attain them. The benefits of a camper experiencing camp are numerous in their scope and impact the world in which they live. By attending camp, experiential learning situations are provided that campers would likely not be able to experience elsewhere.
What Are the Components of a Quality Camp Experience?

When camping is viewed as a youth development program, there are numerous components that must be considered. Experiential learning situations are one of the components necessary for having a quality camping experience. Others include the commitment to accountability and assessment of outcomes; trained staff; physical and psychological safety; appropriate structure; supportive relationships; opportunities to belong; positive social norms; opportunities to matter or make a difference; opportunities for skill building; and integration of family, school, and community efforts (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Each plays an important role in the quality of the experience for the camper. There are other components that impact the quality of the camping experience. These components are the expectations from parents and campers, camping standards and accreditations, overarching goals of the camp, age and development of campers, roles and duties of counselors, involvement of counselors, camp curriculum, and camping context. Each item is discussed further in the sections that follow.

Expectations. Before campers decide to attend camp, parents must permit them to do so. When making the important decision of putting their child into someone else’s care, they give great consideration related to the safety of their children. They want to ensure their children will be well cared for and that they will not be in great danger while at camp. In addition to wanting their child to be safe, it is likely that consideration is given to what the experience will be. Parents have high expectations that their children will benefit from the best of camp experiences (Duntley, 2011). It is also likely the campers have high expectations they will have an enjoyable time, because one of the reasons campers attend camp is because it is fun (Arnold et al., 2005b). They may have a
preconceived idea of what will occur at camp and how campers will interact with each other. To ensure the campers do have a quality experience, camp directors and staff members have similar expectations for how counselor and staff will perform while at camp. These expectations are shared with counselors prior to their arrival at camp during the training that takes place. They might include how counselors are to interact with each other, campers, and camp staff, or even how to behave during meals. In addition, these expectations might include appropriate behavior, actions, and activities provided for the campers. Counselors also have expectations for themselves and other counselors. They likely expect other individuals to work as a team and carry out the responsibilities they set out to tackle. These expectations can have an impact on the campers’ experience at camp, if the experience does rate as highly as they originally had hoped.

**Camping standards.** Outside entities have expectations for the camping experience as well. The camp setting itself is something parents, campers, and staff members envision and expect to be in appropriate working order. Camp experiences often contrast with everyday living settings because they are frequently in remote areas and are restorative in nature. In turn, the setting may play an important role in shaping how camp experiences affect youth and adults (Garst et al., 2011). The physical components of the camp are foundational in establishing a safe place for the programs. This includes appropriate lodging and facilities, activities, and staff members who are working with the campers. In order to support the efforts of having a safe environment, the ACA has an accreditation process that provides a framework for camps to support further positive youth development among campers (Garst et al., 2011). These include counselors receiving training prior to camp arrival, specific types of lodging and
accommodations, and the types of safety protocols for particular activities, among other items. There are numerous standards that must be met to have an accredited camp, and by following the guidelines, it is more likely campers will have an enjoyable, safe, and educational experience.

**Camper involvement.** An additional component that increases the likelihood of campers having a quality experience is giving campers the opportunity to experience new and exciting activities. Participation in activities allows for camper involvement and engagement throughout the camping encounter. Cohesion is developed within the camp community by using effective organizational strategies, which may entail having a common group name, singing a song, or creating a chant or symbol (Garst et al., 2011). When campers are invested in what they are doing during their camping experience, they are likely to be more excited to participate in camping activities, take ownership of their actions, and interact with others in a positive manner. They will try new experiences and step out of their comfort zone when they succeed in making appropriate decisions. By doing so, they further enhance their skills and self-esteem.

**Curriculum and planned activities.** Campers will have an enjoyable experience that may foster personal reflection and recognition of their skills and engagement if those selecting the activities and curriculum used at camp have carefully considered the age of the campers, safety, and camper involvement. This careful selection of activities is important, as every minute counts (Duntley, 2011). Because campers are at camp 24 hours a day, they are constantly engaging in activities and making decisions about what they should do next. When counselors and staff members prepare activities that give campers smart choices about what to do, they are both providing safe activities while
enabling the campers to enhance their decision-making skills. Garst and colleagues (2011) noted that the structural components of the camp experience contribute to positive youth development. These structural components may include camp norms, behavioral and rule expectations, and the way there is consistency and commitment to camp policies. By considering the activities and curriculum to implement while at camp, the campers are more likely to develop their skills.

Camping context. The context and setting where activities happen matter, and the individuals who plan and lead them have a significant impact on whether youth involvement produces positive developmental outcomes (Barcelona et al., 2011). Staff must be intentional when planning how they use time, understand how the roles of staff and youth may blend together, and alter the content and purpose of the program to fit youth interests and needs because the point (purpose) of the program occurs at the point (place and time) where youth and staff meet (Smith et al., 2006). There must be quality at the point of service, which is the place where youth and the program intersect, in order to have key developmental experiences (Smith et al., 2006). Campers have a chance to participate in these developmental experiences when they experiment with new activities, challenge themselves to expand their horizons, and experience nature in a fun, hands-on setting (Arnold et al., 2005).

Genson (2010) discovered nature plays a part in the camp experience and is one of the reasons campers and counselors choose to return to camp every year. Even though it may be an initial deterrent from attending camp for some, campers and counselors appreciate the seclusion from media and society. In addition, individuals learn from
nature and its surroundings. This includes being exposed to the sounds, sights, and smells of trees, animals, and fresh air, while allowing for a time of reflection.

However, it is not just the physical environment or place that leads to a connection or sense of ownership, but the activities and relationships that are developed when working together (Genson, 2010; Whitacre & Farmer, 2013). This sense of belonging is a strong motivator for individuals to return to camp each year. They feel accepted, included, and endure friendships in a welcoming environment.

By having a welcoming environment, campers feel included and are more likely to have a positive camping experience. At 4-H camp, the counselors and the friendliness of other campers play an instrumental role in ensuring a fun and inclusive camp community where youth can thrive (Arnold et al., 2005a; Garst et al., 2011). When friendly campers and counselors surround the campers, they are more likely to try to things with the encouragement of others and further enhance their skills.

**Environmental factors and camp issues.** Even if the activities are planned accordingly, it is inevitable that plans need to change. It could storm when the campers were to be outside playing a game. The campsite could lose power. Bees or other creatures in nature might interrupt happenings. These environmental challenges can affect the overall camping experience. In order to have success with the program, counselors and staff members should have reserve plans or have knowledge of how to alter plans at the last minute. Learning how to anticipate risks and develop back up plans comes with counselor training and preparation. When counselors receive training prior to camp and are prepared for their role, they feel more confident in their abilities.
**Tasks and duties of counselors.** The duties counselors perform vary from camp to camp. Some of these duties are related to being responsible for planning workshops or programs, leading and implementing activities and events, while others are simply in charge of keeping the campers safe. This largely depends on the expectations of the camp facility and the camp director who trains the counselors. But in order for campers to have a successful camping experience, counselors must have a supportive relationship with the campers. Henderson and colleagues (2007) noted that the supportive relationships trained staff provide are essential elements of camp. These relationships begin at the onset of the camp and continue throughout camp. Regardless of the duties of the counselors, it is imperative they are prepared to provide a quality camping program for the campers.

**Staff.** The adult staff also has an impact on the quality of the camping program. They are the individuals who work with the camp counselors in planning and implementing the camping program. These adult leaders play an integral role in facilitating the process of developing responsibility in teens (Ferrari & Risch, 2013). This is accomplished as they intentionally structure the camp training and planning prior to the camp session to ensure the counselors are prepared to handle situations appropriately while at camp. In addition, they provide emotional and instrumental support while balancing the conflicting needs of control and youth ownership.

Not only does the staff work with the counselors to facilitate the training, but they set policies and expectations for the counselors and campers. These expectations may include how to behave, work as a team, or interact with one another while at camp. Specific policies may include a particular dress code or a way that emergency situations
should be handled. Throughout the camping experience, these individuals provide guidance to the campers and teen counselors on following protocol and procedures.

This guidance also includes offering suggestions for how counselors can improve. The adult leaders do this by providing opportunities to the counselors for them to learn and practice skills, in addition to giving verbal and written feedback on counselors’ performance throughout the process (Ferrari & Risch, 2013). By suggesting improvements, the counselors are able to better their skills and make the camping experience more enjoyable for the campers.

Counselor engagement. Youth engagement is positively related to achieving positive youth development outcomes. There are three distinct forms of engagement: affective (emotional), behavioral, and cognitive (Ferrari & Arnett, 2012). Affective or emotional engagement refers to the emotional state of the individual, that is, whether they are happy, interested, and excited while completing tasks. Behavioral engagement is in relation to an individual’s conduct, participation, and attention during activities. Cognitive engagement refers to the degree to which program tasks challenge participants at their level of skill or knowledge. Throughout the counseling experience, counselors must be engaged with campers, counselors, and the activities. Ferrari and Arnett (2012) found that counselors experienced high levels of engagement, and this engagement appears to be a necessary, although not a sufficient, condition to produce outcomes.

Counselors can provide a quality program by engaging with the camper throughout the camp. Smith et al. (2006) discuss the importance of having quality at the point of service in a youth development program. The key component to achieving quality is exploring what occurs where the youth and staff interact and where the
programs are delivered. Throughout the camping experience, counselors work with campers. This includes waking in the morning, preparing for the day, learning sessions, mealtimes, and evening programs. Because of their continuous involvement, counselors have an incredible responsibility to ensure the campers have a safe and enjoyable time while at camp. These counselors are aware of their responsibility, and recognize the positive and negative consequences that may result when performing in their role (Risch, 2012). Because they take ownership of their responsibility, it is more likely the counselors will work toward enhancing the skills and competencies necessary to be a successful counselor. This is crucial, as the relationship the counselor has with the camper largely contributes to the quality of the camping program and camper enjoyment. Camper enjoyment determines whether or not they will continue camping in future years, and also has an impact on the skills that they gain during the camping experience.

**Required Skills and Competencies of Counselors**

The role camp counselors play in the camping program is crucial to the success of the program. The skills these individuals possess (or do not possess) can have a lasting impact. Because the counselor has such a tremendous impact on the camping experience, if the counselors and professionals who train them know what is required to have a successful camp counselor, it is more likely to have a quality camping program. These necessary skills align with the skills needed to be successful in the workforce. Camp counselors are a specialized subset of youth workers who need to have opportunities for staff training and development to be successful not only at camp, but also in the workplace.
As previously mentioned, camp counselors serve in various roles while at camp. To better prepare these individuals for their particular role as a counselor, similar areas need to be reviewed to gain a full understanding of the role they play. Initially, the actual camp environment needs to be understood to grasp the concept of where camp counselors are working. Camp counselors are preparing themselves for the workforce, so it is necessary to understand what is required of workers in the 21st century. In addition, youth workers are adult individuals who work with children, similar to how teen camp counselors work with campers. To gain an understanding of how these skills align, youth worker characteristics needs to be explored. Models of cross-age teaching have been in place where teens or older youth work with younger children. Teen counselors serve in a similar role when working with younger campers. Each of these items is discussed further to have a better understanding of how they relate to camp counselors and the desirable competencies.

**American Camp Association Competencies**

The American Camp Association (2010a) has a set of core competencies that relate to the camping environment. This list is comprised of 13 competencies and includes (a) youth and adult growth and development; (b) learning environment and curricula; (c) program planning; (d) participant observation, assessment, and evaluation; (e) professionalism and leadership; (f) health and wellness; (g) risk management; (h) cultural competence; (i) families and community connections; (j) nature and environment; (k) business management and practices; (l) human resources management; and (m) site/facility management.
The identified competencies were designed with the intent to be used by camp staff and youth development professionals, camp administrators or directors, families, trainers or training organizations, higher education faculty and staff, and in professional development efforts. Because the intended audience was not specifically for camp counselors, these competencies are not a perfect solution to competencies for camp counselors. These particular competencies relate to the specific campsites and how they are operated, including hiring employees and ensuring the campsites are safe, marketable, and are fiscally responsible. In Ohio, 4-H camp counselors are not charged with this task.

However, some of these items are related to the role of camp counselors. For instance, counselors serve in a leadership capacity and are representative of the camping program. They are also charged with establishing and maintaining an environment that assesses risks and implements management practices, as well as a learning environment that capitalizes on experiential opportunities. By reviewing information related to the camping environment and program, the entire scope is captured for what the need is for families, facility managers, trainers, campers, camp staff, and counselors.

21st Century Skills

As society continues into the 21st century, new technologies are developing, jobs are being created and eliminated, and necessary skills for the workplace are changing. Because computer use is becoming more extensive, what was once a job that required a person in the past now requires a machine. Along the same lines, people are needed for jobs to manage computers, machines, and other technologies that did not exist before. The world is shifting to a global, entrepreneurial, and service-based workplace (Sawchuk, 2009). Youth are being educated in schools for positions that do not exist yet. In order to
assist with the marketability of the workforce, current youth skills need to be enhanced for success. The Critical Skills Survey (2010) illustrates managers’ perceptions regarding the importance of students to begin developing skills, as they are likely to be open to new ideas and do not have work patterns set in place.

Bryant, Zvonkovic, Raskauskas, and Peters (2004) noted that three significant changes will continue to influence future job demands. These include new developments in technology, the view of women’s role in society, and diversity of employees. Technology changes on a daily basis and there are more opportunities for individuals to work at home or abroad. More women are working, and benefits including health care and paid vacations are being offered. Employees span across a multitude of ages with individuals living longer and retiring later in life. Additionally, programs provide more opportunities to reach out to various ages, races, and ethnicities making the workforce more available for a wider range of audiences.

Marketability is crucial to one’s success in the workplace. In order for youth to prepare themselves for it, they must know what community leaders search for when hiring workers. The goal of the Partnership for the 21st Century Skills is to assist in the process. The mission of this organization is “to position 21st century skills at the center of the United States K-12 education by building partnerships among the business community, education leaders, and policymakers” (Box & Yell, 2008, p. 1). The skills outlined in the P21 Framework Definitions (2009) relate to the knowledge and areas of expertise students should comprehend to thrive in work and life in the 21st century. Core subjects are also included with the interdisciplinary themes and skills outlined in the framework.
Among the themes and skills for being successful in the 21st century, being critical thinkers and problem solvers who use analytical methods were judged to be of utmost importance. Being critical thinkers and problem solvers, along with being good communicators and collaborators were the skills mentioned as most desired for employees in the workforce (Box & Yell, 2008; Critical Skills Survey, 2010; Davies, Fidler, & Gorbis, 2011; Lai & Viering, 2012; P21 Framework, 2009; Pawlina & Stanford, 2011; Sawchuk, 2009; Smith, 2008). These skills enable individuals to solve problems that may arise when interpreting new information. By communicating clearly, thoughts and ideas can be shared through oral, written, and nonverbal means. Analyzing information, evaluating multiple points of view, and utilizing various problem-solving techniques enhance worker performance. Better solutions are presented when individuals look at a variety of options, and conclusions can be interpreted with ease. By constantly seeking out and analyzing information, individuals learn and relearn topics to ensure the best decisions are being made.

In addition to thinking critically and collaborating with others, having creative and innovative ideas when moving forward is a desirable skill (Box & Yell, 2008; Critical Skills Survey, 2010; Davies et al., 2011; Lai & Viering, 2012; Sawchuk, 2009). This skill permits individuals to brainstorm ideas with a group and maximize creative efforts. The innovative ideas enable contributions to be made to the particular field of work. In addition, due to the increase in more complex technologies, a need for computational thinking and the ability to access media and information is important (Davies et al., 2011; P21 Framework, 2009; Sawchuk, 2009). By researching and
accessing information, new products may be developed to reach new audiences, knowledge is gained, and information is up to date.

Life skills are also mentioned as being important (P21 Framework, 2009; Smith, 2008). These include adapting to change, taking initiative to complete tasks on one’s own, and interacting appropriately with others. By being accountable for one’s projects, results are produced. In addition, guiding others to accomplish common goals benefits the workplace by creating a sense of team.

Each of these skills relates to the idea of global awareness, which is an additional skill that is desirable (Box & Yell, 2008; Davies et al., 2011; P21 Framework, 2009). When collaborating with others, it is crucial to be familiar with diverse cultures to ensure dialogue is appropriate and individuals are not misinterpreted. Additionally, using technologies and gaining knowledge around the world allows for understanding concepts across many disciplines.

The skills mentioned will likely continue to be necessary in order to be successful in the workplace in the future. One way to assist youth in enhancing P21 skills is by incorporating them into classroom curriculum (Box & Yell, 2008; Critical Skills Survey, 2010; Sawchuk, 2009; Smith, 2008). However, due to required testing and additional content covered in classrooms, Sawchuck (2009) expressed concern for being able to attain this goal. Bryant et al. (2004) mentioned additional enhancement opportunities outside classroom curriculum, early work experiences in naturally occurring paid employment, volunteer work, and planned youth employment programs. Ferrari, Arnett, and Cochran (2008) described a program where teens had a summer job experience to enhance some of the necessary skills for the workplace. They found that youth gained
specific workforce skills, learned about the world of work more generally, and acquired knowledge related to specific jobs.

Similar to youth participants taking part in a summer work program, serving as a camp counselor is another example of volunteer work and where youth may be influenced regarding future career decisions and roles in the workplace. They have the capability to enhance their skills and be marketable as they enter the workforce. Throughout their counseling experience, they are using many of the skills needed for the workforce, such as critical thinking and problem solving skills, as they plan programs, work with others, and create a positive camping experience for the campers.

**Youth Worker Competencies**

Teen camp counselors work with youth campers and can be considered youth workers. Therefore, previous research and information on youth workers should be explored to serve as a foundation when developing a competency model for teen camp counselors. However, the literature on youth worker competencies is not a perfect solution. Even though the competencies are geared toward individuals who work with youth, they are not geared toward teen workers. In turn, these competencies provide groundwork and concepts to explore and expand upon when determining competencies for teen camp counselors, but cannot be used entirely.

Youth worker competencies have been used as a foundation for worker performance throughout the nation. Starr et al. (2009) compiled a review of existing frameworks and purposes for core competences related to youth work. They identified 14 sets of core competencies that are applicable to those who work with children and youth ages 5 to 18. There were two universal content areas that appeared in all
frameworks: curriculum and professionalism. This indicates there is general agreement that youth workers must be competent in curriculum and that they must exhibit professional behavior. There were an additional nine common areas that appeared in over half (eight or more) of the frameworks: (a) connecting with families; (b) health, safety, and nutrition; (c) child and adolescent development; (d) cross cultural competence; (e) guidance; (f) professional development; (g) program management; (h) connecting with communities; and (i) environment. The authors commented that communities or organizations developing a set of core competencies would benefit from this list and would not need to start from scratch, because there is common ground across various organizations.

Other authors have identified competencies for youth workers (Astroth et al., 2004; National Collaboration for Youth, 2004). Some of the competencies overlap with those identified by Starr et al. (2009). These include understanding and applying basic child and adolescent development principles; respecting and honoring diversity; caring for, involving, and working with families and communities; and working as part of a team and showing professionalism.

Table 2.2 lists these youth worker competencies from Starr et al.’s (2009) review, noting the areas of agreement as well as additional competencies mentioned by Astroth et al. (2004) and the National Collaboration for Youth (2004). Additional items include (a) identifying potential risk factors and keeping youth safe; (b) adapting, facilitating, and evaluating age-appropriate activities for the group; (c) involving and empowering youth; (d) demonstrating the qualities of a positive role model; and (e) interacting with and relating to youth to support asset building.
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Table 2.2 Comparison of Core Competencies Found in Youth Worker Competency Frameworks

Defining core competencies provides a context for designing staff development strategies, along with a framework for designing performance and credentialing standards for youth development workers (Astroth et al., 2004). If a framework is developed, Starr et al. (2009) indicated that the core competencies have the capability to help professionals working in settings such as childcare centers, after-school programs, summer camps, and
youth organizations. Developing such a framework, in turn, would assist in selecting and training camp counselors who work at summer camps.

The literature on youth worker competencies is not specific to teen 4-H camp counselors, which provides justification for a study to develop this particular competency model. The youth worker competencies described in this literature relate to adults. In addition, this literature covers a variety of youth programs including afterschool programs, military school-age programs, family programming, early childhood professional development, and the 4-H program among others. Each of these programs has varying needs, and in turn would have varying competencies identified for those who work in the particular program.

By having a study exploring 4-H camp counselor competencies, a model would be developed that would assist professionals as they train camp counselors to better prepare them for the camping experience. In addition, it would assist counselors to enhance their skills specific to their roles both at camp and outside of camp. As mentioned, counselors serve in numerous roles in the camp setting. These roles largely determine the success of the campers having a quality camping program.

In addition to determining areas of commonality, it is also important to identify any gaps in the existing frameworks. One of the roles that camp counselors play is that of teacher (Brant & Arnold, 2006; McNeely, 2004), but none of the frameworks located in the literature search on youth worker competencies identified teaching as a competency area. Because of their closeness in age, the camp counselor-camper relationship is one of cross-age teaching.
Cross-Age Teaching

Cross-age teaching has been around in various forms for centuries (Paolitto, 1976). Its current use largely involves students in classrooms working across grade levels (Barone & Schneider, 1997; Conrad, 2005; Eggers, 1995; Rekrut, 1994; Thrope & Wood, 2000). Typically, the tutors are high school students working with elementary aged tutees. In many instances the purpose of establishing the cross-age relationship is to have the older students assist younger students with learning specific subject matter such as reading, writing, or math.

In addition to its use in classrooms, research has been conducted on cross-age teaching that is outside of the classroom setting. Karcher (2009) and Ripberger, Devitt, and Gore (2009) conducted studies in an after-school setting, Hammond-Diedrich and Walsh (2006) focused on a summer community-based program, and Smith and Enfield (2002) explored the cross-age teaching interactions in workshops conducted in the community. The programs conducted outside of the classroom setting were geared toward overall development and growth of the participants, rather than classroom objectives of gaining specific subject matter knowledge. Similar to typical high school students in the cross-age teaching literature, camp counselors fit the role of the tutor. The elementary-age campers, then, fit the role of the tutee. Even though counselors and campers are not in a classroom, cross-age teaching occurs. Thus, a review of the literature on cross-age teaching can inform the study of camp counselor competencies.

In a camp setting, counselors are engaging in cross-age teaching when they instruct campers in workshop or classroom settings on a wide range of topics as diverse as how to line dance, make a craft, shoot a basketball, or bait a hook on a fishing pole.
Additionally, counselors continue educating campers in a cross-age manner when they lead the campers in songs during meals, give instructions on how to play a game during the evening program, or encourage creative ideas when they have competitive challenges for campers during the campfire. Furthermore, cross-age teaching occurs informally when the counselors enlighten campers about how to set the table in the dining hall, straighten their belongings in the cabin, or recite the pledges during the flag ceremony (McNeely, 2004).

Just as those who conduct camping programs desire to have success, organizers of cross-age teaching programs aspire to create rewarding experiences. There are several recommendations for how to have a successful cross-age teaching program that are also applicable to camp programs. Authors note the importance of selecting, preparing, and training tutors prior to their involvement with the tutees to ensure they are equipped for success (Barone & Schneider, 1997; Conrad, 2005; Eggers, 1995; Rekrut, 1994; Thrope & Wood, 2000; Topping, 1998). One of the ways mentioned for training is modeling potential ways to instruct youth (Barone & Schneider, 1997; Conrad, 2005; Thrope & Wood, 2000). This may include how to read a story, inquire further on a subject, or give responsive feedback – in other words, whatever the tutors will be doing with their tutees. By modeling particular concepts to the tutors, they are then able to mimic the method when working with tutees. Along with preparation of the tutors, giving clear and specific expectations and requirements to the tutors and tutees, while meeting the needs of the classroom, is listed as an important component to a flourishing program (Barone & Schneider, 1997; Conrad, 2005; Rekrut, 1994; Thrope & Wood, 2000). Knowing the expectations enables participants to have a clear understanding of what they should and
should not be conducting throughout the program, eliminating any potential misunderstandings of the end goals for the program.

Authors also share the importance of having continual assessments conducted on tutors’ and tutees’ progress and activities they have achieved (Eggers, 1995; Hammond-Diedrich & Walsh, 2006; Thrope & Wood, 2000). This enables time for reflection for both those participating in the program, along with the administrator, to enhance future productivity. If teaching methods ought to be altered or a setting is too challenging, the needed modifications may be made before the end of the tutoring experience.

The concept of training, preparing, and altering activities as needed is applicable to camp counselors. The ACA (2012) requires counselors to have at least five to six days of training hours prior to the arrival of campers. Throughout camp counselor training, 4-H professionals model appropriate ways to speak to campers, provide instructions, and work together as a team. Additionally, counselors are being prepared on how to handle emergency situations, respond to camper needs, and make appropriate planning choices in camp preparation. By setting goals for the counselors and the camp itself, clear expectations are illustrated for what their responsibilities will be. 4-H professionals give counselors responsibilities, provide opportunities to practice skills, and give feedback to counselors on their performance (Ferrari & Risch, 2013). To gain an understanding of how a program has fared, an evaluation is conducted in order to make improvements for future years, and to determine the outcomes of the event.

Cross-age teaching benefits both the tutor and tutee. The participants improve knowledge on subject-related material, such as reading competency and writing skills (Barone & Schneider, 1997; Conrad, 2005; Eggers, 1995; Thrope & Wood, 2000), which
assists with enhanced academic achievement. Along with gaining subject-related material comprehension, student responsibility and self-confidence are strengthened for tutors and tutees (Barone & Schneider, 1997; Hammond-Diedrich & Walsh, 2006; Thrope & Wood, 2000). Additionally, the tutors created ways for tutees to be engaged throughout the learning process and were on time and prepared for their teaching sessions.

Not only do tutors strive to engage learners throughout the process, but also these tutors or mentors make more thoughtful comments and increase problem solving skills (Conrad, 2005; Eggers, 1995; Hammond-Diedrich & Walsh, 2006). This was due in part by probing mentees for more information when discussing questions and digging for a deeper understanding of a topic. Hammond-Diedrich and Walsh (2006) also commented on the advanced leadership opportunities for the tutors while developing a sense of community. By serving in a leadership role, youth are empowered to take the lead in planning lessons and generating discussion questions, while relating information to the community that surrounds them. Serving in this leadership role leads to becoming a role model. According to Conrad (2005) and Thrope and Wood (2000), younger students viewed older students as role models. This not only gives younger students someone to look up to, but also permits for the older students to realize they are serving as a role model.

Likewise, camp counselors also serve in a leadership role by planning and implementing the camping programs. Because they are engaged with campers for several days at a time, a bond is created, and they too become role models. Just as the tutors need to be prepared for their task at hand, camp counselors also need to be prepared for
their activities at camp. Both groups of teens teach children in both formal and informal settings and serve as role models. They must give responsive feedback, model appropriate behavior, and alter plans as needed. They also have an impact on the experience they have as the tutee or the camper. The skills and competencies needed align between the tutors and camp counselors. Tutors needed to be prepared and on time, have problem solving skills, work as a team, and take on a leadership role while serving as a role model. Camp counselors have similar responsibilities when working with youth and must know what needs to be accomplished or work toward in order to be successful.

Because teaching is one of the roles that camp counselors perform, it is imperative to counselors’ preparation and the success of the camping program to know what competencies are needed to be an effective teacher in the camp setting.

**Summary of the Literature**

In this chapter, I introduced a conceptual model to guide this research study. This model gives an overview of the skills and abilities that affect teen camp counselors’ available core competencies and also of areas that affect the competencies that are required for a quality camping program. By having this conceptual model in place, it enables individuals to look deeper into what could possibly have an impact on the outcomes of the camping experience. In turn, competencies will be more likely to align with the needs of the camping program.

Competency models give specific expectations for what an individual should accomplish and also assist in recruitment and selection, professional development, and evaluation of employees (Athey & Orth, 1999). Appropriate measures must be considered when developing a competency model. The most appropriate method for
conducting this research study is the tailored approach, because this approach is used as a basis for making employment decisions such as selecting, terminating, or promoting individuals (Rothwell & Lindholm, 1999). Multiple methods including questionnaires, focus groups, and job analysis interviews should be used when building a competency model to ensure all competencies are identified.

In addition to reviewing information regarding competency models, literature was analyzed related to the foundation for the competency model. To gain an understanding of factors that contribute to a quality camping program, I reviewed the camping program and its importance as a youth development vehicle. The specific aspects of a quality camping experience were reviewed to gain an understanding of each component. While there are multiple components related to what makes a successful camping program, one specific item of interest to the present study is the importance of the role camp staff and counselors play in a quality camping experience. The roles of camp counselors are complex and multifaceted (Risch, 2012). With regard to campers, they were found to be a caregiver, disciplinarian, entertainer, and facilitator. In addition, these teens take on programming roles where they serve as leaders and manage groups (Risch, 2012). To assist in fulfilling these roles, counselors must attain particular skill sets and possess certain characteristics. In turn, it is more likely for a quality camping program to take place and campers will be more likely to return year after year.

Camp counselors have an impact on the quality of the camping program, and the quality of the camping program is the key to using it as a youth development vehicle. Because camps tailor their programs to target key camper outcomes, which highlight the child’s assets, are age appropriate, and are outcome focused, camps are ideal settings for
promoting positive youth development (Bialeschki, Lyons, & Ewing, 2005). All of the skills gained at camp have a common theme for what camp provides the campers, because there is an opportunity for self-determination and mastery (Garst et al., 2011).

The role camp counselors play in the camping program is crucial to providing accomplishments of the camper’s outcomes and the success of the program. There are similar roles related to camp counselors including camp professionals, youth workers, and cross-age teachers. These individuals work with youth, but they are not serving in the exact same role as camp counselors. In addition, reviewing P21 skills ensures the desirable skills of the workforce are explored. Workforce skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, and communication relate to the roles of camp counselors.

It is clear from this review that research on defining teen 4-H camp counselor core competencies is limited. Therefore, there is a need for further research regarding camp counselors in general and specifically in the Ohio 4-H program. By reviewing this existing literature, a foundation was developed related to the teen 4-H camp counselors that will be put to use when developing the competency model.
Chapter 3: Methodology

Using the literature on competencies and competency modeling as a foundation, this chapter explains the methods used in the study. Information is shared regarding competency modeling approaches, the type of study, research context, and participants. Then, the research design of four successive phases of data collection and data analysis is discussed. Because the research design includes qualitative methods, the final section of this chapter addresses the trustworthiness and validity issues as well as my role as the researcher.

Competency Modeling Approaches

Previous research has been conducted on developing competency models. Rothwell and Lindholm (1999) note multiple approaches that have been used to develop competency models. These approaches include the borrowed approach, borrowed and tailored approach, and the tailored approach. The borrowed approach simply involves “borrowing” a competency model from an organization and implementing it as-is for a different organization. The borrowed and tailored approach is when a model is used from an organization and then tailored to make it suitable for use in another organization. The tailored approach is when a model is developed to suit an organization’s specific needs. The tailored approach is essential to use when the purpose of using the competency model is to serve as a basis for making employment decisions such as selecting, terminating, or promoting individuals (Rothwell & Lindholm, 1999).
Multiple forms of the tailored approach have been used when developing a competency model. These include the Delphi method, which requires use of a jury of experts to develop consensus among the group regarding what the competencies are (Boyd, 2004; Reynolds, 2011), surveys that are sent to groups of individuals to list and rank competencies (Culp, McKee, & Nestor, 2007; Hatala & Hisey, 2011; Karbasioun, Mulder, & Biemans, 2007), literature searches that seek out previous information on what is used by other organizations (Ng & Feldman, 2010), and using two or more methods to develop a list of competencies (Byham & Moyer, 2005; Cochran, 2009; Cochran, Ferrari, & Chen, 2011; Hartje et al., 2008; Marrelli et al., 2005; Mirable, 1997). These methods may include literature reviews, focus groups, questionnaires, interviews, and group meetings. Using multiple methods increases confidence that all competencies have been accurately identified and a competency is not missed altogether (Marrelli et al., 2005).

**Type of Study**

In this study, I followed Rothwell and Lindholm’s (1999) recommendation for using the tailored approach when developing a competency model. More specifically, I used a non-experimental mixed methods approach (Byham & Moyer, 2005; Cochran, 2009; Cochran et al., 2011; Hartje et al., 2008; Marrelli et al., 2005; Mirable, 1997), with an emphasis on qualitative approaches. This design enables a more in-depth approach to be used. By using mixed methods research, qualitative and quantitative data can be collected concurrently or sequentially (Jones, Torres, & Arminio, 2006). This enables data to build upon previous data collected to further enhance and refine the process.

The present study had multiple phases that were used in conducting this research. These phases are similar to those used by authors who have developed competency
models (Bernthal, Colteryahn, Davis, Naughton, Rothwell, & Wellins, 2004; Cochran et al., 2011). The phases consisted of various steps including a review of existing research, gathering data from employees through nominal group processes, and focus group interviews. Peer debriefing and survey research were used to validate and further refine the results. By using a mixed method approach, the end result provides more dependable findings with a more complete explanation than one method could provide on its own (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010).

**Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research is an umbrella term encompassing numerous techniques and approaches to studies that seek to describe, decode, translate, and come to terms with meaning in the social world (Merriam, 2009). These researchers desire to understand how people interpret their experiences and what meaning they attribute to them. There are four characteristics of qualitative research: (a) the focus is on process, understanding, and meaning; (b) the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis; (c) the process is inductive; and (d) the product is richly descriptive (Merriam, 2009). Qualitative methods were well suited for this study because the end result was to have a solid understanding of camp counselor core competencies, along with rich descriptions of what each competency entails.

One way to collect data in qualitative research is through interviews, which typically have findings that are richly descriptive and presented as themes (Merriam, 2009). In this study, a modified nominal group technique and focus group interviews were used to obtain in-depth information to build the competency model. Both types of research involve a type of interview process. These types of studies are explained more
thoroughly in later sections of this document. Even though it was more time consuming to gather and interpret the data gathered using qualitative methods, it provided for a more comprehensive and richly descriptive list of competencies. These competencies will be used throughout the state of Ohio as a guideline for what a high performing camp counselor looks like. By having these descriptions, the counselors and the professionals who work with them will have a clear understanding of what these competencies are.

**Nominal group technique.** The nominal group technique is often used for generating ideas, identifying issues and potential solutions, and promoting consensus among the group (Delp, Thesen, Motiwalla, & Seshardi, 1977; Rebori & Havercamp, 2003). This technique was initially described in the 1960’s by Delbecq and van de Ven as a method to facilitate effective group decision-making. The suggested size of a group is five to nine participants (Potter, Gordon, & Hamer, 2004).

There are six steps recommended for conducting the nominal group techniques (Delp et al., 1977). Other authors (Dunham, 1998; Potter, Gordon, & Hamer, 2004) discuss having fewer steps that is accomplished by combining some of the six steps of Delp et al. (1977). For the purpose of this study, modified versions of the steps Delp et al. (1977) recommend were used. The first step is idea generation, in which the moderator poses the question or problem to the group. Participants then silently write ideas independently. Next, without discussion among the group, each individual gives feedback that is recorded on a flip chart, going to each member of the group in round robin-style, where individuals shared ideas one at a time. Ideas are not repeated at this point, but if there is variation among them, it is included. When all ideas have been documented, the group moves on to the third phase of discussing the ideas. This phase
involves clarifying topics or elaborating on something if there were questions about the item. Next, individuals have a preliminary vote on item importance. The fifth step is having a discussion of the preliminary vote. This step involves clarifying the vote in a brief discussion. Participants have a final opportunity to clarify their reasoning. The final step is having the final vote in rank order. This is the same as step four, but the additional step allows for participants to explain their reasoning one last time. An immediate response of the results can be shared with the group and the meeting concludes when the specific outcome is reached.

This method takes all opinions of the group members into account by using the round robin technique and does not permit one person to dominate the conversation. This occurs because members write down their thoughts and ideas silently. In doing so, participants are not swayed by their peer group. Tallying the ideas generated captures the end result as a prioritized solution or recommendation of the group’s preference. Not only does the round robin approach balance participation across members, but also there is a greater satisfaction and sense of closure and accomplishment for participants (Dunham, 1998). In addition, using this approach allows for individuals to produce more ideas alone without sacrificing quality (Sample, 1984). Sample (1984) recommends using this method to help staff, volunteers, clients, and consumers improve their ability to make sound decisions.

There are, however, disadvantages to this method. Some members may be reluctant to share ideas, as these ideas may be perceived as creating a conflict or they may think they will be criticized for their thoughts. In addition, ideas may be constrained because they are not discussed extensively (Sample, 1984). This may also result in
minimization of ideas and discussion and in turn may not stimulate the group process as well as other techniques. Another noted disadvantage is the preparation that is needed prior to the research and the lack of flexibility throughout the process (Delp et al., 1977; Dunham, 1998).

In order to account for the disadvantages of the nominal group technique method, appropriate measures can be taken. By having the results anonymously, criticism toward a person is minimized. Because the focus groups will take place following to the nominal group techniques, ideas will be discussed more extensively at another point in time to generate a full range of competencies. Regarding the time taken to prepare, I took this into consideration and planned an appropriate amount of time and had a plan for what to do throughout the process. Following the nominal group technique, additional research techniques were used to ensure appropriate competencies were clearly identified and defined.

**Focus groups.** Focus groups are used for idea generation, where participants talk about problems, tasks, or unfilled needs and offer specific ideas for improvements (Greenbaum, 1998). The function of the group may be to suggest ideas, clarify potential options, react to ideas, recommend action steps, make a decision, plan, or evaluate an idea or plan (Krueger & Casey, 2000). In this particular research I followed Krueger and Casey’s (2000) recommendation to consider using a focus group when the researcher seeks a range of ideas or feelings and the purpose is to have ideas emerge from the group. The purpose of these particular focus groups was for idea generation to then in turn improve programs and evaluate programs. Sessions involved reviewing the draft of the
camp counselor core competencies and then discussing a set of questions to identify what these competencies look like.

In a focus group, groups of people come together at the same time and location to have a conversation about a specific topic. The conversation goes beyond the surface level of explanation (Stewart, Shamdasani, & Rook, 2007). It is recommended that these group sessions have four to six people or even eight to ten individuals and last for approximately 100 minutes (Greenbaum, 1998). These participants are those who are capable of providing the highest quality of discussion about the topic being researched because of the breadth of the conversation that occurs. A guide or outline that is prepared based on specific research objectives is used to encourage discussion among the group. The participants are the individuals who do most of the talking and are directed in conversation based on the guide. Because individuals are interacting with each other, it is more natural than being in a one-on-one interview setting. Participants are asking questions, exchanging anecdotes, and commenting on others’ experiences and points of view. Because people are at the same location at the same time, the researcher is able to get relatively quick results and could talk with several contributors at once. The sessions should be audio taped to preserve a permanent record of the proceedings. Audio taping enables the researcher to revisit the conversation when analyzing the data.

Because focus groups are ideal for exploring people’s experiences, opinions, wishes, and concerns (Kitzinger & Barbour, 1999), in this study participants had the opportunity to give input into the development of camp counselor competencies, and in turn were likely more invested into the research. This involvement should also play an important role in future usage of the competencies. Extension professionals who were
nominated as being knowledgeable or having expertise in the camping area came together at the same time and location, which saved a tremendous amount of time compared with individual interviews. This is one of the advantages of using the focus group method. Additionally, this method of research enables the competencies to be explored on a deeper level. By having open dialogue and communication, multiple perspectives and ideas could be generated. Participants respond to both the researcher and other participants in the group, expanding the conversation and knowledge base of the research. As the researcher, I was able to see how participants incorporated the viewpoints of others, while still structuring my own understandings and making meaning of the topic. 

Having a deeper understanding of each competency assisted in creating the final model by giving descriptive information with what each competency looks like.

There are also disadvantages of the focus group method. Initially, there is a large dependency on the individuals who have access to potential candidates to participate in the focus groups. In this situation, this was the 4-H professional who nominated peers whom they deemed would be knowledgeable about the camping program. As the moderator, it is important not to be judgmental of those in the focus groups or to steer the conversation in a particular way. Along with individuals who assist in orchestrating the study, participant behaviors could have an impact. Even though open dialogue is encouraged, one person could dominate the conversation. Alternately, the conversation may have been narrow and the respondents could miss identifying competencies or have too broad of a spectrum developed. The most challenging aspect, however, revolves around time. Assembling all parties at the same place and the same time can be difficult with the busy schedule of professionals. Additionally, the participants and the researcher
need to devote time prior to, during, and after the focus groups to generate ideas and follow up with further thoughts. The researcher then dedicates even more time when reflecting back upon notes and seeking out themes and common threads of conversation.

I reduced or eliminated these disadvantages by having set parameters to determine who could participate in the focus group. 4-H professionals were nominated by peers to participate in the group. In addition, the topic was straightforward and of obvious interest to research participants, because individuals who were asked are knowledgeable about the camping program. I also took steps to avoid being judgmental or biased (see later section on avoiding bias) and encouraged interaction among the participants. If one person was being overpowering, limits were placed on the amount of time he or she could talk, or others were encouraged to share ideas by taking turns. To assist in setting a time to meet, and bearing in mind professionals’ need for flexibility, I set several dates in advance and gave participants a choice for which date was most suitable for them. In order to ensure all competencies were developed and narrowly focused, I conducted a literature review prior to the focus groups to have background knowledge on the competencies. In addition, the roles and responsibilities of camp counselors were shared with participants to ensure all individuals had the same understanding of what the requirements of a camp counselor are.

**Quantitative Research**

Quantitative research methods enable a researcher to gather numeric data through measurement tools such as scales, tests, observation checklists, and questionnaires (Ary, et al., 2010). This type of research typically focuses on logic, numbers, and unchanging data. Instead of the researcher being the tool used to collect data as in qualitative
research, the instruments are usually more structured than those of qualitative research methods. These structured tools, such as questionnaires, are used to collect numerical data for the study.

In this study, there was a portion of the research that used quantitative research methods of survey research and descriptive statistics. Instruments such as questionnaires and interviews are used to gather information from groups of individuals. Descriptive statistics are used when the goal is to determine and report the way things are in the current situation. The attitudes and opinions toward an issue are summarized. This type of quantitative research does not attempt to identify cause or differences or relationships.

Survey research. Surveys are the most widely used research technique within the social sciences (Kalton, 1983). This type of research has the potential to reach large populations using a small amount of money. Surveys permit the researcher to summarize the ideas of different groups to measure their opinions about an issue (Ary et al., 2010; Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009). The tailored design approach involves using motivational features in supportive ways to encourage high quantity and quality of response to the surveyor’s request (Dillman et al., 2009). This design assumes the likelihood of responding and doing so accurately is greater when the respondent trusts that the expected rewards will outweigh the anticipated costs of responding.

Electronic mail (e-mail) surveys have gained popularity as computers have become more common. Researchers launch the questionnaire using a web browser or it can be sent directly to an e-mail address. Once the target population is identified and a sample has been selected, a notification is sent to subjects informing them about the process. Then, the questionnaire or link to the survey is sent. After a predetermined
period of time, follow up reminders are sent to encourage responses from the sample. Upon completion of the evaluation, a thank you is given to the respondent. The responses can be submitted online, in the body of an e-mail, or as an e-mail attachment.

The electronic survey method is relatively quick and inexpensive. This is because there is no cost associated with sending an e-mail and because computers and other technology are already available to the professionals. Faster responses are possible because a researcher’s presence is not required to ask questions or facilitate discussion. Because of the lack of researcher presence, there is a perceived level of privacy and anonymity, which may reduce social desirability effects when responding to questions. This assists participants to report their true opinions instead of being swayed by peers. Individuals may also respond whenever and wherever they desire, and do so on their own schedule. This flexibility is extremely important when implementing a research study with Extension professionals. Scheduling a time and location to meet is challenging for this audience, so professionals will be more likely to have time to respond at their leisure.

Another advantage of having responses given in an electronic manner is that the researcher is not required to spend time transcribing information or entering numerical data. While the information needs to be sorted, it can be done so in a manner that is faster when using appropriate software.

Having these data be accessible and stored electronically has its drawbacks. There is a lower level of data security and researcher control, because the survey is transmitted among several computers. The potential arises for information to be intercepted and viewed by individuals who should not have access to it. Because participants respond on their own schedule, there is the likelihood for a low response rate,
which is another disadvantage to this method. They may forget about the questionnaire, may not take time to complete it, or simply do not feel compelled to respond. By sending a survey electronically, the e-mail addresses could have the potential to be incomplete or invalid. Formatting of the questionnaire is also a concern. It may arrive misaligned or in an undesirable presentation format. If the survey is sent in a text format, participants may edit the contents of the survey and delete or add questions not intended by the researcher. Because there is anonymity in this method, it is possible that participants do not feel pressure to respond out of obligation to the researcher. This anonymity may lead to difficulty in establishing rapport with participants, which Hewson and Laurent (2008) share as one of this method’s struggles. There is also potential for the responders to not fully understand the questions or to misunderstand the instructions. They might not even fully read the questions before responding. They are also limited to the questions that are being asked and do not have the option to elaborate on the responses or have the opportunity to clarify why they are responding a particular way. This limited information leads to just scratching the surface on the information obtained. The variation in participants’ behavior and their surroundings, including noise level and communication with others, differs in each respondent’s setting. The researcher cannot control these conditions, because the respondent is in a different location.

An electronic mail survey was the method that was used for identifying and describing camp counselor competencies; this was accomplished by sending a questionnaire to professionals throughout the state of Ohio. It allowed for professionals who represent all the different camp facilities to express their ideas regarding the desired competencies. Because it is possible for campsites to have varying needs in relation to
their camp counselors, this process enabled a variety of perspectives to be taken into
consideration when developing the model.

In order to minimize the limitations, this questionnaire was designed so that it
provided an opportunity for respondents to explain their answers. I also created a cover
letter with instructions explaining the process of the research and the importance of the
respondents to thoroughly read the questions and respond in a timely manner. To ensure
the questions were worded correctly, a field test of the questionnaire was conducted prior
to executing the survey. This step ensured greater face validity and also assisted in
ensuring proper formatting for the questionnaire was in place by testing it using various
types of software. Because professionals were sent this survey, it was known they have
access to the Internet, because they use it in the workplace. Additionally, mailing lists
were already established, which assisted in ensuring their proper e-mail addresses were
being used. To increase response rate, I followed Dillman et al.’s (2009)
recommendations and provided information about how the results would benefit the
individuals taking the survey, said thank you, offered an incentive for completing the
questionnaire, and provided social validation. Individuals who agreed to participate in
the study were entered in a drawing for one of four gift cards. I also sent follow up
reminders to the respondents to encourage participation. Ultimately, by using a variety of
methods, a large amount of individuals were able to play a role in developing the
competency model. This helped to ensure that individuals would be more likely to use
the model, because they had a part in developing it.
Research Context

This study was undertaken in the Ohio 4-H camping program, a statewide program that is part of The Ohio State University and the Cooperative Extension System. Throughout the state of Ohio, there are 15 residential campsites that host 4-H camps (McNeely, 2004). Some of these sites have only one county that camps at the location, while others have 11 or more counties that use a particular site. The level of responsibility for 4-H professionals at the specific campsite differs as well. Some 4-H professionals are responsible for the upkeep of the camping facilities, others are responsible for hiring annual staff members who maintain the facilities, and others rent the campsite from a state park. Sites also have different opportunities and challenges for campers. These activities may include a high ropes course, team challenge course, shooting range, canoeing, or water sports, among others. These are just a few examples of how each campsite differs from location to location. The underlying message is that because the campsites differ in size, scope, usage, and involvement of 4-H professionals, the roles and responsibilities of camp counselors will also differ. However, all of the campsites have a few commonalities. The 4-H professional serves as the camp director while their county (or multiple counties) camp there. These directors are connected to Ohio State University Extension and are responsible for training and working with the camp counselors, who work directly with the campers.

These counselors are teens who are typically 14 to 19 years old. In 2013, there were 1,867 youth who served as a 4-H camp counselor in Ohio (T. Grody, personal communication, November 1, 2013). These counselors are the individuals who receive training, plan programs and activities, and work with the campers at each camp. These
individuals contribute much to the success of the camping program and whether or not the camper has a quality camping experience. The roles and responsibilities of counselors were discussed in greater depth in Chapter 2.

Ohio 4-H Camping Design Team members had the opportunity to be involved in the research process. Each Ohio 4-H professional serves on a design team that is related to their specialization or focus of programming and research. Members of design teams are the professionals with the most expertise and knowledge in their particular subject matter (Archer, 2012). The purpose of the design team is to address the needs of youth development as well as providing emphasis in creating curriculum and completing sound applied research. Previous activities and involvement of the Camping Design Team have been to develop lesson plans for training camp counselors, conducting workshops for 4-H professionals, and creating curriculum, among other items. These individuals are 4-H professionals who also serve as 4-H camp directors. Because of their expertise and knowledge related to the camping program, their ideas and insight proved invaluable to this research study.

This research study involved participation from individuals located throughout the state of Ohio in order to encompass all 4-H camping facilities. 4-H professionals from throughout the state had the opportunity to share insight about the model. The research activities described here occurred during a six-month time period from 2013-2014.

**Participants and Sampling Strategies**

Sample selection in qualitative research is usually nonrandom and purposeful, and there is a small sample size (Merriam, 2009). For this research, purposeful sampling was used. Merriam (2009) describes this process as creating a list of the essential attributes
needed for the study and then proceeding to find or locate individuals matching this list. By identifying what criteria will be used, it also indicates what criteria are important to the study. When sampling individuals who are considered knowledgeable about the topic or experts in their field, it is more likely to have data that will align with the objectives of the study. In addition, it will assure data will be collected from key informants throughout the organization. In addition to purposeful sampling, I used networking or snowball sampling, a strategy that involves locating a few key participants who meet the established criteria and then asking them for referrals of other participants (Merriam 2009).

The population for this study was all Extension 4-H professionals in Ohio \((n=156;\) see Table 3.1). Initially, the Camping Design Team members \((n=13)\) formed a purposeful sample for Phase 1 of the research. The focus group sample in Phase 2 consisted of those who were nominated by members of the Camping Design Team and the state 4-H administration \((n=2)\). These Ohio 4-H professionals were those considered to be knowledgeable about the camping program and therefore would have good insight about what would make an exceptional camp counselor. Of those who were nominated and asked to participate \((n=24)\), 20 participated in the focus groups. In the final phase of the research, all 4-H professionals throughout the state of Ohio were included in the validation of the competency model. 4-H professionals could have the job titles of specialists, educators, program coordinators, or program assistants. Each phase is described further in the procedures section of this chapter.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population Breakdown</th>
<th>Number of Individuals Asked to Participate</th>
<th>Actual Number of Participants</th>
<th>% Response Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State 4-H Administrators</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camping Design Team Members</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>84.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus Group Participants</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>83.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio 4-H Professionals</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1 Population of Participants for Each Phase of the Study

**Instruments, Methods Used, and Procedures**

Multiple methods were used to collect data for the study including both quantitative and qualitative measures. The qualitative portion of the research included face-to-face meetings that were conducted at The Ohio State University’s campus, a central location for the participants. Even though the physical location for the meetings was centralized, the participants in the groups were from various parts of the state. Because individuals representing different campsites were involved with this research, a wider array of information was gathered. In turn, the competency model is more applicable to the counselors throughout the state of Ohio and not just a specific campsite or location.

The Assistant Director of Extension/State 4-H Leader supported the research with these employees and approval for this research was granted by The Ohio State University’s Office of Responsible Research Practices under protocol numbers 2013E0565 and 2014E0085 (see Appendix A for copies of these letters). Four phases, each with multiple steps, were used to accomplish the objectives of this study. These phases, illustrated in Figure 3.1, are described further in detail, including the selection of...
participants, instrumentation, data collection techniques, data analysis, and integration processes where appropriate. Some steps occurred concurrently within a phase while others required stepwise progression. Peer review and debriefing were used as a strategy to improve the research and address validity throughout the study. The research process is described here and the results of these steps are described in Chapter 4.
Figure 3.1 Methodology Overview and Summary of Key Steps
Phase I-Review of Literature, Document Review, and Idea Generation

**Literature review.** Initially, a literature review was conducted on a variety of topics applicable to competencies and camp counselors. The literature review included:

1. **Theoretical and conceptual base for developing competency models**—existing research on methods and approaches to develop competency models and how competencies are defined.

2. **Context of camping in Ohio 4-H**—what camping is along with how teens are used as camp counselors, their expectations, and the counselor’s roles and involvement with campers and in the camp process.

3. **Camping as a youth development vehicle**—the outcomes for campers and youth development and what goes into a quality camping experience

4. **Skills and competencies related to camp counselors**—what is required for counselors to do a good job in related areas to camp counselors, including P21 skills, youth worker competencies, and cross-age teaching.

I used the information gained from this review to develop materials that were used with research participants in later phases and for data integration during the research process.

**Draft of roles and responsibilities of camp counselors.** The *Roles and Responsibilities of Camp Counselors Draft A* was created following a review of literature. It was shared with the individuals who were involved with the research process (e.g., Camping Design Team members, state 4-H administration, focus group participants, and 4-H professionals who were invited to complete the online questionnaire). Reviewing this document enabled individuals to think along similar lines and to have a common basis for thinking about the roles the counselors perform while at camp at various campsites. Teaching handouts and presentation materials were prepared for use in later steps.
**Administrative review.** The Ohio state 4-H administrators, who are knowledgeable about the professionals and activities that occur within the Ohio 4-H program, were provided with the *Roles and Responsibilities of Camp Counselors Draft A* document. They were asked to review the document for accuracy and also to provide insight as to what should be added to or deleted from this draft. These individuals were also asked about competencies that would be important to have in the model and to nominate those whose opinions they value about the camping program. These individuals may include people who serve on the Camping Design Team, or they may be other professionals throughout the state who have an expertise in the camping area. By identifying these 4-H professionals, additional candidates for the focus groups, who have expert knowledge in this topic area (see Phase II), were able to be pinpointed. See Appendix B for the letter shared with the members of the Camping Design Team and Appendix C for the specific questions asked to the state 4-H administrators.

**Modified nominal group technique session.** Along with the administrative review, there was a group session with members of the Ohio 4-H Camping Design Team. This session was held at The Ohio State University campus, a central location in the state, and was in the form of a modified nominal group technique. Thirteen individuals who serve on the Camping Design Team received an invitation to participate. Eleven of these individuals were able to participate. One person who did not participate was on maternity leave and the other was unable to make the drive to the meeting due to weather conditions.

**Participants.** Members of the Ohio 4-H Camping Design Team were the individuals involved in the session using a modified nominal group technique. They
were purposefully selected based on their ability to contribute to the research because they are considered experts in the field of camping in Ohio 4-H.

**Instrumentation.** For this process, a modified version of Delp et al.’s (1977) recommendations was used. Conversations were recorded on flip charts and an audio recorder. Initially, the group introduced themselves and a PowerPoint slide presentation was used to provide an introduction about competency modeling. Then, the *Roles and Responsibilities of Camp Counselors Draft A* was discussed. By determining what may impact the quality of the camping experience and the competencies required of a counselor, the individuals who were in the group sessions and focus groups had a common understanding of information related to the roles of the counselor, even if they camp in various settings. The group discussed items that were missing from the list or added additional items to ensure all members were thinking along the same lines when relating to camp counselors.

Once the roles and responsibilities were agreed upon, the next phase of the group session took place. This was the competency idea generation. Individuals silently generated ideas about what competencies contribute directly to the success of the camping program, constitute a high performing counselor, and contribute to camper enjoyment while at camp and recorded their ideas on a worksheet. Then, using a round-robin approach, group members shared one at a time what ideas they had generated for these competencies. This method continued until all ideas were exhausted. A total of 91 items were generated. Discussion was discouraged, but participants were encouraged to expand upon others’ statements. If individuals exhausted their own ideas, they were able to pass on their turn. If individuals had duplicate ideas, they were encouraged to skip
anything that was exactly the same, but to share ideas that had a slight variation. This helped for creativity when developing the model. Individuals asked for clarification on any ideas that had been generated to this point and to combine similar items.

Initially, it was planned to share information with the group regarding the ACA core competencies and youth worker competencies literature and then ask participants to generate ideas based on the areas indicated in literature that contribute to a successful camping program, constitute a high performing counselor, and contribute to camper enjoyment while at camp. They were then to use a similar approach using the round-robin method and clarifying meaning of wording. However, during the initial round when competencies were being clarified and combined, the participants became overwhelmed with the generated competencies. Participants had varying ideas regarding what items should be combined and which should stand alone.

To assist with facilitation of this process, the plan was altered. The group took a break while the assistant moderator and researcher combined the generated competencies on their own. The list of competencies was now combined to be 58 items instead of 91. After the initial combining of the items, it was presented to the group for accuracy, and a few adjustments were made as suggested for clarification.

Then, the participants were given the ACA and youth worker literature and were asked to generate additional competencies based on the literature that were not already identified. The participants again used a round-robin approach and shared one at a time the ideas they had generated for these competencies. This method continued until all ideas were exhausted. Due to time constraints, clarification and questions occurred throughout the process of sharing this time, and duplicates were combined. Then, the
lists from the two rounds were combined, for a total of 67 competencies. While the participants were generating ideas for competencies, the researcher reviewed the competencies generated by the state 4-H administrators to ensure they were included on the final list used to rank the competencies. All ideas from the interview had been produced during the group session.

Next, the group ranked competencies by importance. Participants were given note cards, then asked to select their top 20 competencies and arrange them in priority order, with the highest priority being “1” and so forth. After they completed their rankings, the cards were collected and returned to the researcher. This method helped eliminate social pressures by silently voting and also increased accuracy in judgments by having them mathematically ranked. Initially, it was planned to tally the votes and record on a flip chart in front of the group. However, due to time constraints, the researcher compiled the information following the group session and sent it as an e-mail to the group for review of accuracy and feedback. After the participants submitted their ranking of competencies, the meeting concluded. Members were thanked for coming and were dismissed. Participants were informed that the compiled data would be shared with them to check for accuracy. See Appendix D for details of the Camping Design Team Group Session.

**Data analysis.** When integrating the roles and responsibilities of camp counselors, items were added to and deleted from the original document during the group session. Camping Design Team members voted on the items that should be included in the document, and a majority vote determined what items should be included on the final
document. This determination occurred before the group session discussion occurred on the teen camp counselor core competencies.

For this and later data analysis and integration steps, I used the process described by Merriam (2009) in which data were analyzed simultaneously with data collection. This ensured the final product encompassed all stages of the design and so new questions could be asked if themes arose that required further discussion. In addition, it assisted me to not be overwhelmed with the sheer amount of material that needed to be processed. The items were then categorized into themes that arose from the notes from flip charts and audio recordings using an open coding method (Merriam, 2009). Open coding begins with collecting raw data and breaking it down into segments in order to interpret them. From there, data were evaluated and grouped into similar categories. Margins were left on the document so notes, comments, observations, and queries could be made. By allowing for wider margins on pages, making notes about items that were potentially relevant, interesting, or important to the study were mentioned directly next to data. In addition, literature was reviewed and compared to the data generated and considered during the integration to create the model.

Then, data from the group session and the Ohio 4-H administrators were put into a data summary report, which was an outline with careful choice of phrases and words to clearly convey the concepts to the reader. This report was sent to the group participants to ensure appropriate concepts have been captured from the discussion. This technique, referred to as a member check, provides participants the opportunity to react to the findings and interpretations that emerged and also serves as a verification of data (Jones
et al., 2006). If there are any discrepancies in the report, they were made to a new version of the bulleted report.

**Phase II-New Model Development**

Following the group session and administrative review, data were integrated. The *Roles and Responsibilities of Camp Counselors Draft A* was refined to create *Draft B*. In addition, the first draft of the *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Model* was created. Both of these drafts were then sent to the Ohio 4-H Camping Design team to review. In addition, a peer review was conducted with the same information to ensure data had been analyzed accurately. Then, once comments were returned, data were again integrated and compared to the literature. This draft of *Roles and Responsibilities of Camp Counselors* became the final document, and the *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Model Draft 1* was revised (becoming *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Model Draft 2*). These documents were used in following stages in the research study.

The members of the Ohio 4-H Camping Design Team were asked to nominate individuals who have expert knowledge related to the camping program. The list of nominated professionals was used in upcoming phases to contact individuals to be involved with the focus groups. The focus groups consisted of three separate sessions to further review and refine competencies. In addition, they were asked to produce ideas for the behavioral indicators specific to these generated competencies. Along with the focus groups, a group interview with state 4-H administrators was conducted. The purpose of this interview was to allow administrators an opportunity to provide feedback to the research study to ensure they are on board with the model being developed. By giving the administrators an opportunity to provide feedback, it was more likely the model
would be useful throughout the state 4-H program. The questions asked included “Are there any competencies that are not clear or should be worded differently?” and “Are there competencies included on this list that should be eliminated?” See Appendix C for the specific questions asked.

Following the focus groups and interview with the 4-H administrators, data were integrated and the *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Model Draft 3* was created. A peer review was again conducted to ensure for accuracy of analyzing data.

**Participants.** The focus groups were all held on separate occasions at The Ohio State University campus, a central location in the state. The groups consisted of the professionals who were identified by the Ohio 4-H Camping Design Team members and the Ohio state 4-H administrators as having a specialization in or being knowledgeable about the Ohio 4-H camping program. Twenty-four individuals were invited to participate in the focus groups, and of these individuals, 20 individuals participated (see Table 3.1).

**Instrumentation.** Initially there was conversation about the roles and responsibilities of a camp counselor. The document *Roles and Responsibilities of Camp Counselors Final* was provided to ensure the participants were thinking similarly in regard to what a 4-H camp counselor is. In addition to the roles and responsibilities, the camping context for where the counselors serve as counselors and information gained from the literature review was shared. By identifying the common end result, the group was able to have a better discussion related to the topic and was more likely to stay on the topic at hand.
The focus group discussion was recorded so it could be reviewed and coded following the conversation. See Appendix E for the complete list of questions that were asked in the focus groups. Even though the list of questions was generated prior to the focus groups, additional questions arose throughout the process. This is due in part to qualitative designs being emergent (Merriam, 2009).

There were multiple steps used when conducting the focus groups. Initially, there was an introduction to the process explaining the procedure for the meeting. Next, participants were asked to review the previously developed competencies and react to them. They were asked to share any ideas of competencies that may be missing or any that should be eliminated. In addition, participants also generated ideas for what the actions and behavioral indicators should be for the competencies. Throughout the discussion, participants were asked to keep in mind the roles and responsibilities of 4-H camp counselors and what a high performing 4-H camp counselor looks like. Participants were asked to write their ideas on post-it notes. Then, the items were shared with the rest of the group in a round-robin manner until all ideas had been exhausted. At the end of the focus groups, participants had the opportunity to share any ideas that may have been missed. Finally, the participants were thanked and were dismissed.

**Data analysis.** Following each of the focus groups, the discussion was transcribed and data were analyzed. Data were analyzed following Merriam’s (2009) recommendation. In addition, the literature was reviewed and compared to the data generated and considered during the integration. Data were tentatively identified into categories of key components for establishing camp counselor core competencies. The actual number of categories was not determined until the data were analyzed, as it is
depended on what arose throughout conversation (Merriam, 2009). These final categories were then used to code all responses throughout the discussion in the group sessions. Responses were tallied for a final count for the main themes that arose from the discussion.

Upon completion of this process, my peer reviewer examined the data to ensure the information had been compiled accurately. In addition, the information was sent to the Camping Design Team members for review. Additional thoughts were given and the model was refined for the development of Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Model Draft 3.

**Phase III-Model Validation**

Following the peer review in Phase II, data were integrated and incorporated into the Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Model Draft 4, which was circulated to 4-H professionals throughout the state of Ohio. It was developed into the form of a questionnaire and sent as an electronic survey. This questionnaire could not be created until data from previous phases had been compiled and evaluated. The purpose of this step was to obtain input from a wider group of individuals to validate competencies and key actions and to identify additional changes that might need to be made.

**Instrumentation.** The model was converted to a questionnaire with respondents being asked to rate the importance of each competency overall and each key action on a five-point Likert-type scale with the higher score representing greater importance. The information included in this instrument depended on data obtained in previous phases, so it was not possible to develop it until those phases were completed. After it was developed, it was field tested with four 4-H professionals who serve on the state
counselor workshop team and the Assistant Director of Extension/State 4-H Leader. Two of the professionals and the Assistant Director of Extension/State 4-H Leader had been involved in the focus groups or group session, and two had not seen the information in any form before. These individuals completed the questionnaire and provided suggestions for minor changes to instructions or changes that would improve flow. These suggestions were incorporated into the questionnaire instructions and questionnaire before it was sent to the participants.

The questionnaire was sent to a census of 4-H professionals throughout the state of Ohio (n=156). This enabled all individuals who camp at the various camping facilities to have a voice in developing the model and also assisted in validating the model for use throughout the state of Ohio. Because the different needs of the camping facilities may necessitate different counselor responsibilities, it was important for all perspectives to be explored when developing a statewide model.

An initial e-mail (see Appendix F) was sent to the individuals inviting them to participate, providing instructions and information on the *Roles and Responsibilities of Camp Counselors Final Draft* for review prior to completing the survey and providing information about confidentiality. Individuals consented to participate by reading an introduction to the questionnaire (see Appendix F) and clicking on a link to continue with the questionnaire. Because of the alignment with the OSU Extension program and having 4-H professionals serve as supervisors to the 4-H camp counselors, this survey was based on the same format as Cochran’s (2009) “OSU Extension Competency Study” model study. The survey was administered electronically using SurveyMonkey and followed recommendations from Dillman et al. (2009) for messages and reminders. The
questionnaire was open for two weeks and four reminders were sent to participants to encourage completion. In addition, individuals who began the questionnaire were entered into a drawing for one of four gift cards as an incentive to use toward their programming needs, not directly to the individual who began the questionnaire. The response rate was 54.4 percent (85 of 156 individuals completed the questionnaire). Detailed information on demographics of participants and questionnaire respondents is reported in Chapter 4.

Data analysis. Qualitative and quantitative data from the survey were compiled and reviewed. Data were analyzed using Excel and open coding. Descriptive statistics and frequency distributions for importance ratings and future priority were calculated and summarized. Written responses were analyzed for alignment, common themes, and frequently raised questions or suggestions. Literature was also reviewed and compared to the data generated and considered during the integration.

Phase IV-Final Refinement and Confirmation

Using the information collected from the survey results, including the survey data, competency definitions, and key actions, the Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Model Draft 5 was refined. A final cross check of the Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Model Draft 5 was reviewed by the state 4-H administrators and the Ohio 4-H Camping Design Team. They were asked to review the document and consider suggestions they might have to ensure the language was clear and that the model would be effective as a communication tool. I then reviewed the data provided by these individuals and used the data to make final revisions to the Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Model Final Draft. I reviewed written notes from the individuals and
incorporated them into the model using my judgment as a researcher on how suggestions would be in alignment with the data. My peer reviewer examined the data integration notes and the final draft of the document. This assisted in validating the process and decisions I made. This step concluded the research process. Upon completion of compiling the data, the findings of the study will be presented to all 4-H professionals throughout Ohio for use in the 4-H camping program. Distributing evidence of the findings assists in persuading the reader that the findings are trustworthy (Merriam, 2009).

**Trustworthiness and Validity**

A qualitative study describes people acting in events and gives the reader enough detail to show the conclusion of the research “rings true to readers, practitioners, and other researchers” (Merriam, 2009, p. 210). In order for readers to understand the results and relate them to other experiences, the study must be valid. Because human beings are the primary instrument of data collection and analysis in qualitative research and are assessing data through observations and interviews, it is important for a rigorous system to be in place to strengthen the internal validity of the study. When a rigorous system is in place for qualitative research, internal validity is strengthened (Merriam, 2009).

When discussing research that uses qualitative measures, the general standards involve assessing the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability when determining the quality of the data (Merriam, 2009; Shenton, 2004). They are substitutes for internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity and have become widely adopted in qualitative research (Merriam, 2009). Each of these items is discussed more
in the sections that follow in regard to what they mean and also how I used them in this research.

**Credibility**

Credibility of a study ensures that the study measures or tests what is actually intended (Shenton, 2004). There are several ways to establish credibility. In this study, I used some of Shenton’s (2004) recommendations to establish credibility. I recorded notes from the information gathering, group sessions, focus groups, and discussion openly and honestly. Data were collected using triangulating methods including focus group interviews from multiple sources, Camping Design Team discussion, and open-ended and fixed-response questions from surveys. These informants were encouraged to be frank in their discussion and had the understanding they could withdraw from the study at any point without having to disclose an explanation.

Member checks of the research process also took place. This ensured the meaning was not misinterpreted and that the preliminary analysis of data was accurate (Merriam, 2009). In addition, an expert group analyzed emerging themes during model development. Peer examination or review was also incorporated into the steps of this study. A colleague reviewed the raw data to assess whether the findings were plausible based on the data (Merriam, 2009). In addition, I critically reflected on myself as the researcher to explain biases, dispositions, and assumptions to allow the reader to understand how I might have arrived at the particular interpretation of the data (Merriam, 2009). To establish this component and clarify bias that may occur, information is provided in a following section. Throughout the entire research process, I strived to
ensure the study was credible by carrying it out in as ethical a manner as possible (Merriam, 2009).

**Verification and Transferability**

Transferability of a study means that the findings of one study can be applied to other situations (Merriam, 2009; Shenton, 2004). The reader, not the researcher, decides if the results can be applied to the next situation (Kruger & Casey, 2000). In order to ensure the research can be applied to a wider population, several steps were taken. This included using triangulation of data, member checks for accuracy, clarification of researcher stance, and peer debriefing. As previously mentioned, triangulation was used by using multiple sources in focus group interviews from different audiences and also by using a panel of experts and questionnaires in addition to the focus groups. Also previously mentioned, member checks took place following a particular phase in order to ensure the data were interpreted correctly. Peer examination also took place by an individual who was not associated with the study but could scrutinize the data with a knowledgeable open mind. My stance as a researcher and potential for bias is discussed later in this chapter.

In addition, in-depth or “thick” descriptions were given in order to provide detailed information regarding the background of this study and concrete information about people and places. In reporting the results of this research, this information was explained in specific quotes from the data collected during focus groups and discussion with study participants. By using highly descriptive or “thick” descriptions, the reader can understand the phenomenon studied and can draw his or her own interpretations.
about meanings and significance (Jones et al., 2006). In turn, the reader can take the information and make an application elsewhere (Merriam, 2009).

**Dependability**

The purpose of a study having dependability, often known as reliability, is to ensure that if the work were repeated in the same context with the same methods and participants, similar results would be obtained (Shenton, 2004). In addition, the question is posed whether the results are consistent with the data collected (Merriam, 2009). As previously mentioned, in this study “thick” descriptions were used so the reader is able to understand the specific research design and implementation. I also scrutinized the effectiveness of the process undertaken and reflected upon the changes that occurred throughout it. By giving complete information, the reader will have a full understanding of the study.

**Confirmability**

Confirmability ensures the researcher is being objective in the research and that the result of the experiences and ideas are those of the informants and not the researcher’s preferences (Shenton, 2004). To ensure this study was objective, an outside individual confirmed the findings and checks were made to control for bias or misinterpretation. Peer review and debriefing were used throughout the study and included a review of data collected, researcher notes, researcher reflections, data analysis, and data integration. In addition, I asked Karen Argabright to keep me honest with questions and to be a devil’s advocate, to help my analysis and decisions during data integration, and to critique my work. Karen is a peer in the Agriculture and Extension Education doctoral program and is knowledgeable about the Ohio State University Extension but is not otherwise
associated with the camping program. She validated decisions that I made or made points that caused me to re-evaluate what I had done. Her impartiality enabled me to evaluate the data in the way they were intended and to present the results as objectively as possible.

**Self as Researcher: Clarification of Researcher Bias**

As a researcher, I was a part of the process, bringing my own opinions and points of view. It is important to note that as a researcher, I served as an instrument, involving myself with individuals and groups as a data gathering tool. I have had various roles in the camp setting including a camper, counselor, and adult staff member prior to my tenure as a camp director. I am also a member of the organization that was studied, specifically a 4-H educator in OSU Extension who also has served as a camp director for eight summers. In addition, I have previous existing relationships with employees involved as participants in the study. I am invested in this research and the Extension organization. As an experienced Extension professional with opinions about competencies of successful camp counselors, I needed to be aware of the likelihood that I might hear what I wanted to hear and find ways of focusing on those ideas that I agreed with in the research process.

In this research, my opinions, knowledge, and experience with OSU Extension were useful, but they also represented a potential source of bias. Therefore, it was important for me to monitor my bias, which I did by keeping a reflective journal throughout the research process. Journal entries were used for critical self-reflection, processing, and inspecting the research process. Concerns about bias having a negative
influence on the research were addressed through strategies described above including member checks and peer debriefing.

Summary

Chapter 3 described the type of study (mixed method research in the context of a state 4-H camping program) and research participants (4-H professionals). This chapter also provided an overview (Figure 3.1) and then gave a detailed description of the research design and specific data collection, analysis, and integration methods. In addition, I reviewed advantages and disadvantages of various methods and chose those deemed best suited to address the development of a competency model. I developed the process based on the recommendations of those who have conducted competency studies.

Multiple phases took place in this study. Initially, a literature review on existing skills and counselor competencies was conducted. Then, by using the information obtained from the review, a document was created describing the roles and responsibilities of camp counselors. Next, a group interview was held with state 4-H administrators where they reviewed the draft document on roles and responsibilities of camp counselors, generated ideas for competencies, and identified 4-H professionals who would be knowledgeable about the 4-H camping program to serve in the focus groups. In addition, a modified nominal group technique was conducted with members of the Ohio 4-H camping design team to acquire feedback on the roles and responsibilities and to generate ideas related to competencies and to rank their importance. Upon completion of the modified nominal group technique, the document on roles and responsibilities of camp counselors was refined and the first draft of competencies was created. The Camping Design Team members revisited the documents to ensure all data were
incorporated appropriately and were also asked to identify 4-H professionals to serve in the focus groups. A peer review was also conducted to ensure the data were being interpreted accordingly. Then, these data were integrated to develop the second draft of the competencies and final draft of the camp counselors roles and responsibilities.

Invitations were sent to potential focus group members and the focus groups were conducted at a central location, Ohio State’s campus. The previously identified competencies were reviewed and further refined using a discussion of open-ended questions. These groups also generated ideas for behavioral indicators of each competency. Then, the discussion transcripts were analyzed using an open coding method to identify themes and were sent to individuals for review. The state 4-H administrators also reviewed the second draft of competencies and contributed insight to additional items that should be added. At the conclusion of this phase, data were integrated and a third draft of the competency model was developed. A peer review then occurred to ensure data were being evaluated appropriately.

The next phase of the research was sending the current version of the draft in an electronic survey to 4-H professionals throughout the state of Ohio. They have varying needs of the camp counselors at their campsites, and had the opportunity to give feedback and insight to the competencies based on these needs. Finally, these data were integrated and a final model was created. It was then sent for a final review to the Camping Design Team and state 4-H administrators. Then, a peer review was again conducted and the competency model was finalized. Upon completion of the process the Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competency Model will be made available to be used throughout the
state of Ohio by 4-H professionals when training camp counselors and evaluating their performance.

Trustworthiness and validity in the context of the research were also addressed. In order to ensure a valid and trustworthy study, several approaches occurred throughout the process of gathering and analyzing data. These included using triangulation of data, member checks for accuracy, clarification of researcher stance, and peer debriefing. By using several methods, it was more likely to have a research study that was able to be used throughout the state and even as a foundation for additional studies. Chapter 4 presents the results obtained using the methods described in Chapter 3.
Chapter 4: Findings

As stated in Chapter 1, the purpose of this study was to develop a competency model for 4-H camp counselors in the state of Ohio by identifying and describing competencies and constructing a competency model. Because of the predominately qualitative and multi-phase nature of this study, it made sense to include results and a brief description of the findings at each step in the research process in this chapter, with further discussion reserved for Chapter 5. Data gathered and decisions made at each step informed the next one. Therefore Chapter 4 is organized by the four phases of research illustrated in Figure 3.1.

I will use the progression of steps in each phase, where data were gathered from multiple sources and then integrated to develop documents that were then used for successive data collection, as an organizing framework for presenting results. Data collection results at each step are disclosed followed by the results of successive data integration. First, findings from the initial review of literature, development of the initial *Roles and Responsibilities* document, administrative review, identifying a pool of knowledgeable 4-H professionals, and group session with the Camping Design Team (Phase I) are described. Phase II includes data synthesis and integration, results from several rounds of data collection, and subsequent data synthesis and integration. Results from the validation survey in Phase III are then shared, followed by results from Phase IV, which includes data synthesis and integration and the final competency model.
Phase I Results

Phase I results include a literature review to identify roles and responsibilities of camp counselors, data collected from an interview with state 4-H administrators, data collected and decisions made to identify a group of knowledgeable 4-H professionals to participate in focus groups, and a group session with the Camping Design Team.

Literature Review

As indicated in Chapter 2, a literature review was conducted to gain an understanding of the topic and background information regarding the need of the study. In addition, the roles and responsibilities of camp counselors were explored to draft a document to share with individuals throughout the research process. These roles are consistent from county to county and camp to camp, even though the specific duties of counselors may vary. From this review, 14 key points were identified (see Appendix G). These items are not listed by importance, as their importance is dependent upon the individual in charge and the situation at that point in time. This document was then shared with the state 4-H administrators and Camping Design Team for input before creating the final document.

Group Interview I with State 4-H Administration

Through interviews and associated member checks, the state 4-H administrators nominated individuals to participate in focus groups and provided opinions and thoughts about roles and responsibilities of camp counselors, recommendations for the competency model, and key decisions about building a model. Their feedback was used to support the research process, model development (e.g., format and structure), and content for later data integration steps.
In the first interview, both of the state 4-H administrators provided insight as to what should be added to the roles and responsibilities of camp counselors document. A key addition to this was the awareness of child protection regulations by emphasizing that it is the counselor’s duty to report in accordance with university policy any suspected child abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect. In addition to discussing roles and responsibilities, the state 4-H administrators provided information regarding the important competencies for Ohio 4-H camp counselors. At the end of this discussion related to identifying competencies, 47 ideas for competencies were named (see Appendix H). Examples of named competencies are commitment to the camp itself, creativity, dependable, fun, and responsible. State 4-H administrators were then asked to identify 4-H professionals who they felt were knowledgeable about the 4-H camping program and would have good insight into what would make a high performing camp counselor. Between the two administrators, 22 individuals were identified to participate in focus groups that were conducted in Phase II.

**Group Session with Camping Design Team**

During a four-hour session, using a modified nominal group technique described in Chapter 3, 11 of 13 Camping Design Team members generated ideas and provided initial prioritization in three rounds of data collection. One individual was on maternity leave, and the other had hoped to attend, but was not able to travel due to unfavorable weather conditions. In Round 1, Camping Design Team members were asked about their thoughts on the draft document of *Roles and Responsibilities of Camp Counselors*. Suggestions to add to the document included, “market and promote camp,” “serve in a leadership and teaching role to other counselors,” “the ability to problem solve and apply
critical thinking in different settings and situations,” and “be adaptable and flexible” were mentioned. In addition, it was mentioned to include “including emergency procedures” on the same bullet point as “know and understand all safety guidelines associated with the camp and program areas” to ensure counselors would have an understanding of this component’s importance.

In Round 2, members of the Camping Design Team were asked to silently generate ideas on a worksheet (see Appendix D) regarding the competencies that contribute directly to the success of the camping program, constitute a high performing counselor, and contribute to camper outcomes while at camp. At the end of this round, 91 items were generated as potential competencies. Because some of the items were similar or duplicated, the items were combined into clusters or similar concepts. This step was challenging for the group. Initially, they started to combine the items as a group, but after much frustration, the assistant moderator and I decided to combine the items while the group took a break. After the items were combined, I verified the groupings with the participants, and the list generated in Round 2 was reduced to 58 items.

In Round 3, participants were asked the same question as in Round 2 but were given several existing competency models and lists to review for competencies or phrases. The models given to them were from the American Camp Association (ACA, 2010a), and from several youth workers studies (Astroth et al., 2004; Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008; National Collaboration for Youth, 2004; Starr et al., 2009), which are similar to camp counselors because they are related to the camping environment or individuals who work with youth on some level. At the end of Round 3, a total of 68
items or clusters were generated as potential competencies. I reviewed the list of competencies generated by the state 4-H administrators to ensure they were also included in the list of items before having participants prioritize the competencies. Participants were then asked to individually rate on note cards the top 20 of the 68 items on a scale of 1 to 20 (1 being the most important, and so on). Examples of the top 20 concepts included ability to create a welcoming environment, willingness to be coached and learn, ability to interact with children, and having a high level of commitment or buy-in to the camp philosophy.

**Identifying a Pool of Knowledgeable 4-H Professionals**

As described in Chapter 3, 4-H professionals who are knowledgeable about the 4-H camping program and would have good insight as to what would make a high performing camp counselor were identified using two primary sources of information: nominations from the state 4-H administrators and nominations from the Camping Design Team. To collect nominations, during the interview I asked state 4-H administrators to identify these individuals. They were not limited in the number of people they could identify. In addition, I sent an e-mail request to members of the Camping Design Team to nominate individuals. They were not limited to the number of people they could nominate and were asked to nominate individuals who work with camp counselors, are knowledgeable about the camping program, and would add value to discussion about the camping program.

Between the two groups, 45 individuals were nominated. There was a break between the number of nominations for individuals who received one nomination or two or more nominations. I decided all individuals who had two or more nominations would
receive an invitation to participate in focus groups, and also all but one of the individuals identified by the state 4-H administrators, regardless of the number of nominations they received. This is because the state 4-H administrators were verbally nominating professionals, so they would not duplicate their votes if one person mentioned a name first. Because they are knowledgeable about all professionals in the state, I decided to count these individuals as having at least two votes from their nomination. The individual who I decided to not invite to participate in the focus groups is a camp facility manager, not a 4-H professional, and does not directly work with selecting, training, and supervising camp counselors. In addition, the state 4-H administrators were uncertain when they mentioned this individual’s name. A total of 27 individuals who received two or more nominations from members of the Camping Design Team or were nominated by state 4-H administrators received an initial invitation to participate in the focus groups. Of these individuals, some were not able to participate for various reasons in one of the focus groups, so I needed to invite additional individuals to participate. The additional five individuals who I decided to send a invitation to all had one nomination, but have served in other leadership capacities in the camping program at a regional, state, and/or national level. Moreover, they are representative of various camping locations across the state.

**Phase II Results**

**Creating Draft 1**

In order to develop the *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competencies Draft 1* document, I initially assigned a point value to the competencies that were ranked by the Camping Design Team. I made sure to not include the name of the individual ranking the
competencies to ensure it did not sway or bias my interpretation. The item that was ranked as number one received 20 points, second highest competency received 19 points, and so on. Of the 68 competencies generated, 55 of them were ranked by at least one person as being one of the top 20 most important competencies.

I then coded all of the competencies generated from the interview with state 4-H administrators and the group session with the Camping Design Team into 13 themes. I compared this list to the priority ranked competencies to verify that the competencies rated as most important were included in the model. One of the items that was ranked as the most important competency was not discussed much throughout the conversation and in turn did not end up being in one of the themes (customer service), so I noted to look into this further in additional phases of the research. Also, even though the Camping Design Team members thought the items related to diversity and knowledge should be grouped together, when reviewing the data this concept was mentioned several times, which led me to believe it is more important than being grouped with something else. Therefore, I decided to put items related to diversity and knowledge under its own heading.

I noticed there are some competency headings that included more descriptors than others and included a variety of topics (e.g., professionalism and leadership, teamwork and working with others), so I expressed my concerns regarding the larger headings to my peer reviewer. In addition, some of the competencies were more of an outlier in the themes (e.g., health and wellness), but they were ranked as a high priority, so I decided to keep them in the model for now.
To create Draft 1 of the model, I listed the potential competency and its supporting concepts. This draft was in the form of a table with 13 potential competencies and their supporting concepts. These concepts were taken almost verbatim from the participants in the initial phase of the research to ensure the concepts were interpreted correctly. In addition to taking concepts from the participants in the initial phase and analyzing the data from the interview and group session, the literature was reviewed and compared to the data generated and considered during the integration. Five of the 13 competencies as presented in *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competencies Draft 1* are illustrated in Table 4.1. The complete *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competencies Draft 1* is in Appendix I. During the member check, members of the Camping Design Team and state 4-H administrators had the opportunity to express concern if items were taken out of context.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Competency</th>
<th>Supporting Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child and Adolescent Development Knowledge</td>
<td>Youth and their needs; behavior management techniques and guidelines; ages and stages of youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Competence</td>
<td>Understands differences in others; accepting and empathy towards others; appreciate different talents; relate and connect with diverse groups of people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Planning and Management</td>
<td>Designs or creates and plans for and implements programs and workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosocial Connectedness</td>
<td>Committed to the philosophy and goals of camp; takes ownership and has “buy-in” to the influence and impact on the program; devotes themselves to position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Empowerment</td>
<td>Teach and lead activities; selflessness; interact with, engage, and motivate children; facilitate hands-on or experiential learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.1 Examples of Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competencies Draft 1 and Supporting Concepts
Roles and Responsibilities Draft B

I incorporated the ideas of the Camping Design Team and the state 4-H administrators’ suggestions regarding “being aware of child protection regulations and report any child abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect in accordance with university policy,” “market and promote camp,” “serve in a leadership and teaching role to other counselors,” and the phrase “including emergency procedures” into the document. However, I decided not to include “the ability to problem solve and apply critical thinking in different settings and situations” and “be adaptable and flexible” because I felt those were more aligned with the competencies of camp counselors instead of what their particular role or responsibility is of a counselor. See Table 4.2 for a list of roles and responsibilities; the complete Roles and Responsibilities Draft B is in Appendix J.
Table 4.2 List of Roles and Responsibilities of Camp Counselors from *Roles and Responsibilities Draft B*

**Member Check, Peer Review, and Debriefing**

In order to ensure I analyzed the results appropriately, I sent the draft model and draft of the roles and responsibilities to the members of the Camping Design Team. This enabled them to provide feedback and correct my analysis if anything was misinterpreted.
Three members of the camping design team responded and said they thought the draft of the competency model captured the conversation during the group session. One member thought the titles for the groups were accurate and also provided clarification and ordering to items (no change of meaning). The same member who provided clarification questioned adding “foreseeing potential outcomes” and not just “dissipate consequences” to one of the supporting concepts to a potential competency (Thinking and Problem Solving). I re-checked the data and it was not clear what the participant had mentioned, other than reiterating it was “dissipate” consequences. I also asked the assistant moderator to see if she recalled additional information from the discussion, which she did not. So, at this point in time, I decided to leave the concept as originally mentioned by the participant but made a point to explore it further in upcoming phases of the research.

Also during the member check, an individual questioned if the role model and character outside of camp specifically needed to be listed as a competency. This is already listed as a role and responsibility of camp counselors, so I debated whether or not it should be listed as a separate competency. I discussed this with my advisors and later with my peer reviewer to get their input.

In addition to sending information to the Camping Design Team, I sent information to my peer reviewer. As described in Chapter 3, peer review and debriefing was used throughout the study as a strategy to improve the research and address validity. My peer debriefer reviewed the data I had collected, my researcher notes and reflections, and my analysis and integration notes. Results from peer debriefing will be discussed here and at other steps when it was used.
In general, my peer debriefer felt like I was on track, and she could follow my work in developing the roles and responsibilities document. She empathized with the challenge of grouping the generated ideas into themes, which was also evident by the frustration of the Camping Design Team members. I asked her for her thoughts on the comments from the member check with “dissipate” consequences versus foreseeing potential outcomes. We decided that regardless of how it is worded, it would still fall under the same heading of “Thinking and Problem Solving,” so I decided to leave it as worded at this point, but made a note to review this wording in additional phases of the research. We also discussed whether or not to add role model or character outside of camp as a main heading. Because it is really an underlying theme for all the competencies and is listed as a role of the camp counselors, I decided not include it as a separate heading at this point in time.

My peer reviewer suggested adding “Compassion” or “Interpersonal Relationships” or something similar regarding meeting specific needs of youth as a heading. This would pull some items out of other headings (e.g., Professionalism and Leadership, Teamwork and Working with Others, Youth Empowerment, etc.), which would make some of the larger categories smaller. She also brought up that “welcoming environment” was not specifically listed under the “pro-social connectedness” heading and should be included there, as indicated from the data. This could also be included in the “Understanding of the Camp Environment” or the suggested “Compassion” heading to see if that encompasses the concept.

Another suggestion my peer reviewer had was to combine health and wellness with risk management, because they align similarly. I saw them fitting together, because
they both involve safety and well-being in the camp environment, but one refers more to preventative strategies, while the other refers to after-the-fact items. Another point my peer reviewer mentioned was the size of the “Professionalism and Leadership” heading. She suggested separating the leadership component and combining it with youth empowerment, which could be made to meet the specific needs of the youth. Finally, she gave insight regarding word choices for the broad headings and supporting concepts to ease with understanding. I decided to re-visit the list, particularly focusing on the compassion component to see what type of difference that made in how the concepts were grouped together.

**Creating Draft 2**

When creating *Draft 2* of the competency model, I used *Draft 1* and drew from feedback from the Camping Design Team and peer review, and existing literature from the American Camp Association and that related to youth workers. I also had a conversation with my advisor to ensure I was on the right track and to get her feedback and insight.

Because the “Professionalism and Leadership” heading included so many items (and with such a variety), I decided to divide the category. The “Leadership” component was combined to be “Teamwork and Leadership,” which was changed from “Teamwork and Working with Others.” To help clarify the distinctions between professionalism from leadership, I viewed professionalism as more of the things you are (qualities you have) and leadership is more things you do (actions you take). Items under the “Professionalism” heading included descriptions such as responsible, flexible and adaptable, appropriate sense of humor, customer service, and maintains confidentiality.
The “Teamwork and Leadership” competency included items such as supportive of peers and other staff, ability to lead or follow, and organization skills.

I also decided to separate out a “Role Model” heading. The more I evaluated the data, the more apparent it was that this is a major component of a camp counselor’s competencies. It is an underlying theme that is encompassed in many of the competencies, but has an impact on all of them, and therefore should be identified as one to demonstrate the importance of it. The descriptors for this competency include positive and responsible fun and positive role model.

Because the counselors are not necessarily responsible for managing programs, the “Program Planning and Management” heading was changed to “Program Planning.” Due to several comments regarding the “Prosocial Connectedness” heading not encompassing what was in the supporting concepts, I decided to change “Prosocial Connectedness” heading, with items including “caring and kind; responsive to needs; accepting and empathy toward others” to encompass the “Compassion” component of the data. Then, the items that were under “Prosocial Connectedness” were put under the “Personal Commitment” heading, which better encompasses each of those concepts (e.g., committed to the philosophy and goals of camp, takes ownership and has buy-in). I also included the descriptor of “create a welcoming environment” that was missing from this heading, because it is along the same lines of meeting the needs of the campers and being compassionate.

When re-evaluating the data after receiving feedback, I noticed many items the Camping Design Team originally described could be categorized as “Communication.” To encompass their conversation and clarify items from other categories, I added a
separate “Communication” heading, which included descriptors of public-speaking skills and conflict mediation skills.

Another change to the draft was to the “Understanding Camp Environment” heading. Because it also includes the organizational components of camp (e.g., the 4-H organization), I changed the heading to be “Understands Organizational and Camp Environment.” In addition to changing this heading, the “Youth Empowerment” heading was also changed. The descriptors under this heading referred to teaching campers and facilitating their learning. To ensure the descriptors were appropriately describing the heading, it was changed to “Teaching and Facilitating.”

Another change to the competencies was to combine the “Risk Management” and “Health and Wellness” headings. They were combined because they are related to emergency knowledge and focus on both preventative actions and reacting to situations.

The result of this step was the Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competency Draft 2. Draft 2 included 15 competencies.

1. child and adolescent development knowledge
2. communication
3. cultural competence
4. health, wellness, and risk management
5. personal commitment
6. professional development
7. professionalism
8. program planning
9. prosocial connectedness
10. role model
11. self-direction
12. teaching and facilitating
13. teamwork and leadership
14. thinking and problem solving
15. understands organizational and camp environment
Each competency included a title (see numbered list above) and descriptors. The complete draft is provided in Appendix K because it represented major changes from *Draft 1*. The *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competency Draft 2* was used with the interview with the state 4-H administrators and focus groups as described in following sections.

**Creating Final Roles and Responsibilities Final Document**

I expressed my thoughts about not including “the ability to problem solve and apply critical thinking in different settings and situations” and “be adaptable and flexible” in the *Roles and Responsibilities* document to the Camping Design Team during their member check and they agreed with the concept. I had feedback from the review that the bulleted items should be listed by a timeline of when camp counselors will perform these roles throughout the year. Therefore, I altered the order of the bullets to be arranged by items counselors would do before camp, during camp, and after camp. Because my peer reviewer felt the data had been analyzed appropriately, this document became the final version. See Figure 4.1 for the complete document. This document was used as a foundation for information shared with participants in successive phases of the research study. This included the interview with the state 4-H administrators, focus groups, and electronic questionnaire as described in following sections.
Roles and Responsibilities of Ohio 4-H Camp Counselors Final

As a foundation for our competency modeling, we need to have a list of roles and responsibilities of Ohio 4-H camp counselors. This will help participants (including you) in the research think about competencies needed to enhance the skills for these roles.

The following are roles and responsibilities of Ohio 4-H camp counselors. While specific duties of counselors may vary from county to county and camp to camp, these are consistent at all camps. They are not listed by importance.

- Attend required trainings prior to camp
- Market and promote camp
- Serve in a leadership and teaching role to other counselors
- Serve on committees or other groups to plan programs at camp
- Conduct self in an appropriate manner before, during, and after camp while serving as a role model to campers and peers
- Assist staff and other counselors with camp activities; work as a team to implement the activities
- Know and understand all safety guidelines, including emergency procedures, associated with the camp and program areas
- Follow and enforce camp rules
- Assure for safety of campers at all times including in cabins, sessions, and large group activities
- Be aware of child protection regulations and report any child abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect in accordance with university policy
- Identify and respond to camper behavior issues
- Ensure campers’ health and hygiene, e.g., brushing teeth, eating meals, taking medication, etc.
- Promote camper participation during camp
- Lead and supervise campers in activities at camp including but not limited to songs, teambuilding challenges, group activities, challenges, etc.
- Teach and lead campers at workshops or during other components at camp (table setting, song leading, etc.)
- Mentor and give guidance to campers to encourage positive youth development and enhancement of life skills

Figure 4.1 Roles and Responsibilities of Ohio 4-H Camp Counselors Final
Group Interview II with State 4-H Administration

As described in Chapter 3, both of the state 4-H administrators participated in a second interview to review the generated competencies and provide feedback on the model. The administrators expressed their belief that I was on the right track with the competencies and were supportive of the process taking place.

There were a couple of suggestions about the model that arose from our discussion. One was that the descriptor “dissipate consequences” under the “Thinking and Problem Solving” heading was not easy to understand and they suggested changing it to “anticipate consequences.” The intent of changing this was so that 4-H professionals and camp counselors would have a better understanding of the descriptor’s meaning.

In addition, the heading “Prosocial Connectedness” was not a heading that was easy to understand without the descriptors describing its meaning. Suggestions were given including changing it to “Interpersonal Relationships” or something related to responsiveness.

Overall, they felt the competencies listed represented a complete list, so nothing needed to be added or eliminated. A few additional suggestions were made to clarify what the competencies or descriptors represented. The data from this interview and focus groups were analyzed when creating Draft 3 of the competency model.

Focus Groups

As described in Chapter 3, a total of 20 employees participated in three focus group sessions, where they critiqued the content of the Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competency Model Draft 2 and generated ideas for key actions (i.e., descriptors of behaviors that illustrate the competencies for camp counselors). Major themes that
emerged from focus group discussion included: (a) overall support for the model and interest in next steps related to application; (b) suggestions for model format and structure; (c) specific supportive comments or suggestions for changes to individual competency titles or its supporting concepts; and (d) generating key actions to describe each of the competencies. First, focus groups participants were asked about their initial reaction to Draft 2. Examples from each group are provided below.

Across focus groups, there was support for the Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competency Model Draft 2 and interest about how the competencies could be applied in the Ohio 4-H camping program. One participant said, “These were all the things that I look for in a camp counselors and my next question to myself was ‘am I teaching this or am I fostering this in the trainings I provide them?’” Another stated, “If I thought about camp counselors, these are things that I’d definitely pull out and that was my next thought, ‘How am I teaching these?’ and ‘How am I covering these in my counselor trainings and in my helping to foster these things into counselors themselves?’” Another participant said, “I think it makes an easier transition for kids if they have the list for counselors to be able to utilize the things that they do at camp and job applications, college applications, and so how do they turn those things in [to words].”

There were also suggestions for the model format and structure. One individual commented, “For me, I’d like more white space under each [competency]… just to be able to make some notes.” Another individual also commented about adding white space, but to have it in order to be able to list curriculum that might tie in to each competency. Another participant said, “I would possibly like to see, and maybe this would be down the road once we have it is curriculum or program materials out in another column that
could be used to help us teach that competency.” One individual commented, “I like that you have it in a table because it makes it easy to read and see and that helps.”

When discussing the competency headings, suggestions were given for how they should be clarified or altered. The title “Prosocial Connectedness” was difficult to understand, which is similar to the feedback from the interview with the state 4-H administrators. The term “Cultural Competence” was also mentioned as not being a clear heading. Discussion also occurred related to the descriptors for each of the competencies. The phrase “dissipate consequences” was confusing to some groups, and it was suggested to change it to “anticipate consequences.” This also aligns with what was suggested by state 4-H administrators.

Also during the focus groups, participants generated ideas to further define or describe the competencies. As a result of this discussion, 418 key actions, statements, or illustrations were put into 73 themes within the 15 competencies. Representative examples of these statements are in Table 4.3.
In general, discussion during the focus groups provided validation for the content of Draft 2 as well as providing additional data for refining the content that would be used in the next integration step.

**Creating Draft 3**

As described in Chapter 3, data analysis and integration to create *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competencies Draft 3* used Draft 2, including supporting concepts, and drew from (a) the interview with state 4-H administrators (b) focus group data and (c) existing literature. The same 15 competencies were carried through to *Draft 3* with

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Idea or Description Shared</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>• Appropriate voice and inflection tone and volume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Speaks directly to child to give specific instructions, praise, criticism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Eye contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Awareness</td>
<td>• Overlooks differences and seek out commonalities and shared interests or experiences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Makes sure all are involved no matter of differences (end game if not all involved; change games to include wheelchair, etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Commitment</td>
<td>• Understanding camp is for the camper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Dedicated to come to every training, prepared, (attends) extra training opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>• Can adjust roles willingly if event changes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Greet campers and parents in a positive way</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Doing what needs done with confidence and a good attitude</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Model</td>
<td>• Actually plays soccer and assists camper to be successful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Does what is asked by authority without complaint or negativity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
minor changes made to titles based on the data generated in this step. Most of the changes in this step were adding specific definitions and key actions to each competency. Examples of changes and additions to create Draft 3 are described below.

The title “Cultural Competence” was changed to “Cultural Awareness” based on suggestions from two focus groups that the word *awareness* is not as high of a level as *competence* and in turn would be easier for teens to understand. Also under this competency, I included more specific information including youth with special needs. Another title change was from “Prosocial Connectedness” to become “Supportive Relationships.” Concern related to lack of understanding of this concept heading was mentioned in all three focus groups and the interview.

The descriptors for each competency were changed to a definition. The basic concept of information was considered as it was put into an easier to understand format. Because it was mentioned several times, the phrase “dissipate consequences” under the “Thinking and Problem Solving” heading was changed to “anticipate consequences.” Other minor changes were made to the descriptors as they were converted to definitions of the competencies including elaborating on what the “big picture” entails, giving more of an explanation related to understanding the 4-H organization and the philosophy behind it, and adding that feedback and guidance was from peers and adults instead of one or the another.

In addition to making some minor changes, I moved some of the generated themes under another competency heading. As mentioned by several of the focus groups, many of the items can fit into more than one competency area, so it was challenging to
assign them to the best location. Using their comments, I altered a few of these items, such as moving “ownership” from “Professional Development” to “Self-Direction.”

The major change from Draft 2 to Draft 3 was the addition of the key actions for each of the competencies. Based on the 418 generated key actions, statements, or illustrations that were put into 73 themes within the 15 competencies, bullet pointed key actions were listed for each competency. Each competency ranged from having three to six key actions describing what the competency looked like when demonstrated by the camp counselor. See Appendix L for a Draft 3 which includes a complete list of the 15 competencies and their respective key actions. Examples of the Cultural Awareness and Supportive Relationships competencies, their definitions, and key actions are provided below in Table 4.4.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Definition and Key Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Awareness</td>
<td>Understands and accepts differences in others; appreciates different talents; relates and connects with diverse groups of people including but not limited to various cultures, special needs, and backgrounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Conveys respect for individuals who have different perspectives related to culture, religion, socioeconomic status, special needs, and opinions or ideas and embraces the differences.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Seeks out individuals who have different backgrounds from themselves and expands their own awareness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Welcomes others who are different with a positive attitude and makes sure all individuals are involved regardless what their difference is; makes adaptations to activities to include everyone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Relationships</td>
<td>Is accepting and empathetic towards others, caring and kind, and responsive to needs; creates a welcoming environment and puts campers first.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Attentive to the needs of others (e.g., illness, preparation for activities, accident) and treats them as they would like to be treated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Uses empathy to read others (e.g., homesick, struggling, not included); acts accordingly to engage them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Creates a welcoming environment for campers and their parents; makes them feel like they are special.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4 Representative Examples of the Cultural Awareness and Supportive Relationships Competencies, Their Definitions, and Key Actions

**Peer Review and Member Check**

To ensure the data were appropriately analyzed, the generated key actions and definitions were sent the Camping Design Team and also to my peer reviewer. In addition to making sure the data were appropriately interpreted, I wanted to have the
Camping Design Team review the definitions for each of the competencies because these definitions were to be included in the electronic questionnaire to validate the instrument.

Five (of 13) members provided feedback to Draft 3. Four commented that the model was on the right track, and one member gave a few suggestions for minor word choice changes.

My peer reviewer’s overall feedback was that the concepts were sound, she could follow my logic about how I drew conclusions, and the documentation for decisions or additions to create Draft 3 was solid. She provided some suggestions for word choices and for clarifying of some of the concepts, and also mentioned a few key actions that should be added to the competencies based on the data. For instance, she thought being more “captivating” should be included under the “Communication” heading, “know when to seek help and report violations” needed to be added to the “Health, Wellness, and Risk Management” competency, and adding “willingness to challenge peers and campers when bias is observed” to the “Cultural Awareness” competency. I considered each of these items when creating Draft 4 of the model.

Creating Draft 4

Data analysis and integration to create Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competencies Draft 4 used Draft 3, and drew from (a) member check with Camping Design Team members (b) peer review feedback, and (c) existing literature. Most of the changes involved word choice and clarifying key actions. For instance, some of the key actions did not give a picture of what the competency “looked like” when demonstrated (e.g., aware of various learning styles versus demonstrates awareness of various learning styles). So, several key actions were altered to ensure an illustration was given for each
of the key actions. With a better illustration of the competency, individuals who evaluate the counselors will have a clear picture of what the competency looks like when put into practice.

In addition, some of the key actions for the competencies were describing two different things and therefore they were divided into two separate key actions. For instance, “delivers clear messages when speaking using appropriate inflection of tone, volume, and proper pause; uses nonverbal communication that is congruent with the intended message; speaks directly to individual on their particular level” was changed to “delivers clear messages when speaking using appropriate inflection of tone, volume, and proper pause; captivates the audience when speaking” and a separate bullet for “uses nonverbal communication that is congruent with the intended message” and another bullet “speaks directly to individuals on their particular level.”

Based on my peer reviewer’s feedback from her review, some key actions that were missing were added to this document. For instance, “challenges others if a bias is observed” was added to the “Cultural Awareness” competency and “knows when to seek help and report violations” was added to the “Health, Wellness, and Risk Management” competency. The result of this step was the Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competencies Draft 4. The content of this draft is what appears in the validation survey (see Appendix M).

Phase III Results

Survey Results and Data Integration to Create Final Draft

As described in Chapter 3, the Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competencies Draft 4 was converted into an online questionnaire (Appendix F). Respondents received
a copy of the *Roles and Responsibilities of Camp Counselors Final* and *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Model Draft 4*, so they would be able to have a similar framework to base their responses and also print out a version of the draft for reference while completing the questionnaire. They were asked to rate the importance of each competency overall and each key action on a five-point Likert-type scale (not important; slightly important; moderately important; very important; essential). A comments box provided opportunities to provide feedback on each competency and its key actions.

After cleaning up the list by removing duplicates or individuals who did not have the title of 4-H Educator, Program Coordinator, Program Assistant, or Specialist, an invitation to complete the survey was sent to a census of 156 4-H professionals identified by the state 4-H office. Eighty-five employees responded with a response rate of 54.4 percent. In order to learn about the non-respondents, I followed the recommendation from Ary et al. (2010) to compare respondents to the population on known characteristics. To attain the demographic information, I contacted Ohio State University Extension Human Resources and requested gender, years of service, and geographic location. After comparing the two groups, I discovered respondents closely mirrored the demographics of the total population in terms of gender and years of service. There were some noticeable differences related to the geographic location, but I did not feel it would critically make a difference in the results because each area was still represented in the respondents. As suggested by Ary et al. (2010), the data show the respondents closely resemble the population of interest, so it is reasonable to assume the nonrespondents also resemble the population. Therefore, further study of nonrespondents was deemed not
necessary. See Table 4.5 for comparison of respondents to known characteristics of the population.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Percentage of Population</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Males</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Females</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>81.2</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>82.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years in OSU Extension</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Percentage of Population</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-5 Years</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>27.0</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>29.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 Years</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 Years</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16-20 Years</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25 Years</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-30 Years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 &amp; Over</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>98.7</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>99.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographic Location (Extension Education Research Area)</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
<th>Percentage of Population</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Buckeye Hills</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camping Facility</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crossroads</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11.6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erie Basin</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heart of Ohio</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maumee Valley</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miami Valley</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio Valley</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Office</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Top of Ohio</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Reserve</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>99.3</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>99.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.*

Table 4.5 Comparison of Respondents to the Population on Known Characteristics

The purpose of this step was to circulate *Draft 4* to a wider group of employees to validate the competencies and key actions and to identify additional changes that might
need to be made. In general, the competencies and key actions were highly rated, validating each as a competency and the key actions as an important part of the corresponding competency. When asked to rate the importance of the 15 competencies overall, at least 99.9 percent of respondents rated each competency as moderately important, very important, or essential. At least 93.7 percent of respondents rated each competency as very important or essential. No competencies were rated as “not important.” Only one competency, *Child and Adolescent Development Knowledge*, was rated by 1.2 percent as being “slightly important.” However, this competency was one of the eight competencies that had a 50 percent or greater rating as “essential.” Overall competency ratings are summarized in Table 4.6 (illustrated in descending order based on the percentage in the essential column). The highest rated competencies, based on the percentage in the essential column are *Health Wellness and Risk Management*; *Supportive Relationships*; and *Professionalism*. The lowest rated competency, based on the percentage in the essential column is *Professional Development*. This is the only competency that received a “not important” rating. It is likely this is the lowest competency because it is a competency that is more beneficial as the counselor continues his or her growth and development over time and is not necessarily directly related to their specific role as a camp counselor.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Not important %</th>
<th>slightly important %</th>
<th>moderately important %</th>
<th>very important %</th>
<th>essential %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health, Wellness, and Risk Management</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>81.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Relationships</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>74.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>30.1</td>
<td>68.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Model</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>61.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork and Leadership</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>58.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child and Adolescent Development Knowledge</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>38.8</td>
<td>56.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking and Problem Solving</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>40.2</td>
<td>53.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Awareness</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>53.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>46.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Commitment</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>39.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Direction</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>38.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understands Organizational and Camp Environment</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>37.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Planning</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>62.7</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and Facilitating</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>30.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.*

*n=number of respondents*

Table 4.6 Level of Importance for Camp Counselor Competencies Ranked by Highest Percentage as Essential

Individual key actions were also highly rated. For key actions across all 15 competencies, at least 99.9 percent of respondents rated each key action as moderately
important, very important, or essential. At least 90.9 percent of respondents rated each key action as very important or essential. Importance ratings for key actions are summarized by competency in Table 4.7 through Table 4.21 (presented in descending order by percent ratings that key action as essential). Each table lists each of the key actions for a particular competency. The percentage is also included for how each key action was rated ranging from not important, slightly important, moderately important, very important, or essential.
### Table 4.7 Level of Importance for Each Key Action Describing the Child and Adolescent Development Knowledge Competency for Camp Counselors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Action</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Not important</th>
<th>slightly important</th>
<th>moderately important</th>
<th>very important</th>
<th>essential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plans activities and programs appropriate for camper ages, stages, and abilities and not counselor interests; adjusts the rules and objectives as needed.</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explains rules to campers to ensure an understanding of expectations and how it relates to camp.</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>51.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates awareness of various learning styles and camper needs related to ages of campers by engaging appropriately in conversation or regarding physical needs.</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td>43.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates awareness of different behavior management techniques by redirecting campers or managing situations.</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>42.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

*n* = number of respondents

Table 4.7 Level of Importance for Each Key Action Describing the *Child and Adolescent Development Knowledge* Competency for Camp Counselors
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Action</th>
<th>$n$</th>
<th>Not important</th>
<th>Slightly important</th>
<th>Moderately important</th>
<th>Very important</th>
<th>Essential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates effective listening skills; listens to others, shows interest in what they are saying, checks for understanding.</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>45.1</td>
<td>53.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addresses conflicts that may arise and resolves the issue by effectively communicating with others.</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>50.6</td>
<td>48.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speaks directly to individuals on their particular level.</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>48.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses nonverbal communication that is congruent with the intended message.</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>65.1</td>
<td>21.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses communication tools, methods, and attention grabbing techniques based on the situation and need of recipients.</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>19.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivers clear messages when speaking using appropriate inflection of tone, volume, and proper pause; captivates the audience when speaking.</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>66.3</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

$n$=number of respondents

Table 4.8 Level of Importance for Each Key Action Describing the *Communication* Competency for Camp Counselors
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Action</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Not important %</th>
<th>slightly important %</th>
<th>moderately important %</th>
<th>very important %</th>
<th>essential %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcomes others who are different with a positive attitude and makes sure all individuals are involved regardless what their difference is; makes adaptations to activities to include everyone.</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>72.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conveys respect for individuals who have different perspectives related to culture, religion, socioeconomic status, special needs, and opinions or ideas and embraces the differences.</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>62.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenges others if a bias is observed.</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td>31.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeks out individuals who have different backgrounds from themselves and expands their own awareness.</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>39.8</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.
n=number of respondents

Table 4.9 Level of Importance for Each Key Action Describing the Cultural Awareness Competency for Camp Counselors
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Action</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Not important %</th>
<th>slightly important %</th>
<th>moderately important %</th>
<th>very important %</th>
<th>essential %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Addresses safety issues or threats that may arise by preparing the</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>80.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>environment for safe success; keeps camper safety at the forefront of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>their mind.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has an understanding of safety protocols and what to do in an emergency</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>78.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>situation; reacts to the situation according to these protocols.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knows when to seek help and report violations.</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>75.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizes the seriousness of an event, behavior, or action and calmly</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>74.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and appropriately reacts to the situation.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

*n* = number of respondents

Table 4.10 Level of Importance for Each Key Action Describing the *Health, Wellness, and Risk Management* Competency for Camp Counselors
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Action</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Not important %</th>
<th>Slightly important %</th>
<th>Moderately important %</th>
<th>Very important %</th>
<th>Essential %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Makes every decision with the best interest of the campers in mind,</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>65.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>creates an environment for the campers to enjoy, and puts the campers’</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>needs first.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a positive outlook on camp, desires to work as a team to have a</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>41.5</td>
<td>56.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>positive impact on the program.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attends trainings and planning meetings, spends extra time preparing</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>44.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for camp, and is engaged in all aspects of camp, not just what one likes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes camp a priority.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note*: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

\( n \) = number of respondents

Table 4.11 Level of Importance for Each Key Action Describing the *Personal Commitment* Competency for Camp Counselors
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Action</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Not important %</th>
<th>slightly important %</th>
<th>moderately important %</th>
<th>Very important %</th>
<th>essential %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluates self and understands why some things did or did not work.</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>13.3</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makes a connection between being a counselor and later when applying for</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>24.4</td>
<td>51.2</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>college or jobs and develops the skills that will assist in performing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>well (e.g. completing application, interviewing, reflection).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeks and employs critiques and performance feedback from peers and staff</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>25.3</td>
<td>51.8</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>members.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeks out opportunities and extra training to directly impact and enhance</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>48.2</td>
<td>14.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>their role in the camping program; sets goals and pushes themselves to</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>learn something new.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

n=number of respondents

Table 4.12 Level of Importance for Each Key Action Describing the Professional Development Competency for Camp Counselors
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Action</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>not important %</th>
<th>slightly important %</th>
<th>moderately important %</th>
<th>very important %</th>
<th>essential %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Maintains confidentiality regarding medical needs, special conditions, or</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>81.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>incidents that may arise.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treats others with respect; is inclusive of all individuals.</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>76.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates appropriate language, actions, and behaviors while at camp</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>59.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and also outside of camp (school, church, fair, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrates maturity by differentiating between being a camper and a</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>43.4</td>
<td>54.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>counselor; does not get defensive when their ideas are challenged.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does what needs to be done with a positive attitude and is prepared for</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>47.6</td>
<td>51.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>activities and events.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaged with campers, counselors, and staff members.</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>48.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adjusts roles willingly if plans change.</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>56.6</td>
<td>37.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

n=number of respondents

Table 4.13 Level of Importance for Each Key Action Describing the Professionalism Competency for Camp Counselors
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Action</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>not important %</th>
<th>slightly important %</th>
<th>moderately important %</th>
<th>very important %</th>
<th>essential %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Works to plan and create program with a team and includes resource people as needed.</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>57.8</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thoughtfully plans lessons, generating and understanding a detailed list of steps while keeping in mind the ages of campers, available location and timeframe, and the finances and resources needed while relating activities to the goals of camp.</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>54.9</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributes meaningfully to committees, brings ideas and voices opinions when planning events.</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>16.9</td>
<td>59.0</td>
<td>22.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generates ideas that are new or creative but incorporates an educational component to the activity or program.</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>20.5</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>10.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

n=number of respondents

Table 4.14 Level of Importance for Each Key Action Describing the Program Planning Competency for Camp Counselors
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Action</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>not important %</th>
<th>slightly important %</th>
<th>moderately important %</th>
<th>very important %</th>
<th>essential %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is engaged and shows respect for all persons, places, and things.</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>72.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leads by example and has fun while following the camp rules.</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>67.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintains positive image and acts appropriately in all areas of life (online, school, church, sports, etc.).</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>47.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betters others around them by giving credit to peers or staff and enabling campers to succeed.</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>61.0</td>
<td>32.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

*n*=number of respondents

Table 4.15 Level of Importance for Each Key Action Describing the *Role Model* Competency for Camp Counselors
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Action</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>not important %</th>
<th>slightly important %</th>
<th>moderately important %</th>
<th>very important %</th>
<th>essential %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performs with minimal supervision or direction and follows through on</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>53.1</td>
<td>39.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assignments or tasks without being reminded.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes initiative to generate ideas or play games during transition or</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>54.3</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>down time; includes teachable moments as they arise.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is willing to take ownership for successes and failures; works</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>31.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>toward achieving group (and not individuals) success.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is prepared to lead an activity but changes plans if needed.</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>62.2</td>
<td>30.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifies what needs to be accomplished and takes action before being</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>asked; looks into the future to prepare the setting.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.  
*n* = number of respondents  

Table 4.16 Level of Importance for Each Key Action Describing the *Self-Direction* Competency for Camp Counselors
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Action</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>not important</th>
<th>slightly important</th>
<th>moderately important</th>
<th>very important</th>
<th>essential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creates a welcoming environment for campers and their parents; makes them feel like they are special.</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>69.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attentive to the needs of others (e.g. illness, preparation for activities, accident) and treats them as they would like to be treated.</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>36.6</td>
<td>62.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses empathy to read others (e.g. homesick, struggling, not included); acts accordingly to engage them.</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>46.3</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

*n* = number of respondents

Table 4.17 Level of Importance for Each Key Action Describing the *Supportive Relationships* Competency for Camp Counselors
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Action</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>not important</th>
<th>slightly important</th>
<th>moderately important</th>
<th>very important</th>
<th>essential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is enthusiastic while encouraging youth, regardless of what the task may be.</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>41.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involves all youth in activities through motivation or guided direction while creating a fun and engaging environment.</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>37.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Takes time to practice and prepare before leading an activity or session and is willing to research ideas as needed but is able to be spontaneous and alter plans as needed.</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>57.3</td>
<td>34.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employs a variety of teaching methods including demonstration, visual, and hands on learning, and relates the activity to life outside of camp.</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>59.3</td>
<td>23.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

*n* = number of respondents

Table 4.18 Level of Importance for Each Key Action Describing the *Teaching and Facilitating* Competency for Camp Counselors
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Action</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>not important %</th>
<th>slightly important %</th>
<th>moderately important %</th>
<th>very important %</th>
<th>essential %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Develops constructive and cooperative working relationships with others.</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>52.4</td>
<td>43.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assumes the leadership role when appropriate but does not always need to</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>42.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>be in charge and allows others to lead.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive of other’s ideas and allows individuals to be in a leadership</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>53.7</td>
<td>39.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>role and assists them to be successful; shares the workload to provide</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opportunities for all individuals.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifies the strengths and weaknesses in the group and draws upon the</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>strengths to achieve a common goal.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.*

n=number of respondents

*a This key action does not have data because the key action was left off the survey. See below for further discussion on whether or not to include this key action in the final competency model.

Table 4.19 Level of Importance for Each Key Action Describing the *Teamwork and Leadership* Competency for Camp Counselors
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Action</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>not important %</th>
<th>slightly important %</th>
<th>moderately important %</th>
<th>very important %</th>
<th>essential %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employs sound judgment when faced with confrontation, potential breaking of rules, and strives to ensure fairness of all participants.</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>60.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifies potential problems before they occur and takes action to prevent or handle the threat; works with others to solve problems if needed.</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>49.4</td>
<td>43.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflects upon performance, experience, and activities and alters ideas as needed.</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>20.7</td>
<td>56.1</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses creativity to plan activities or solve problems and is not afraid to plan something (e.g., theme, event, game) that has never been conducted before.</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>67.1</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

*n* = number of respondents

Table 4.20 Level of Importance for Each Key Action Describing the *Thinking and Problem Solving* Competency for Camp Counselors
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Action</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>very important</th>
<th>moderately important</th>
<th>slightly important</th>
<th>not important</th>
<th>essential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is focused on their job as a counselor.</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
<td>67.9%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has a basic understanding of the rules and what is acceptable and is willing to explain and follow the rules, even if they do not agree with them.</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>40.0%</td>
<td>58.8%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understands that camp is a special place and can make a difference in a child’s life.</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>39.0%</td>
<td>53.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identifies needs of self and campers and learns what is expected of them; generates new ideas suitable for the camp environment.</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>64.6%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understands the philosophy and why and how a 4-H camp is conducted and the outcomes that arise for the campers.</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>58.5%</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Percentages may not sum to 100 due to rounding.

n=number of respondents

Open-ended comments were analyzed next. A total of 62 open-ended comments were collected for competencies and individual key actions. All comments were coded into three major themes: (a) comments indicating support for a competency or key action, (b) comments suggesting changes, and (c) reason for the response. The reason for the
responses allowed for a better understanding regarding why the competencies and key actions were rated the way they were, therefore these themes are not discussed here. Supportive comments confirmed the ratings reported above and added to the validity of the competencies and key actions. Representative examples of supportive comments for the Child and Adolescent Development Knowledge competency and it’s key actions are reported in Table 4.22.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Many adults need this competency!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• My BS is in Human Development and Family studies, so I think it is all very important to know ages and stages and behavior techniques</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• This is an important concept especially as the range of cognitive and physical needs and behaviors range from very low to high.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.22 Representative Examples of Supportive Comments Coded for Child and Adolescent Development Knowledge

Comments suggesting changes were the focus of analysis for use in data integration. These comments generally were suggestions for changes to wording or requests to clarify language. Table 4.23 provides representative examples of comments coded as “change” for the comments related to the Cultural Awareness competency and its key actions.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Coding</th>
<th>Suggestion</th>
<th>Action Taken</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Challenges others   | • They don't need to challenge others when bias is observed but they do need to address the situation. This maybe with the help of an adult.  
  • To challenge other just because a bias is observed, may not be in the best interest of the situation. It would depend, is this something that is openly and belligerently being done, or is it something that quickly passed and was unintentional. If unintentional, it may be something to talk quietly to the individual about, or it may be just as well to see if it is a continuous problem before talking with the individual. If it is a very open and blatant problem, then it should be challenged or addressed openly. | Changed the key action to be “Address the situation if a bias is observed” instead of “challenges others” |
| Conveys respect     | • First Key Action: 'embraces' the differences may be too much to expect/build into this competency for teens. Acknowledges or respectfully acknowledges may be as good as it gets....  
  • The "respect for" statement is good but I think the issue of sexual orientation might need to be more apparent in the statement. It is suggest[ed] in "opinions and ideas" but doesn't specifically address it. It's something we talk about with our counselors but it may be worth mentioning in the competencies.  
  • Unclear of exactly what question 2 was asking. I saw it as making sure everyone is validated and respected/tolerated no matter what background or history they carry. Acknowledge and respect the individual. No advocating or flaunting one lifestyle, belief or personal bias over another one. Everyone goes in equal and can agree to disagree but not let it get in the way of the activity. | Added “sexual orientation” to the key action, so it reads, “Conveys respect for individuals who have different perspectives related to culture, religion, socioeconomic status, special needs, sexual orientation, and opinions or ideas and embraces the differences.” |
Responses to a final open-ended prompt asking if there were any other final comments or suggestions about the competency model were reviewed and categorized into three major themes: (a) support; (b) formatting; and (c) reason. Most of the comments in this final question indicated overall support of the model or the process. Representative examples of overall supportive comments include:

“I think this is great! It’s nice to have a compact ‘outline’ of what is needed for our teens to be trained by and gain leadership experiences through.”

“I think this model does a thorough job of outlining the competencies that are needed to be an effective camp counselor. I felt unable to rate anything as non-essential; as I read through the competencies and key actions, I really felt that everyone was very important and exactly what you would look for in the ideal counselor.”

“Excellent. All are equally important. Individuals will excel at some but be challenged by other skills. The combination of respect, knowledge, and willingness to strive to the same goal of empowering campers is what it is all about. Thank you for your work.”

“This is an absolutely wonderful tool and [I] can’t wait to have it in my teaching arsenal!”

Other supportive comments indicated the future use of the model and what could be added to it regarding counselor training or specific formatting. One participant said, “A very helpful survey when reflecting on training of camp counselors and camper’s needs. Would like to see this written into a training module for directors to use for training.” Another respondent commented, “Needs to be a usable document that guides what is taught in training sessions.” Finally, another participant said, “I love this and I am excited to use the finished product with my counselors! However, I am wondering if there is a way to make it more exciting. The graph works great, but maybe a little more creative formatting would make it more captivating.”
Data Integration to Create Draft 5

After examining the questionnaire data, including importance ratings and open-ended comments, the following criteria were established to identify individual competencies and key actions perceived as important by the questionnaire respondents. For competencies and key actions to be validated as important and retained in Draft 5 of the model, each item must be rated by at least 50 percent of respondents as very important or essential, with a concurrent requirement that each item may be rated by at least 90 percent of respondents as moderately important, very important, or essential. In setting these criteria, I drew from the literature and my judgment as a researcher.

I reasoned there should be little doubt regarding the importance of the item for it to be included in Draft 5 of the model. By requiring 50 percent of respondents to rate the item as very important or essential, the item’s importance would be indicated. In addition, I reasoned that an item that 10 percent or more of the respondents rated as not important or slightly important would suggest doubt as to the importance of the item. In turn, the requirement to have an item to be rated by at least 90 percent as moderately important, very important, or essential was used when determining whether or not the item would be included in the Draft 5 of the model. These criteria align with criteria used by other competency researchers (Bernthal et al., 2004; Cochran, 2009).

Based on the criteria described above, importance ratings for competencies (Table 4.6) and individual ratings for key actions (Table 4.7 through Table 4.21) validated the importance of each, therefore none was dropped as a result of these ratings. Items meeting the criteria were generally supported in the literature and received few, if any, negative comments from survey respondents.
Open-ended comments described above were analyzed with a focus on comments coded as *support* and *change*. Changes suggested or concerns mentioned were considered when creating the *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Model Draft 5*. The revisions made addressed problems with clarity or other concerns. When making decisions, attention was given to whether changes were mentioned by multiple respondents and to my judgment as a researcher about alignment with prior data collected and existing competency research, and whether suggested changes would alter the nature of the model. When analyzing the data, I realized I neglected to include the key action, "Identifies the strengths and weaknesses in the group and draws upon the strengths to achieve a common goal" under the *Teamwork and Leadership* competency. There was not a mention that this component was missing from the key action in the comments section of the competency. I decided to email the Camping Design Team and state 4-H administrators for their input regarding whether or not it should be included in the final model. The result of this data integration phase was the *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Model Draft 5* that was used in Phase IV.

**Phase IV Results**

**Camping Design Team and State 4-H Administration Review**

As described in Chapter 3, the *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Model Draft 5* was reviewed by Ohio 4-H administrators and members of the Camping Design Team as a final cross-check. Both groups received an email with the draft and specific questions to consider as they reviewed the information in a time convenient for them. They were able to provide final reactions and give additional suggestions. Specifically,
they were asked to make sure the language was clear and that the model would be an effective communication tool.

In addition, they were asked to review the key action that was missed from the survey and determine if they thought it should be included in the final model or not. Six (of 13) members of the Camping Design Team responded and five of them thought the key action should remain in the model. The sixth person indicated he did not think it was necessary to have it included in the model, but he did not feel strongly about it. These individuals also provided comments related to improving clarity of the competencies or their key actions. One of the two state 4-H administrators responded to the request and provided feedback regarding formatting and word choices in the model. This administrator also agreed the missing key action should be included in the final competency model.

**Peer Review**

The final peer review was conducted. My peer reviewer agreed with asking the Camping Design Team members and state 4-H administration for their feedback regarding the key action that was missing from the survey. In addition, she agreed with the coding system I used and the decisions I made to the model regarding the *Child and Adolescent Knowledge; Communication; Cultural Awareness; Health, Wellness, and Risk Management; Personal Commitment; Professionalism; and Program Management.* Some of these decisions involved clarifying key actions, while others split a key action into two separate points.

Regarding the *Understanding Organizational and Camp Environment,* she agreed with my decision to divide one of the key actions into two because they were separate
items. She also said she could see how there was confusion from some of the participants who completed the survey. One of the comments was how the portion of the definition “commitment to personal wellness” relates to the key actions generated. I re-evaluated this concept as I made my final modifications to the model. In addition to this key action, she suggested including a technology example to the sixth key action to help with clarification for the competency, so the key action would read, “Has a basic understanding of the rules and what is acceptable and is willing to explain and follow the rules, even if they do not agree with them (e.g., withdrawing from cell phones or other technologies).”

She wanted me to reevaluate the known characteristics by which I analyzed respondents in comparison to the entire population. I compared gender and years of service in Extension, as well as geographic location (Extension Education Research Area). She was not sure if the geographic location contributed to analyzing the data and having a different result. I reevaluated this information before making my final recommendation for what the model should look like.

**Final Integration of Model**

Using data collected from the member checks and peer review and referring to existing literature, a few minor changes were made to the model. Upon recommendation from the Camping Design Team and state 4-H administrators, I decided to keep the key action that was missing from the survey in the model. Only one individual expressed concern that it did not need to be included, but he stated he did not feel strongly about it. Because of his uncertainty and the recommendations from others to keep it as is, I decided it would stay in the model. One comment for support of keeping the key action
was, “That section would be missing an important element without it.” When evaluating other comments and suggestions for changes, attention was paid to changes that could be made while maintaining alignment with prior data collected and existing competency research. Examples of revisions made include:

(1) Changed the key action in *Child and Adolescent Knowledge* from “Plans activities and programs appropriate for camper ages, stages, and abilities and not counselor interests; adjusts the rules and objectives as needed” to include “for these activities.”

(2) Changed the key action in the *Supportive Relationships* competency to “Is empathetic toward others (e.g.…)” instead of “Uses empathy to read others…”

(3) Deleting the portion “commitment to personal wellness” from the definition of the *Understanding Organizational and Camp Environment* competency.

(4) Adding “(e.g. withdrawing from cell phones or other technologies)” to the key action “Has a basic understanding of the rules and what is acceptable and is willing to explain and follow the rules, even if they do not agree with them” under the *Understanding Organizational and Camp Environment Competency*.

After making these changes, I revisited them with my peer reviewer for one final check to ensure I interpreted comments from members of the Camping Design Team and state 4-H administrators correctly. The result of this data integration phase was the major finding of this research, the final *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competency Model*. This model includes 15 competencies, each with three to seven key actions illustrating the competency. The final *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competency Model* is presented in Figure 4.2.
Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competency Model

Background Information
This document was developed by using a variety of internal and external sources. For this research project, the focus is on developing a competency model that includes core competencies, a competency definition, and key actions for each.

Definitions
Some definitions are helpful before reviewing this information:

- **Competencies**—observable elements including the knowledge, individual skills, attitudes, and other characteristics that are associated with high performance.
- **Core competencies**—“the ‘demonstrated capacities’ that forms a foundation for high quality performance in the workplace”; this workplace may include campsites or camping programs in Ohio.
- **Competency title and definition**—a term and associated description of the knowledge, skills, abilities, and observable behaviors that represent the competency identified.
- **Key actions**—general descriptions of behaviors that illustrate a competency.

Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competencies
Initial research identified the following set of 15 competencies, presented in alphabetical order.

1) Child and Adolescent Development Knowledge
2) Communication
3) Cultural Awareness
4) Health, Wellness, and Risk Management
5) Personal Commitment
6) Professional Development
7) Professionalism
8) Program Planning
9) Role Model
10) Self-Directed
11) Supportive Relationships
12) Teaching and Facilitating
13) Teamwork and Leadership
14) Thinking and Problem Solving
15) Understands Organizational and Camp Environment

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Figure 4.2 Final Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competency Model Constructed in Phase IV continued
**Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competencies**

(These are not listed by importance)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| Child and Adolescent Development Knowledge | Understands youth and their needs, along with the ages and stages of youth development; has an understanding of behavior management techniques and guidelines; puts knowledge to practice. **Key actions**  
- Demonstrates awareness of various learning styles and camper needs and abilities related to ages of campers by engaging appropriately in conversation.  
- Demonstrates awareness of various physical needs and abilities of campers.  
- Plans activities and programs appropriate for camper ages, stages, and abilities and not counselor interests; adjusts the rules and objectives for these activities as needed.  
- Demonstrates awareness of different behavior management techniques by redirecting campers or managing situations calmly and confidentially.  
- Explains rules to campers to ensure an understanding of expectations and how it relates to camp. |
| Communication | Communicates effectively with others using a variety of methods including active listening, observation, direct conversation, and public speaking, in both individual and group settings; has conflict mediation skills. **Key actions**  
- Delivers clear messages when speaking using appropriate inflection of tone, volume, and proper pause; captivates the audience when speaking.  
- Uses nonverbal communication that is congruent with the intended message.  
- Speaks directly to individuals on their particular level.  
- Demonstrates effective listening skills; listens to others, shows interest in what they are saying; checks for understanding.  
- Uses communication tools, methods, and attention grabbing techniques based on the situation and need of recipients.  
- Addresses conflicts that may arise and resolves the issue by effectively communicating with others. |
### Figure 4.2 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Awareness</td>
<td>Understands and accepts differences in others; appreciates different talents; relates and connects with diverse groups of people including but not limited to various cultures, special needs and backgrounds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Key actions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Conveys respect for individuals who have different perspectives related to culture, religion, socioeconomic status, special needs, sexual orientation, and opinions or ideas; embraces the differences.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Address the situation if a bias is observed.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Seeks out individuals who have different backgrounds from themselves and expands their own awareness.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Welcomes others who are different with a positive attitude and makes sure all individuals are involved regardless what their difference is; makes adaptations to activities to include everyone.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health, Wellness, and Risk Management</th>
<th>Is watchful and knows what to look for regarding potential health and safety concerns and how to deal with and react to situations; has knowledge of emergency procedures and the protocol to take if they arise; has knowledge of how to manage their own stress, support the physical and emotional well-being of the camp community and basic first aid skills.</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Key actions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Addresses safety issues or threats that may arise by preparing the environment for safe success; keeps camper safety at the forefront of their mind.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Has an understanding of safety protocols and what to do in an emergency situation; reacts to the situation according to these protocols.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Recognizes the seriousness of an event, behavior, or action and calmly and appropriately reacts to the situation.</td>
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<td>• Knows when to seek help and report violations.</td>
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Figure 4.2 Continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal Commitment</td>
<td>Is committed to the philosophy and goals of camp and devotes themselves to the position; has a sense of selflessness; takes ownership and has “buy-in” to the influence and impact they have on the program.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Key actions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Makes every decision with the best interest of the campers in mind, creates an environment for the campers to enjoy, and puts the campers’ needs first.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Attends trainings and planning meetings, spends extra time preparing for camp and is engaged in all aspects of camp, not just what one likes; makes camp a priority.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Has a positive outlook on camp, desires to work as a team to have a positive impact on the program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>Has a willingness to be coached and challenged; accepts feedback and guidance from adults and peers; seeks opportunities to continually improve knowledge, skills, and capabilities; develops job-seeking skills (including completion of an application, references, screening, and selection process).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Key actions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Seeks and utilizes critiques and performance feedback from peers and staff members.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Evaluates self and understands why some things did or did not work.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Makes a connection between being a counselor and later when applying for college or jobs and develops the skills that will assist in performing well (e.g., completing application, interviewing, reflection).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Seeks out opportunities and extra training to directly impact and enhance their role in the camping program; sets goals and pushes themselves to learn something new.</td>
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continued
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Key actions</th>
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</table>
| Professionalism | Demonstrates behaviors that reflect high levels of maturity, responsibility, flexibility and adaptability, honesty and trustworthiness; has an appropriate sense of humor; has a positive attitude; energetically shares knowledge; avoids a sense of entitlement; is engaged and respects people and things; demonstrates customer service and maintains confidentiality. | • Demonstrates maturity by differentiating between being a camper and a counselor; does not get defensive when their ideas are challenged.  
• Demonstrates appropriate language, actions, and behaviors while at camp and also outside of camp (school, church, fair, etc.).  
• Adjusts roles willingly if plans change.  
• Maintains confidentiality regarding medical needs, special conditions, or incidents that may arise.  
• Engaged with campers, counselors, and staff members.  
• Treats others with respect; is inclusive of all individuals.  
• Does what needs to be done with a positive attitude and is prepared for activities and events. |
| Program Planning| Designs, creates, and plans for appropriate programs and workshops to engage all participants; is prepared to implement these programs.                                                                   | • Contributes meaningfully to committees, brings ideas, and voices opinions when planning events.  
• Generates ideas that are new or creative but incorporates an educational component to these activities or programs.  
• Thoughtfully plans lessons, generating and understanding a detailed list of steps while keeping in mind the ages of campers, available location and timeframe, and the finances and resources needed while relating activities to the goals of camp.  
• Works to plan and create program with a team and includes resource people as needed. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role Model</td>
<td>Is someone who others aspire to be like; models, demonstrates, and teaches positive values; has fun in a positive and responsible way.</td>
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<td><strong>Key actions</strong></td>
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<td>• Maintains positive image and acts appropriately in all areas of life (online, school, church, sports, etc.).</td>
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<td>• Betters others around them by giving credit to peers or staff and enabling campers to succeed.</td>
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<td>• Leads by example and has fun while following the camp rules.</td>
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<td>• Is engaged and shows respect for all persons, places, and things.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Direction</td>
<td>Takes initiative and does things from start to finish with all the details and without being asked; works unsupervised; admits and recognizes mistakes when they are made.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Key actions</strong></td>
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<td>• Identifies what needs to be accomplished and takes action before being asked; looks into the future to prepare the setting.</td>
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<td>• Takes initiative to generate ideas or play games during transition or down time; includes teachable moments as they arise.</td>
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<td>• Is prepared to lead an activity but changes plans if needed.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Performs with minimal supervision or direction and follows through on assignments or tasks without being reminded.</td>
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<td>• Is willing to take ownership for successes and failures; works toward achieving group (and not individuals’) success.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Competency</td>
<td>Definition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supportive Relationships</td>
<td>Is accepting and empathetic toward others, caring and kind, and responsive to needs; creates a welcoming environment and puts campers first.</td>
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<td><strong>Key actions</strong></td>
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<td>• Attentive to the needs of others (e.g., illness, preparation for activities, accident) and treats them as they would like to be treated.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Is empathetic toward others (e.g., homesick, struggling, not included): acts accordingly to engage them.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Creates a welcoming environment for campers and their parents; makes them feel like they are special.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and Facilitating</td>
<td>Teaches and leads activities with ease; interacts with, engages and motivates children; facilitates hands-on or experiential learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Key actions</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Involves all youth in activities through motivation or guided direction while creating a fun and engaging environment.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Is enthusiastic while encouraging youth, regardless of what the task may be.</td>
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<td>• Takes time to practice and prepare before leading an activity or session and is willing to research ideas as needed but is able to be spontaneous and alter plans as needed.</td>
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<td>• Employs a variety of teaching methods including demonstration, visual, and hands-on learning; relates the activity to life outside of camp.</td>
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**Figure 4.2 Continued**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Key actions</th>
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</table>
| Teamwork and Leadership          | Effectively participates and works as a member of a team; is supportive of peers and other staff; is approachable and has organizational skills, the ability to lead or follow, and sees the “big picture” or goals of camp; understands and follows directions; serves in a supervisory role.                                                                                       | • Supportive of others’ ideas and allows individuals to be in a leadership role and assists them to be successful; shares the workload to provide opportunities for all individuals.  
• Identifies the strengths and weaknesses in the group and draws upon the strengths to achieve a common goal.  
• Assumes the leadership role when appropriate but does not always need to be in charge and allows others to lead.  
• Develops constructive and cooperative working relationships with others.                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Thinking and Problem Solving    | Acquires information and uses thinking skills including creativity and critical thinking to prevent and solve problems; exercises fairness and moral integrity and makes sound judgments; anticipates consequences of actions.                                                                                                           | • Identifies potential problems before they occur and takes action to prevent or handle the threat; works with others to solve problems if needed.  
• Uses creativity to plan activities or solve problems and is not afraid to plan something (e.g., theme, event, game) that has never been conducted before.  
• Reflects upon performance, experience, and activities; alters ideas as needed.  
• Employs sound judgment when faced with confrontation or potential breaking of rules; strives to ensure fairness for all participants.                                                                                                          |
Figure 4.2 Continued

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understands Organizational and Camp Environment</td>
<td>Understands the 4-H organization and philosophy; has a sense of community and citizenship within the camping program; is knowledgeable about whatever content area (nature, technology, horse, etc.) that is the focus of the camp; lives within the camp routine.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key actions**

- Identifies needs of self and campers and learns what is expected of them.
- Understands that camp is a special place and can make a difference in a child’s life.
- Is focused on the job as a counselor.
- Understands the philosophy, purpose, and desired outcomes of the 4-H camp experience.
- Has a basic understanding of the rules and what is acceptable and is willing to explain and follow the rules, even if they do not agree with them (e.g., withdrawing from cell phones or other technologies).
Summary

The results in Chapter 4 were organized by the four phases in this research. Results from each phase and steps within that phase documented an approach using multiple individuals and ideas to develop and validate a competency model. Results throughout the research process were used in multiple data integration steps to construct the drafts and final versions of *Roles and Responsibilities of Camp Counselors* and the *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competency Model*. A more detailed summary and discussion of findings is presented in Chapter 5.
Chapter 5: Discussion and Recommendations

As an aid to the reader, this chapter restates the research problem and provides an overview of the methodology used for the study. Results are summarized and then discussed in a more general sense than the discussion provided in Chapter 4 about results from each step that were used in subsequent steps. The discussion includes conclusions and researcher insights, including the relationship of this study to other competency research. The chapter concludes with recommendations for Ohio 4-H, implications for practice, and suggestions for further research.

Research Problem and Review of Methods

The purpose of this study was to develop and validate a competency model for 4-H camp counselors in the state of Ohio. Specific objectives included:

1. Identify and describe competencies required for 4-H camp counselors in Ohio to be highly effective when serving as camp counselors.

2. Construct a competency model that includes these core competencies, which includes describing what they look like in practice.

As explained in Chapter 3, the study reported here was designed using a mixed-methods approach with an emphasis on qualitative approaches including reviews of existing research and gathering data from employees through interviews and group processes. Peer debriefing and survey research were used to validate and further refine the results. The study was undertaken in the Ohio 4-H camping program with purposeful
sampling used to select various groups of employees for participation; they participated as members of the state 4-H administration, as members of the Camping Design Team, and as an Ohio 4-H professional. In addition, I used networking or snowball sampling to establish a pool of individuals to participate in the focus groups.

The research design included multiple cycles of data gathering, analysis, integration, and peer debriefing. The multiple-step process for this research included four phases (illustrated in Figure 3.1).

**Phase I**

A literature review was conducted on topics applicable to competencies and camp counselors. From these data, a draft of the *Roles and Responsibilities of Camp Counselors* was created. In addition, an interview was conducted with state 4-H administrators and a modified nominal group technique was used with Camping Design Team members. Along with gathering data related to competencies, individuals were identified who are knowledgeable about the camping program and would be asked to participate in one of the focus groups.

**Phase II**

After integrating the data to create the *Roles and Responsibilities of Camp Counselors Draft B* and the *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competency Draft 1* documents, a member check and peer review took place. Following the review, the *Roles and Responsibilities of Camp Counselor Final* was created, along with *Draft 2* of the competency model. These documents were used during the second group interview with state 4-H administrators and three separate focus groups. Then, using data from Phase I and new data (from state 4-H administrators and focus groups), the *Ohio 4-H Camp*
Counselor Core Competency Draft 3 was constructed. Camping Design Team members and my peer reviewer again reviewed information and provided feedback on competency definitions, the draft of the competency model, and data analysis.

**Phase III**

Following the review in Phase II, data were integrated and incorporated into the Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Model Draft 4. A questionnaire was developed using content from Draft 4. Ohio 4-H professionals were identified and completed the online questionnaire, which included importance ratings for competencies and key actions. Data from this questionnaire were analyzed and integrated to create the Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Model Draft 5.

**Phase IV**

Members of the Camping Design Team, state 4-H administrators, and my peer reviewer were asked to review Draft 5 of the model and provide feedback. This feedback was used to develop the final Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Model.

**Limitations**

Before discussing results and implications, it is important to mention the limitations of the study. The identified competencies are based on opinions of camping directors and 4-H professionals in Ohio, so the developed competency model is applicable only to Ohio 4-H camp counselors. In addition, the quality of the data and resulting model are limited by the information provided by the participants. Another limitation to the study is that the results of the study reflect the current roles and responsibilities of Ohio 4-H camp counselors. It is possible the roles and responsibilities of Ohio 4-H camp counselors will change over time, which would alter the desired
competencies needed for the counselors’ role. Because of this evolution, the competency model should be revisited and updated as the roles and responsibilities of camp counselors change.

The *Roles and Responsibilities of Camp Counselor* document had the potential to bias the end result of determining the camp counselor core competencies because it was shared prior to individuals’ participation in the study. However, the *Roles and Responsibilities of Camp Counselor* document was constructed based on previous literature and by input received from state 4-H administrators and members of the Camping Design Team, so several perspectives were considered when creating this document. It was intentional to share this document prior to participation in the study so the participants would have a common understanding and frame of reference when developing the competencies.

An additional limitation is the response rate for the survey. Even though the response rate was 54.4 percent, it did not get the opinions of the entire population, so it is possible those who did not respond would have rated the competencies differently. However, it is less of an issue with the outcome of the *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competency Model* because the respondents were representative of the entire population regarding gender and years of service as an Extension employee. So, it is reasonable to assume the nonrespondents resemble the respondents.

The data collection, analysis, and integration to construct the results were shaped by the researcher and research participants who contributed as members of the Camping Design Team, as state 4-H administrators, as individuals nominated to participate in a focus group, and as survey respondents. These categories were not mutually exclusive.
That is, some of the individuals had more than one opportunity to provide input and therefore some participants’ opinions may have received more weight. However, those who had multiple opportunities were the individuals who were considered experts in the camping field. Because the research only involved those professionals affiliated with the Ohio 4-H camping program, application of these findings is limited to the Ohio 4-H camping program. Although the competency model developed does have limited application in its entirety, the results presented below do suggest application of the findings beyond the Ohio 4-H camping program. This suggestion will be discussed below.

Summary of Results

Overall, the findings from this study are represented by two documents (Roles and Responsibilities of Ohio 4-H Camp Counselors (Figure 4.1) and Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Model (Figure 4.2), which were developed, refined, and validated using the multiple-step process summarized above. Results of each step were important because they were integrated to create draft documents and inform the next steps. Key results for each phase of the study are summarized below with a focus on the final results from Phase IV.

Phase I

Following a review of literature, 14 key points were identified and included in the Roles and Responsibilities of Camp Counselors Draft A document. This document was further refined after the interview with state 4-H administrators and a group session with Camping Design Team members. Following the interview and group session, a total of 68 potential competencies were generated. Fifty-five of these competencies received one
or more priority votes from the Camping Design Team members. In addition, 45 individuals were nominated to participate in focus groups. Of those individuals, 27 were asked to participate.

**Phase II**

The result from the first data synthesis and integration step in Phase II was *Roles and Responsibilities of Camp Counselors Draft B* and *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competency Model Draft 1*. A total of 16 key points were identified in the *Roles and Responsibilities Draft B* document (an addition of two). *Draft 1* of the competency model was an early version that was used to generate further data collection. It included 13 competencies and their respective supporting concepts. These documents were then reviewed by members of the Camping Design Team and my peer reviewer. Data from these reviews were integrated to construct *Roles and Responsibilities Final* and *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competency Model Draft 2*. The *Roles and Responsibilities* document was used as a frame of reference for subsequent phases of this research. *Draft 2* now contained 15 competencies (an addition of two) and continued to evolve throughout the research process.

Following data integration to create the *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competency Model Draft 2*, a second group interview was conducted with state 4-H administrators. In addition, a total of 20 employees participated in three focus group sessions. Both groups critiqued the content of the *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competency Model Draft 2* document. The focus groups also generated ideas for key actions. Major themes that emerged from focus group discussion included: (a) overall support for the model and interest in next steps related to application; (b) suggestions for
model format and structure; (c) specific supportive comments or suggestions for changes to individual competency titles or its supporting concepts; and (d) generating key actions to describe each of the competencies. Also during the focus groups, participants generated ideas to further define or describe the competencies. As a result of this process, 418 key actions, statements, or illustrations were categorized into 73 themes within the 15 competencies.

After analyzing data from the focus groups and interview, Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competencies Draft 3 was created. The same 15 competencies from Draft 2 were carried through to Draft 3 with minor changes to titles based on the data used in this step. The major change from Draft 2 to Draft 3 was the addition of the key actions for each of the competencies. Each competency ranged from having three to six key actions describing what the competency looked like when demonstrated by the camp counselor. Following a review from the Camping Design Team and my peer debriefer, Draft 4 was created. When developing this draft, most of the changes involved word choice and clarifying key actions. In addition, some of the key actions for the competencies were describing two or more different concepts and were divided into two separate key actions. The content of this draft is what appears in the validation survey.

Phase III

The Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competencies Draft 4 was used to develop a questionnaire that was sent to 156 4-H professionals. Eighty-five individuals responded, rating the importance of each competency and each key action on a five-point Likert-type scale. Survey respondents rated all 15 competencies highly; each competency was rated as very important or essential by at least 93.7 percent of respondents. Individual key
actions were also highly rated. Every key action across all competencies was rated as very important or essential by at least 90.9 percent of respondents. Based on these ratings, all competencies and key actions were retained as important. Open-ended comments were analyzed and used to clarify language or address other concerns while maintaining alignment with prior data collected. Survey data were integrated to construct the *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competencies Draft 5*.

### Phase IV

The *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competencies Draft 5* was reviewed by Ohio 4-H administrators, Camping Design Team, and my peer reviewer. Feedback provided during this process was used to make the final version of the competency model, leading to the construction of the *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Model*. Illustrated in Figure 4.2, this model contains operational definitions and 15 competencies listed alphabetically. The full model also includes a title, definition, and three to seven key actions for each competency.

### Discussion

#### Conclusion and Insights

The purpose of this study was to develop and validate a competency model for 4-H camp counselors in the state of Ohio, guided by two objectives: (a) identify and describing competencies required for 4-H camp counselors in Ohio to be highly effective when serving as camp counselors and (b) construct a competency model that includes these core competencies, which includes describing what they look like in practice. Based on a review of literature, my experience as a 4-H professional, and the research findings, the following conclusions related to the objectives of this study were reached:
(1) The *Roles and Responsibilities of Ohio 4-H Camp Counselors* document, constructed from a literature review and conversation with Camping Design Team members and state 4-H administrators, represents what the roles and responsibilities of 4-H camp counselors are in Ohio. The findings represented by this document were an important and necessary precursor in order to develop a competency model that was based on agreed upon roles and responsibilities of 4-H camp counselors in Ohio.

(2) There is a set of core competencies that are important for Ohio 4-H camp counselors. These competencies are named, defined, and described by the key actions in the *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competency Model*.

(3) The competency model that was developed represents organizational preferences; it is customized to the organization.

(4) The *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Model* has high face and content validity.

The following sections will elaborate on my insights regarding these conclusions in relation to the existing literature. This discussion will conclude with recommendations for the Ohio 4-H camping program, implications for practice, and suggestions for further research.

**Roles and Responsibilities Constructed**

The roles and responsibilities that were identified are multi-faceted and complex, which relates to those identified in other research (Johnson et al., 2011; Risch, 2012). In addition, counselors serve as a team member and interact with other staff members and counselors when planning and conducting camp, which aligns with Digby’s (2005)
research. Similar to Risch’s (2012) research, identified roles of camp counselors related to caring for children and being in an adult-like role (e.g., ensure campers’ health and hygiene, i.e., brushing teeth, eating meals, taking medication, etc.) and taking on programming roles where they serve as leaders and manage groups (e.g., serve in a leadership and teaching role to other counselors and serve on committees or other groups to plan programs at camp).

Along with reviewing literature around the roles of counselors, members of the Camping Design Team and state 4-H administrators provided insight. These individuals represent knowledge regarding a variety of campsites, are experts in the 4-H camping program, and know specific requirements of Ohio 4-H. By involving them in the process, it ensured that a complete set of roles and responsibilities was identified. Items the Camping Design Team shared that were not found in the literature includes marketing and promoting camp.

Developing the roles and responsibilities document was an important step, because it served as a foundation for the research reported here. By having this document, it ensured individuals who participated in the study had a similar frame of reference when determining what a high performing camp counselor was. In addition, it helped participants in the research think about competencies needed to enhance the skills for these roles.

**Core Competencies Were Named, Defined, and Described**

This research aligns with literature indicating that competency models should have 20 or fewer competencies (Marrelli et al., 2005). It also aligns with Pickett’s (1998) recommendation that the most critical areas of impact on performance should be
examined when creating the model. Because the purpose of using this competency model is as the basis for decisions such as selecting or terminating individuals, the recommendation by Rothwell and Lindholm (1999) to use the tailored approach was followed. Suggestions from several authors (Byham & Moyer, 2005; Cochran, 2009; Cochran, Chen, & Ferrari, 2011; Hartje et al., 2008; Marelli et al., 2005; Mirable, 1997) were also considered when designing the research study by using multiple methods including a literature review, interviews, group session, focus groups, and questionnaires.

As suggested by Marelli et al. (2005), to attain buy in from individuals in the organization, 4-H professionals were asked to participate in at least one phase of this research study. This enabled them to voice their opinion when developing the model and express concerns or words of encouragement. Prior to their participation, 4-H professionals were asked to review the *Roles and Responsibilities of Ohio 4-H Camp Counselors* document and use this when thinking about the competencies and their key actions. This was to ensure participants were thinking along similar lines regarding what the tasks of counselors are when planning and implementing camp. Research participants considered 4-H camp counselors from a multitude of 4-H camps (e.g., horse, technology, space) when developing ideas for the competency model.

For the model itself, the comprehensive approach described by Byham and Moyer (2005) that uses a paragraph definition and key actions that provide specific information how the competency is relevant to the particular role was used. Each competency has a definition and key actions to describe it. Because a process was used where specific competencies were constructed based on input from 4-H professionals, the competency titles and definitions do not exactly match those in existing research. However, the 15
competencies identified in this research are congruent with parts of the literature. For instance, nine of the competencies all had similar titles or meanings as competencies in previous literature (ACA, 2010; Astroth et al., 2004; Guerra and Bradshaw, 2008; National Collaboration for Youth, 2004; Starr et al., 2009). These competencies were (a) Child and Adolescent Knowledge; (b) Cultural Awareness, (c) Health, Wellness, and Risk Management; (d) Professional Development; (e) Professionalism; (f) Program Planning; (g) Role Model; (h) Supportive Relationships; and (i) Thinking and Problem Solving. Seven of the camp counselor competencies were closely aligned, but had slight variations in wording (e.g., Cultural Competence was changed to Cultural Awareness and Program Management was changed to Program Planning) based on recommendations from research participants.

Other competencies generated from this research are closely related to previous literature, but vary slightly. For instance, in this model, Communication stands alone as a competency and relates to counselors communicating with campers, peers, and staff members. However, other researchers (Astroth et al., 2004; National Collaboration for Youth, 2004; and Starr, Yohalem, & Gannett, 2009) included Communication with Youth as the competency, instead of encompassing the entire spectrum of communication with peers and superiors. Similarly, Understands Organizational and Camp Environment refers to having an understanding of the 4-H organization and whatever the particular content areas is, which may be related to nature, technology, horses, or other topics, but in other literature, the topic is Nature and Environment (ACA, 2010), which is more specific to being in the natural environment and having an appreciation for nature, or
simply Environment (Starr et al., 2009), which refers broadly to the environment created within the program.

There were additional core competencies found in the youth worker literature that were included in the Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Model as a supporting role, but are not one of the key components of it. For instance, having a moral system of belief is encompassed under the key actions for the Role Model and Professionalism competencies and supporting asset building in youth and youth empowerment is represented in the Teaching and Facilitating competency.

Some competencies presented in literature related to youth worker competencies were not included in this model. For instance, Curricula is a competency for youth workers (Starr et al., 2009). However, Ohio 4-H counselors focus more on program planning and teaching aspects of the program and not necessarily the development of curriculum to use in a camping program. In addition, the Program Management and Nutrition competencies are more relevant to adults who plan programs and have an influence on the menu and food offered at camps and also how the particular program is managed as a whole. Another competency found in the youth worker literature that is not represented in the model is Connecting with Families and Connecting with Communities. While the relationship with the campers is focused on in the model, the counselors are not necessarily required to interact with the community outside the camp setting. The competencies found in youth worker literature that were not included in this particular competency model typically relate to the role of the youth worker who has a greater responsibility over program management.
Similarly, some competencies from the American Camp Association (2010a) were not included in this model. Examples of these include Participant Observation, Assessment, and Evaluation; Business Management and Practices; Human Resources Management; and Site/Facility Management. These particular competencies relate to the specific campsites and how they are operated, including hiring employees and ensuring the campsites are safe, marketable, and are fiscally responsible. In Ohio, 4-H camp counselors are not charged with these tasks, which is why these particular competencies were not included in the model and why it was important to start with agreement on the roles and responsibilities of camp counselors.

When comparing the 21st century skills to the competency model that was developed, many of the 21st century skills are identified in the model in some way. For instance, being able to adapt to change is represented under the Professionalism competency, global awareness is aligned with Cultural Awareness, being critical thinkers and problem solvers and being creative and innovative are encompassed in the Thinking and Problem Solving competency. In addition, being able to interact appropriately with others is represented in the Supportive Relationships competency and being a collaborator is encompassed in the Teamwork and Leadership competency. A skill identified in the 21st century skills literature that was not identified in the competency model is computational thinking. It is likely this was not identified in the 4-H camp counselor competency model because a resident camp oftentimes is without technologies and strives to incorporate the natural setting. However, this skill could be encompassed under the Understands Organizational and Camp Environment if it the subject matter of the camp is technology related.
There were two competencies generated that were not found specifically in other literature. These are Personal Commitment and Self-Direction. Even though they are not specifically related to the literature, key actions are found in other components of the literature. For instance, a key action from Personal Commitment, “makes every decision with the best interest of the campers in mind, creates an environment for the campers to enjoy, and puts the campers’ needs first” is aligned with the competencies related to communication with youth and youth empowerment. The key action from Self-Direction, “identifies what needs to be accomplished and takes action before being asked; looks into the future to prepare the setting” aligns with the competency related to decision-making skills.

In addition, the model identified the ideal spot in the conceptual model (Figure 2.1) where competencies available and those needed for a quality program overlap. By identifying these competencies, the individuals who train camp counselors are able to have insight regarding what previous experiences and other key factors should be considered when selecting camp counselors and focus their training efforts. The counselor skills and attributes can be enhanced so they can continue contributing to the quality of the camping program.

As mentioned, the process for developing this camp counselor competency model is based on recommendations from several authors, including using multiple methods to collect data (Byham & Moyer, 2005; Cochran, 2009; Cochran, Chen, & Ferrari, 2011; Hartje et al., 2008; Marelli et al., 2005; Mirable, 1997). 4-H professionals who work directly with teen 4-H camp counselors were involved in the research process and identified the competencies and their key actions. The identified competencies for camp
counselors align with those related to camp professionals (American Camp Association, 2010a) and youth workers (Astroth et al., 2004; Starr et al., 2009; National Collaboration for Youth, 2004). Therefore, this study supports the concept of core competencies as a valid one, particularly in a state 4-H camping program.

**The Competency Model Reflects Organizational Preferences**

Researchers suggest that competency models need to be tailored to the unique needs and context of an organization (Rothwell and Lindholm, 1999), and Mirable (1997) noted the format of a competency model should be determined by the individuals who use it most. In this research study, 4-H professionals were asked to be participants, because they would have information about the areas that are necessary to provide a quality camping program for campers and could ensure that training is conducted in these areas. In addition, these individuals are knowledgeable about concerns and the current climate of safety and abuse, and also the responsibility the camping program has to ensure the safety of campers. In turn, findings from this research study reflect organizational preferences.

The research process included gathering information from state 4-H administrators and 4-H professionals throughout Ohio. Data from all of those sources as well as the literature were applied to decisions made throughout the modeling process. It is also important to note here that as a researcher who is also a 4-H professional and works with and trains camp counselors, my judgments influenced the model format and structure as it was developed. I included checks and balances to minimize the bias my involvement might have created.
One example of a decision about model structure that appeared to meet the needs of the organization was including the *understanding the 4-H program* component. Research participants thought this was important to include in the model to emphasize the importance of counselors having knowledge about the 4-H program. It is likely this particular item would not be listed as one of the important competencies in another type of camping program (e.g., scouts or YMCA), but is one that could be customized to meet the specific needs of other organizations that conduct camping programs.

In addition to generating ideas, 4-H professionals provided feedback to the format and structure of the competency model. When providing this information, they were asked to think about ensuring the model was user-friendly so it would be able to be implemented in the Ohio 4-H camping program. Items suggested include having white space in the document to allow for taking notes on each particular counselor and liking how it is formatted into an easy to read table with lines breaking the competencies apart. Participants also commented having the competencies listed in alphabetical order was appropriate because individuals may have different priorities about a particular competency. These priorities could differ based on needs of the campsite or preference of the camp director. Suggestions were given regarding how the model could be adapted in the future with more research by adding a column for listing curriculum or program materials that could be used to help teach each of the competencies. The findings reported in Chapter 4 and the brief description summarized above support the conclusion that the model developed in this research reflects organizational preferences. Other organizations may give prominence to other competencies because of specific needs to
their organization. This evidence is factored into the decision making process of developing this particular competency model.

**Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Model Validity**

Establishing validity is an important part of competency modeling. The methodology and specific research processes used in this study were conducive to building face and content validity because 4-H professionals were involved in identifying and describing the competencies. The way in which the model was constructed continually cycled back to individuals for feedback and refinement, which led to competency titles, definitions, and key actions that made sense to them. Research participants continually commented that this model would be useful. They talked about how they would use this model with their camp counselors to train and evaluate them, and also give them information for what an ideal counselor looked like. This refinement will continue as the model is used to update with evolving information related to the camping program.

Content validity was established through a validation survey where all 4-H professionals had the opportunity to rate the level of importance of the competencies and associated key actions. Comparison of the *Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competency Model* content to other competency models in the American Camp Association and youth worker literature also supports content validity.

Going along with the recommendation of other authors (Marrelli et al., 2005; Patterson et al., 2000), multiple methods were used when defining competencies to ensure a competency was not missed altogether. In this study, multiple groups of people (state 4-H administrators, Camping Design Team members, focus group participants, and
eventually, all 4-H professionals) had the opportunity to participate in one or more phases of the research. These participants were involved in interviews, group processes, and a survey to provide insight into various components of the model. Because these individuals devoted time and resources to contribute to this study, it is more likely they will use the developed model.

**Recommendations for Ohio 4-H**

The immediate focus of my recommendations is for the organization in which the study took place, specifically for how the Ohio 4-H camping program could use the research findings. Based on the findings of this study, a review of the literature, and my insights as a researcher, the following recommendations are offered to the Ohio 4-H camping program.

(1) Use the model developed. The model developed followed recommended practices to construct a competency model, and the resulting model appears to have high face and content validity.

(2) Plan for communication and education about the competencies and their use in the 4-H camping program. Communication and education was built into this research, and consequently a common understanding of competencies was developed among research participants. Ways to continue sharing this understanding could be accomplished by inviting 4-H professionals to attend workshops designed to share the model. In turn, the 4-H professionals will be able to educate their camp counselors on the model as it is adopted for use throughout the organization.
(3) Integrate competencies into counselor functions. 4-H camp directors can begin to integrate competencies into counselor training and evaluation as soon as possible to leverage the interest already built during this research. A competency assessment process is recommended as one of the first steps and could be integrated as part of the communication and education as recommended above.

(4) Develop counselor training materials based on the developed competencies to enhance counselor skills. These training materials can focus on one or more of the identified competencies. For instance, lessons can be developed to assist counselors to enhance their communication by giving them tips and pointers for what nonverbal cues should be given with the particular lesson or the types of questions they can ask to ensure they are listening to others and understanding the topic of discussion. To enhance the *Health, Wellness, and Risk Management* competency, a lesson can be developed that gives scenarios that may occur at camp where counselors act out and discuss possible risk factors that might arise at camp. Each competency could have a menu with multiple lessons to select from so the camp directors still have a choice in the training and education. Because there are 15 competencies, it would be at the discretion of the camp director what lesson could be used and in what order. It is likely this is dependent on the particular needs at the time and the setting where the training is taking place. The lesson plans would simply be a menu of choices to assist camp directors when training camp counselors. By identifying the desired competencies for camp counselors, the focus of training camp counselors has been identified. When training counselors specifically related to enhancing the competencies, counselors
will continue strengthening their skills, and ultimately campers will have a positive experience while at camp.

(5) Use the competency assessment to identify gaps in counselors’ performance and apply the information to the counselors’ future training. An assessment tool could be developed so 4-H professionals could assess counselors on the competencies and share the information with the counselors, so the counselors know the importance and meaning of attending the training meeting and monitoring the campers during the camping program.

(6) Continue to update the competency model as roles and responsibilities of camp counselors change and the needs of the camping program evolve. Just as cross-age teaching literature suggest the importance of equipping the tutors for success based on the needs of the program, 4-H professionals should equip camp counselors for success. The model should be assessed for its usefulness to ensure it is user-friendly and assists 4-H professionals with their camping programs.

**Implications for Practice**

This study has several implications for practice. Although this study focused on developing and validating a competency model for one organization, the findings and specific recommendations for the Ohio 4-H camping program mentioned above might be useful to other organizations planning to develop or refine a competency model. Even though the direct application of the research findings and recommendations may be limited to the Ohio 4-H camping program, there are broader implications for practice. These implications include:
(1) The nature of the research process described here is comprehensive, and it is aligned with many of the recommendations for practice in the competency modeling literature. The process was designed to address recommendations from the literature including: (a) focusing on core competencies, (b) customizing to the organization, (c) using triangulation through multiple sources and multiple types of information, and (d) involving 4-H professionals on all levels. Other organizations should follow similar processes when constructing competency models.

(2) Participation was particularly important. Involving 4-H professionals who work with camp counselors contributed to the quality of the data and this contribution will likely lead to greater acceptance, understanding, and use of the model. Identifying roles and responsibilities was valuable in helping to focus on what the particular roles of counselors are throughout the state, to ensure all parties were on the same page when evaluating the model. Other organizations that develop competency models should involve individuals who will actually be using the competency model to promote a greater acceptance, understanding, and use of the model.

(3) The process worked. The results from this study illustrate the usefulness of the methodology and the specific process used to identify and validate a competency model. Organizations who desire to construct a competency model can use a similar process to have useable and validated results.
(4) The process is replicable. Specific steps, questions, and rationale for the process are provided, so it could be used by other youth worker or camping organizations to create, update, or refine their competency models.

(5) The competencies identified are related to the skills workers need in the 21st century. Organizations that aspire to prepare youth workers for the workforce can use this competency model as a framework for developing their own competency models with similar items to enhance youth skills and abilities.

(6) The competency model can be used to enhance the quality of a camping program. The ideal spot where competencies available and those needed for a quality program overlap described in the conceptual model (Figure 2.1) are identified in the competency model. Because counselors play such a significant role in the quality of the camping program, camp directors can select counselors based on previous experience and attributes and can train counselors to enhance these competencies. In turn, the counselors can be prepared to provide a quality program for campers.

(7) The competency model extends the research base. Prior to conducting this study, a competency model had not been developed for teen camp counselors. This study can be the foundation for future studies of developing competency models for camp counselors in camp programs run by other organizations beyond 4-H throughout Ohio and even the United States. Researchers and camping professionals will be able to use the model as a springboard to enhance their own camping programs.
Further Studies

Based on the findings of this study, a review of the literature, and my insights as a researcher, the following recommendations are offered for further research.

(1) This study considered perspectives of 4-H professionals; they are the individuals who work directly with training camp counselors. Further investigations could be done from the 4-H counselor, camper, or parent of campers’ perspectives concerning what they perceive is a good camp counselor. It is possible they may have differing opinions regarding what the most important competencies are for a camp counselor to be successful.

(2) This study dealt specifically with the 4-H program in Ohio. In order to be able to generalize the competency model to other camping programs in Ohio (and even the nation), additional camping programs (e.g., YMCA, scouts, recreation, etc.) could conduct research on competency modeling. These programs differ from the 4-H program in how they conduct their camps related to the camp facilities, how staff members are hired, and the programs delivered at the campsites.

(3) This study specifically dealt with Ohio 4-H, a program that uses teen camp counselors and typically has county 4-H professionals responsible for implementing county camping programs. Other state 4-H programs have different camping models in place (e.g., four state campsites throughout the state versus fifteen local sites, using young adult counselors versus teen counselors). In order to generalize a model to the national 4-H program, research on competency modeling involving multiple states should be conducted in order to generalize the results of 4-H camp counselors to the entire nation.
(4) This model was developed for use with teen audiences who work with 4-H campers. It could be extended further to the adult staff or camp directors who work with the Ohio 4-H camping program. At least one group that participated in the study elaborated on how these competencies would also relate to the camp directors who facilitate the camping program.

Summary

The current study focused on developing and validating a competency model to use with Ohio 4-H camp counselors. These counselors have a multi-faceted role. They are volunteers who are supervising, leading, delivering, conducting, directing, and teaching a 4-H program for the campers who are learning and having the opportunity for positive youth development (McNeely, 2004). In addition, counselors make a large contribution to the success of a camping program. By identifying the counselor competencies, the necessary performance of effective individuals is identified, which has an impact on the outcome of an organization or program (McClelland, 1973).

The product of the research reported here was the Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competency Model, a model that identifies 15 core competencies, including definitions and key actions that further illustrate each. This study provided a competency model that will be used and further developed by those who developed it. This competency model can be used as a set of guidelines to assist in having a better counselor selection process, counselor training modules, and counselor evaluation.

The study also extends the body of knowledge by identifying a core competency model for 4-H camp counselors, this first such model to be developed. This model can be
used as a foundation when developing competency models related to other camping programs throughout the nation.
References


Appendix A: Letter of Support and IRB Approval

November 19, 2013

Office of Responsible Research Practices
Research Administration
1060 Kenny Road
Columbus, OH 43210

RE: Epley Research Proposal

To Whom It May Concern:

I am supportive of Hannah K. Epley’s research entitled “Defining and Describing Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competencies”. This study will include contacting Ohio 4-H professionals who are employees of Ohio State University Extension and involving them in interviews, focus groups, and other processes to collect data for this study.

Sincerely,

Thomas M. Archer, Ph.D.
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Office of Research
Office of Responsible Research Practices

Protocol Title: DEFINING AND DESCRIBING OHIO 4-H CAMP COUNSELOR CORE COMPETENCIES
Protocol Number: 2013E0565
Principal Investigator: Graham Cochran
Date of Determination: 12/20/2013
Qualifying Category: 02
Attachments: None

Dear Investigators,
The Office of Responsible Research Practices has determined the above referenced project exempt from IRB review. Please note the following:

- Retain a copy of this correspondence for your records.
- Only the OSU staff and students named on the application are approved as OSU investigators and/or key personnel for this study.
- No changes may be made to exempt research (e.g., personnel, recruitment procedures, advertisements, instruments, etc.). If changes are needed, a new application for exemption must be submitted for review and approval prior to implementing the changes.
- Per university requirements, all research-related records (e.g., application materials, letters of support, signed consent forms, etc.) must be retained and available for audit for a period of at least three years after the research has ended.
- It is the responsibility of the investigators to promptly report events that may represent unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.

This determination is issued under The Ohio State University’s OHRP Federalwide Assurance #00006378. All forms and procedures can be found on the ORRP website: www.orrp.osu.edu. Please feel free to contact the Office of Responsible Research Practices with any questions or concerns.

Cheri Pettay
Quality Improvement Specialist | Regulatory & Exempt Determinations
Office of Responsible Research Practices | The Ohio State University
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*Save paper; use IRB Submit to upload your IRB & Exemption submissions today!
Dear Investigators,

The Office of Responsible Research Practices has determined the above referenced project **exempt from IRB review**. Please note the following:

- Retain a copy of this correspondence for your records.
- Only the OSU staff and students named on the application are approved as OSU investigators and/or key personnel for this study.
- No changes may be made to exempt research (e.g., personnel, recruitment procedures, advertisements, instruments, etc.). If changes are needed, a new application for exemption must be submitted for review and approval prior to implementing the changes.
- Per university requirements, all research-related records (e.g., application materials, letters of support, signed consent forms, etc.) must be retained and available for audit for a period of at least three years after the research has ended.
- It is the responsibility of the investigators to promptly report events that may represent unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.

This determination is issued under The Ohio State University’s OHRP Federalwide Assurance #00006378. All forms and procedures can be found on the ORRP website: [www.orrp.osu.edu](http://www.orrp.osu.edu).

Please feel free to contact the Office of Responsible Research Practices with any questions or concerns.

**Cheri Pettet**
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Appendix B: Camping Design Team Recruitment Letter and Request for Focus Group Nominations

Initial Request for Participation

Dear Camping Design Team Members,

Currently, the Ohio 4-H program does not have a design or set of competencies in place for Ohio 4-H camp counselors. In order to identify the skills and competencies that camp counselors need to enable them to contribute to a quality camping experience, a model of core competencies needs to be determined. This will enable 4-H professionals to have an end goal of developing specific skills and competencies of 4-H camp counselors and have a safe and successful camping program. The model developed will contain descriptions and illustrations of core competencies. This is where I need your help. First, please read a little more about how we will be developing a competency model for Ohio 4-H camp counselors.

Research is needed to develop and validate a competency model for Ohio 4-H camp counselors. The model we develop will contain descriptions and illustrations of core competencies, basic knowledge, skills, attitudes, and observable behaviors that contribute to excellence in the workplace. The research will consist of multiple phases to review existing information and to gather input from key internal stakeholders and individuals from across the organization who work with these teen camp counselors. There will be opportunities for a number of individuals to be involved.

You are being asked to participate in this project because we think your input will help identify and describe competencies that Ohio 4-H camp counselors need to be successful now and in the future. You serve on the camping design team and also work with these teen camp counselors when planning and implementing your camp programs. Information you provide will be used to construct a competency model for Ohio 4-H camp counselors.

Specifically I am asking you to help with this project because you are serving as a member of the Camping Design Team. Composed of 8-15 individuals from throughout the organization, this team will guide the Ohio 4-H camp counselor competency study. Initially, I will ask the team to help with:

- reading and discussion to learn about youth worker competencies and American Camp Association competencies;
• reviewing information, generating ideas, and providing feedback on the roles and responsibilities of Ohio 4-H camp counselors
• brainstorming on core competencies and participating in group processes to review and refine lists, definitions and behavioral descriptions
• nominating of peers who are knowledgeable about the camping program and would have insight to further refining the competencies.

The initial time commitment is 2-3 work days (approximately 24 hours) over the course of three months. Most of your work can be done from your office by reviewing materials, participating in conference calls, and providing feedback when requested. We will also hold one face-to-face meeting towards the beginning of the project. Any travel-related expenses for participation will be paid by the earnings from the Patricia Kunz Brundige Youth Development Fund (#640898) held by OSU Development.

You are not required to participate in this project. If you agree to participate, you will be consenting that you will be a part of the activities outlined in the preceding paragraph for the research project. You will be given a chance to raise any questions regarding your involvement in the study.

The Principal Investigator for this project is Graham Cochran (614-688-4246 or cochrang.99@osu.edu). You may also contact me if you have any questions about the project by phone (740-653-5419 x19) or email (Epley.24@osu.edu). Please let me know by replying to this e-mail whether or not you are willing to be part of this research project.

Thank you for helping with this important project! I appreciate your time!

Hannah K. Epley
Extension Educator,
4-H Youth Development
Request for Focus Group Nominations

Dear Camping Design Team Members,

Thank you for agreeing to be a part of this research process to define and describe Ohio 4-H camp counselor competencies.

The first part of your involvement is nominating Ohio 4-H professionals you would consider to be knowledgeable about the Ohio 4-H camping program. For the purpose of this research process, these are individuals who: (a) work with camp counselors when training and implementing the camping program, (b) are knowledgeable about various aspects of what makes a successful camping program, and (c) people whose contributions extend or add value to the camping program or product. Please respond to this email with the names of these individuals who you would like to nominate by Friday, January 10, 2014.

The information you provide will be a valuable part of developing a competency model for Ohio 4-H camp counselors. The risks to your participation are minimal. Your nominations are confidential. Information you provide about work location and job title will only be shared when aggregated and describing the nature of who provided nominations. Names you provide will be combined with other nominations and data to develop a pool of employees for participating in various steps of the Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Study.

You are not required to participate in this project and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time. There is no penalty if you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study.

This research is being supported by the earnings from the Patricia Kunz Brundige Youth Development Fund (#640898) held by OSU Development. The Principal Investigator for this project is Graham Cochran (614-688-4246 or cochran.99@osu.edu). You may also contact me if you have any questions about the project by phone (740-653-5419 x19) or email (epley.24@osu.edu).

For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251.

I appreciate your time and contributions to this important project!

Hannah K. Epley
Extension Educator,
4-H Youth Development
Appendix C: State 4-H Administration Recruitment and Interview Questions

Request for Participation

Dear Ohio State 4-H Administrators,

Currently, the Ohio 4-H program does not have a design or set of competencies in place for Ohio 4-H camp counselors. In order to identify the skills and competencies that camp counselors need to enable them to contribute to a quality camping experience, a model of core competencies needs to be determined. This will enable 4-H professionals to have an end goal of developing specific skills and competencies of 4-H camp counselors and have a safe and successful camping program. The model developed will contain descriptions and illustrations of core competencies.

I have developed a proposal for conducting the research required to develop a competency model. You are being asked to participate in this project because you play a critical role as the Associate and State 4-H Leaders. Information you provide will be used to make initial decisions about definitions used in this study and to align research plans and competency model development with camping program culture and needs.

Specifically I am asking you to help with this study by reviewing materials and providing information through an interview, then follow-up sessions in person or via email. I will also be asking you to nominate 4-H professionals who are knowledgeable about the Ohio 4-H camping program to participate in focus groups.

You are not required to participate in this project. If you agree to participate, you will be consenting that you will be a part of the activities outlined in the preceding paragraph for the research project. You will be given a chance to raise any questions regarding your involvement in the study.

The Principal Investigator for this project is Graham Cochran (614-688-4246 or cochran.99@osu.edu). You may also contact me if you have any questions about the project by phone (740-653-5419 x19) or email (epley.24@osu.edu).

Please let me know by replying to this e-mail whether or not you agree to participate in this research project. Thank you for helping with this important project!
Hannah K. Epley  
Extension Educator,  
4-H Youth Development

**Phase I – Group Interview I with the State 4-H Administrators**

This interview(s) will be a discussion between the researcher and the state 4-H administrators, guided by these questions:

- You have had a chance to review the draft of the roles and responsibilities of camp counselors to be used in this study. It will be important for the roles and responsibilities I use to align with how OSU Extension and 4-H professionals view how teen 4-H camp counselors are used in the camping program. The purpose of creating this document is to have an agreed upon common framework for the counselors. Are there any of the roles that you have questions or concerns about? Suggestions for changes? Anything missing?
- What are your initial thoughts about the important competencies for Ohio 4-H camp counselors?
- One of the phases of the research process is conducting focus group interviews. In your opinion, what 4-H professionals do you believe are knowledgeable about the camping program and would have good insight to what would make a high performing camp counselor? For the purpose of this research process, these are individuals who: (a) work with camp counselors when training and implementing the camping program, (b) are knowledgeable about various aspects of what makes a successful camping program, and (c) people whose contributions extend or add value to the camping program or product.
- Are there any other thoughts or questions you had regarding the research process?

**Phase II – Group Interview II with Administrators**

After reviewing wording and content of the draft #2 of the competency model, state 4-H leaders were asked the following (general scope of questions):

- Do you think that these are representative of the competencies that high performing camp counselors exhibit?
- Are there any that are not clear or should be worded differently?
- Are there competencies included on this list that should be eliminated?
- Are there competencies that should be added?
Appendix D: Camping Design Team Group Session and Idea Generation
Worksheets

Phase I-Group Session with the Camping Design Team-Review of Camp Counselor Roles & Responsibilities and Competency Idea Generation

Supplies
Worksheets/individual response sheets with question, powerpoint presentation (laptop and projector), existing comp lists to review, pencils/pens, index cards, flip charts (for table top or stand, stand(s), markers, tape, scripts with consent information, agendas, session outline, digital recorders, extra batteries, good flip chart stand (s)

Agenda
9:30 a.m. Introduction & Powerpoint Presentation (20 min)
9:50 Round #1 Roles and Responsibilities (45 minutes)
10:35 Round #2 Competency idea generation (90 minutes)
12:05 Break-Lunch (Combine lists)
12:25 Round #3 Idea generation using existing literature (60 minutes)
1:25 Prioritize/Voting & Wrap Up
1:30 Finish and move to design team meeting

Lunch, Welcome, and Introductions
• Welcome
  o Read script with welcome and consent information
• Powerpoint presentation on the study and the participant role
  o I will be leading the group in a variety of group processes. We will have times when I’ll give you a question and ask you to generate a list of ideas on your own. Then, we’ll share ideas in a round-robin fashion to generate lists on a flip chart. Then we will have interactive discussion.
  o Important – have everyone participate fully = most successful day
  o During some of the activities, we will be recording the discussion. Please make sure you speak up with only one person speaking at a time.
  o Reminder that your contributions will be confidential
  o Intense day! Our session will last until 1:30 p.m. I will take some formal breaks but also feel free to get up, stand, get a drink, or use the restroom as needed.
  o For all of our discussions, there is no right or wrong answer. I am interested in all your ideas and comments. Please speak up even if you disagree with someone else.

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Purpose for the day

document so all participants have the same view of these roles.
2. Idea generation and initial prioritization of competencies needed for Ohio 4-H
teen camp counselors

How Information will get used

- Roles and Responsibilities - As a foundation for our competency modeling, we
need to develop a list of roles and responsibilities of Ohio 4-H camp counselors.
This will help participants (including you) in the research think about
competencies needed to enhance the skills for these roles.

- Competencies and descriptions – I will take this information and combine it with
other data to create an initial draft model that you will get to review. State 4-H
administration will also look at drafts of the model.

Round 1 (45 minutes)

Notes: Assistant moderator writes on flip chart, digital recorder for group discussion,
questions are listed on worksheet and powerpoint.

- Tell your name and how long you have been associated with the 4-H camping
program.
- You have had a chance to review the draft of the roles and responsibilities of
camp counselors to be used as the foundation in this study. It will be important for
these roles I use to align with how you view the use of counselors in the Ohio 4-H
program and use a language that makes sense to you as leaders in the camping
program. What are your initial reactions to this list of roles and responsibilities?
- Did these cover everything you think are important as the roles and
responsibilities? If not, what is missing?
- Is there anything that should not be included?
- Is there anything else you would like to tell me as I work on refining this draft of
the roles and responsibilities of camp counselors?

Round 2-Idea Generation (90 minutes total)

1. Introduce process and question(s) (5 min)

- Provide information on competency based information (worksheet reminder they
are taking notes). Include:
  o Remind how defining competency
  o Remind to think about discussion on roles and responsibilities of camp
counselors

Describe each idea in a few words or phrases. Don’t get hung up on wording. Work
independently. Ask for intense effort during this time! (Silent, using worksheet)
• What competencies contribute directly to the success of the camping program?
• What competencies constitute for a high performing counselor?
• What competencies contribute to camper outcomes while at camp?

2. Idea generation (20 min)

3. Record Ideas (40 min)
Assistant moderator writes on flip chart, digital recorder for group discussion. Record and number ideas, move as quickly as possible, record exactly.

Now I would like each of you to share your ideas with other members of the group. This is an important step because it will guide later discussion, show us the ideas we have generated, and stimulate additional ideas. I’ll go around the table asking for idea one at a time. Summarize in a few words or phrase. After the entire list is on the flip charts, we will have the opportunity to discuss, clarify, and dispute ideas.

• Round-robin, continue until all ideas are depleted
• Discourage discussion, encourage “hitchhiking” (expanding on another’s statement) – add notes to your worksheet if you get new ideas/thoughts.
• OK to pass; Won’t combine ideas at this point unless that are exactly the same.
• Duplicates – you can skip ideas that are exactly the same but please share anything that is different all. Slight variations will be important and will help us be creative.

4. Group discussion (25 min)

Now that we have listed ideas, I want to go back and have a discussion. I encourage you to ask questions or comment on any item, not just your own.

• Clarify wording, meaning of each item
• Discuss meaning/logic, other ideas
• Combine duplicates (or arrange similar ideas under a new heading if participants agree)
• Don’t discuss value or merit of ideas

Questions and comments about _______________
What do you mean by ________________
Give me an example of ________________

BREAK to combine duplicates or similar topics discussed.

Round 3-Idea Generation Using Existing Literature (60 minutes total)
Assistant moderator writes on flip chart, digital recorder for group discussion. Questions are listed on worksheet and powerpoint.

1. Ask if the combined items and topics are agreeable to the group. Alter any ideas that need to be changed.
2. Introduce process and question(s) (5 min)

I am giving you lists that are close to what I found—you can skim them and jot some notes about competencies they see on the lists that would be important for this model.

Upon completion of generating their own ideas, information will be shared with the group regarding the ACA core competencies and youth worker competencies literature.

Based on the lists you received:
- What competencies contribute directly to the success of the camping program?
- What competencies constitute for a high performing counselor?
- What competencies contribute to camper outcomes while at camp?

2. Idea generation (20 min)

3. Record Ideas and Discussion (40 min)

Now I would like to have each of you to share your ideas with other members of the group. This is an important step because it will guide later discussion, show us the ideas we have generated, and stimulate additional ideas. I’ll go around the table asking for one idea at a time. Summarize in a few words or phrases. After an idea is shared, ask for clarification or meaning of each item and combine duplicates (or arrange similar ideas under a new heading if participants agree).
- Round-robin, continue until all ideas are depleted
- Discourage discussion, encourage “hitchhicking” (expanding on another’s statement)-add notes to your worksheet if you get new ideas/thoughts.
- OK to pass; Won’t combine ideas at this point unless they are exactly the same
- Duplicates-you can skip ideas that are exactly the same but please share anything that is different at all. Slight variations will be important and will help us be creative.
- Clarify wording, meaning of each item
- Discuss meaning/logic, other ideas
- Combine duplicates (or arrange similar ideas under a new heading if participants agree)
- Don’t discuss value or merit of ideas

5. Prioritization (20 minutes)
Assistant moderator writes on flip chart, digital recorder for group discussion. Questions are listed on powerpoint.

Now that we have discussed the ideas, I would like your opinions on the most important, highest priority. Individuals ranking most important to least important will do this silently on index cards. Then, the cards will be collected and shuffled to retain anonymity. Votes were tallied and analyzed following the group session and sent out for a member check.
• What are the most important competencies of camp counselors that impact the Ohio 4-H camping program?

Wrap Up & Next Steps (5 minutes)
• Questions about the process today or final comments?
• Next steps: Information, including prioritization from flip charts will be typed up and I’ll share with the group to check for accuracy.
• Focus groups in January/February
• Thank you!
Idea Worksheet - Round #1 Group Session

Question
You have had a chance to review the draft of the roles and responsibilities of camp counselors to be used as the foundation in this study. It will be important for these roles I use to align with how you view the use of counselors in the Ohio 4-H program and use a language that makes sense to you as leaders in the camping program. What are your initial reactions to this list of roles and responsibilities?

- Did these cover everything you think are important as the roles and responsibilities? If not, what is missing?
- Is there anything that should not be included?
- Is there anything else you would like to tell me as I work on refining this draft of the roles and responsibilities of camp counselors?

NOTES
Idea Worksheet - Round #2 Group Session

Question
For this part of our session, I am interested in your ideas about what competencies are important for Ohio 4-H camp counselors. Please remember a competency is defined as “observable elements including the knowledge, individual skills, attitudes, and other characteristics that are associated with high performance”. Think about our discussion on roles and responsibilities of camp counselors when you generate these ideas.

- What competencies contribute directly to the success of the camping program?
- What competencies constitute for a high performing counselor?
- What competencies contribute to camper outcomes while at camp?

NOTES
Idea Worksheet - Round #3 Group Session

Question
Again, please remember a competency is defined as “observable elements including the knowledge, individual skills, attitudes, and other characteristics that are associated with high performance”. Think about our discussion on roles and responsibilities of camp counselors when you generate these ideas.

Based on the literature you reviewed regarding the ACA and youth worker competencies:

- What competencies contribute directly to the success of the camping program?
- What competencies constitute for a high performing counselor?
- What competencies contribute to camper outcomes while at camp?

NOTES
Appendix E: Focus Group Recruitment and Process

Recruitment Script to Potential Focus Group Participant

Dear 4-H Professional,

Currently, the Ohio 4-H program does not have a design or set of competencies in place for Ohio 4-H camp counselors. In order to identify the skills and competencies that camp counselors need to enable them to contribute to a quality camping experience, a model of core competencies needs to be determined. This will enable 4-H professionals to have an end goal of developing specific skills and competencies of 4-H camp counselors and have a safe and successful camping program. The model developed will contain descriptions and illustrations of core competencies. This is where I need your help. First, please read a little more about how we will be developing a competency model for Ohio 4-H camp counselors.

Research is needed to develop and validate a competency model for Ohio 4-H camp counselors. The model we develop will contain descriptions and illustrations of core competencies, basic knowledge, skills, attitudes, and observable behaviors that contribute to excellence in the workplace. The research will consist of multiple phases to review existing information and to gather input from key internal stakeholders and individuals from across the organization who work with these teen camp counselors. There will be opportunities for a number of individuals to be involved.

You are being asked to participate in this project because you have been identified as being knowledgeable about the Ohio 4-H camping program. Your peers and/or state 4-H administration have indicated that your knowledge would be beneficial to this research process. Therefore, we think your input will help identify and describe competencies that Ohio 4-H camp counselors need to be successful now and in the future. Information you provide will be used to construct a competency model for the Ohio 4-H camping program.

Specifically I am asking you to help with this study by participating in a focus group. Participation in the focus group would involve approximately 4 hours of your time on either January 28, January 29, or January 31, 2014. The focus groups will be from 12noon-4:00 p.m. and will be held at the Ohio 4-H Center. Participants will learn about youth worker competencies and American Camp Association competencies, have an opportunity to critique the content of a draft competency model, and brainstorm on behaviors that demonstrate the competencies in Ohio 4-H camp counselor work. Any
travel-related expenses for participation will be paid by the state 4-H office through the earnings from the Patricia Kunz Brundige Youth Development Fund (#640898) held by OSU Development.

You are not required to participate in this project. If you agree to participate in a focus group, I will give you a chance to raise any questions. Please respond to this email if you are 1) willing/able to participate and 2) if so, the date(s) you are available. I will then send additional information to you. Your response is requested by Friday, January 17, 2014.

The Principal Investigator for this project is Graham Cochran (614-688-4246 or cochrang.99@osu.edu). You may also contact me if you have any questions about the project by phone (740-653-5419 x19) or email (epley.24@osu.edu). Please reply to this e-mail to let me know whether or not you are willing to participate in this research.

For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251.

I appreciate your time and contributions to this important project!

Hannah K. Epley
Extension Educator,
4-H Youth Development

Focus Group Process

Supplies
Worksheets/individual response sheets, powerpoint presentation (laptop and projector), session outline (2 copies) handouts (agenda, existing comp lists to review, Draft 2 Competencies, Roles & Responsibilities, travel reimbursement) pencils/pens, post it notes, flip charts (for table top or stand, stand(s), markers, name tents, tape (masking, scotch, painters), scripts with consent information, digital recorders, extra batteries, good flip chart stand (s)

Agenda
11:45 a.m. Welcome, Lunch, and Introductions
    Powerpoint Presentation with Background Information
12:30 Review Draft #2 Competency Model
1:00 Round 1-Group Interview
2:15 Round 2-Idea Generation-Key Actions
3:30 Safe journey home
Information and Ground Rules

- Welcome
  - Read script with welcome and consent information
- Powerpoint presentation on the study and the participant role
  - Provide information on competency based information
  - Review Roles and Responsibilities of Camp Counselors Final Draft
  - Looking for their expertise and knowledge in working with camp counselors
  - Reminder I will be using ideas and will be recording the conversation. Please make sure to speak up and have only one person speak at a time.
  - Must participate fully and have a successful day
  - Contributions to the research will be kept confidential
  - Confidentiality for the group – what we say here stays here
  - There is not a ‘right’ or ‘wrong answer. I am interested in all ideas and comments. Please speak up if you disagree with someone else.
  - Questions about the process?

I have passed out Draft #2 of the Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Model. This is a draft that will continue to evolve based on your input and others. Use the copy you have to read and write on for our discussion. I’ll give you some time for reading and reflection and to take some notes.

Purpose

1. Move draft to a wider group of incumbents for opinions on competencies and ideas for further defining statements/actions/behaviors.
2. Review and discuss competency-based literature sent to them prior to the meeting (understand and operationalize definitions)
3. Reactions to what is/is not there and ideas for competency statements/behaviors that illustrate what is there or that they add.

How Information will get used

- Competencies and descriptions – I will take this information and combine it with other data (having 3 focus groups and interview with state administration) to create an updated draft model.
- Competency statements/behaviors will used to illustrate what the competencies “look like” (combine with other data)
- Updated version will be sent to census of Ohio 4-H professionals for review

Round 1 (60 minutes)
Notes: Moderator take notes, digital recorder for group discussion. Questions are listed on powerpoint

Allow time for participants to review Competency Model Draft #2
1. Tell your name and how long you have been associated with the 4-H camping program.

2. What are your initial reactions to how well the model describes the most important aspects of camp counselors? Or, do you think these are representative of what high performers in the Ohio 4-H camping program exhibit?

3. As you looked at the supporting concepts, to what extent did they accurately describe counselor’s work?

4. To what extent are the competencies clear and the name or label used make sense for what is described?

5. Are there competencies that should be added? (What is missing? What should be changed? Why?) What other ideas do you have about competencies that should be added to make the model more applicable to camp counselor’s work? Why?

6. Are there competencies included on this list that should be eliminated? Why?

7. It is important for this list to make sense for the Ohio 4-H camping program (the language, how it is organized, etc.). Are there other suggestions for specific edits or formatting or you have?

8. Ending our discussion – The purpose of the research was to help evaluate camp counselor competencies. Is there anything that was missed? Is there anything you came wanting to say that you didn’t get a chance to say?

Round 2-Idea Generation (60 minutes total)
Questions are listed on powerpoint and worksheet. Competencies numbered and listed on large post-it notes around the room.

1. Introduction & Question (present verbally, have question on powerpoint) (5 min)

The goal here is to add more (or better) key actions that describe the competencies we have listed. We’ll do this through working independently for a few minutes to write down some ideas or jot a note about a story and then share as a group.

What ideas do you have about key actions or behaviors that would describe the competencies we have listed? There are several ways you can think about this. Use whichever method works best for you.
- Actions or statements to illustrate specific competencies
- Specific examples of how you or others have demonstrated this competency (I…They….)
• Story
The goal is to look through the list of competencies and write down as many ideas that come to mind when you think about each. Everyone will be different. You may have several ideas for some, none for others, etc.

2. Idea generation (~10 min)
• Silent! Intense effort! Don’t get hung up on wording. Work independently.
• Write ideas on sticky notes. Number each note to match the competency number on the flip chart.

3. Share ideas for key actions or stories (60 min)
Facilitator/Recorder: Record ideas, move as quickly as possible, add notes if needed to clarify

During the last few minutes, each of us brainstormed on key actions or stories to help describe the groups of competencies. For each competency:
• Round-robin, reading/sharing until all ideas are depleted (think about what you are hearing)
• Discourage discussion, encourage “hitchhiking” (expanding on another’s idea) – If someone’s idea stimulate another idea, write it down on a sticky note and we will add it to the list.
• Additional discussion? Clarify? (What do you mean by ... Give me an example of..)

Now that we have shared a number of ideas or stories, I want to go back and have a see if you have any final questions or comments.

Wrap Up & Next Steps (5 min)
• Reactions to today? Questions or final comments?
• Reminder about travel reimbursement
• Thank you!
Focus Group Idea Worksheet

Numbered Potential Competencies *(not numbered by importance)*

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1)</td>
<td>Child and Adolescent Development Knowledge</td>
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<td>2)</td>
<td>Communication</td>
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<td>3)</td>
<td>Cultural Competence</td>
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<td>4)</td>
<td>Health, Wellness, and Risk Management</td>
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<td>5)</td>
<td>Personal Commitment</td>
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<td>6)</td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
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<td>7)</td>
<td>Professionalism</td>
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<td>Program Planning</td>
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<td>Prosocial Connectedness</td>
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<td>Role Model</td>
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<td>Self-Direction</td>
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<td>Teaching and Facilitating Management</td>
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<td>13)</td>
<td>Teamwork and Leadership</td>
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<td>14)</td>
<td>Thinking and Problem Solving</td>
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<td>15)</td>
<td>Understands Organizational and Camp Environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What ideas do you have about key actions or behaviors that would describe the competencies we have listed? There are several ways you can think about this. Use whichever method works best for you.

- Actions or statements to illustrate specific competencies
- Specific examples of how you or others have demonstrated this competency (I…They….)
- Story

The goal is to look through the list of competencies and write down as many ideas that come to mind when you think about each. Everyone will be different. You may have several ideas for some, none for others, etc.

NOTES
Appendix F: Email Invitation and Survey Instrument

Phase III Survey-Advance Email

Subject: Please Participate-Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Study

Dear Colleague,

Greetings!

Currently, the Ohio 4-H program does not have a design or set of competencies in place for Ohio 4-H camp counselors. In order to identify the skills and competencies that camp counselors need to enable them to contribute to a quality camping experience, a model of core competencies needs to be determined. This will enable 4-H professionals to have an end goal of developing specific skills and competencies of 4-H camp counselors and have a safe and successful camping program. The model developed will contain descriptions and illustrations of core competencies. Since December, I have been conducting research to develop a draft competency model. I used information from existing research, involved the state 4-H administration, the camping design team members, and employees across the organization in focus group interviews.

You are being asked to participate in this project because you were identified as an Ohio 4-H professional. You work with these teen camp counselors when planning and implementing your camp programs. Therefore, we think your input will help develop and refine our list of competencies that counselors need to be successful now and in the future. Participation will include:

1. Reviewing two documents that were developed out of initial phases of my research. They are Roles and Responsibilities of Ohio 4-H Camp Counselors (link to document) and Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Model Draft 4 (link to document). Please download using the hotlinks or URLs provided. One is a list of roles and responsibilities for Ohio 4-H camp counselors. These roles and responsibilities should serve as a foundation for our competency model so all parties involved have the same frame of reference when considering what the roles of our camp counselors are. The second document is Draft 4 of the Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Model. You will be asked to provide opinions on the level of importance for each competency overall, the importance for each action statement, and any specific suggestions you may have regarding clarity or changes.
2. Completing a questionnaire using a link in an email you will receive from me in the next 24 hours.

Reviewing the documents and completing the questionnaire will take approximately 30-40 minutes and will require concentration. I recommend that you read and respond to the questionnaire when you are able block off time to focus and avoid interruptions. I also realize this is a significant amount of time in your busy schedule. The information you provide will be a valuable part of developing a competency model for Ohio 4-H camp counselors.

You are not required to participate in this project and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time. Information you provide will be confidential. Although every effort to protect confidentiality will be made, no guarantee of Internet security can be given, as, although unlikely, transmissions can be intercepted and IP addresses can be identified. By completing the questionnaire, you are agreeing to participate in the project and have the information you submit be used for research purposes. There is no penalty if you choose not to participate and you may stop participating at any time by simply closing your browser and not submitting your responses.

In the next 24 hours, you will receive another email from me with a link to a questionnaire via Survey Monkey. If you don’t receive this email, please let me know. The survey will be open through March 13, 2014.

The Principal Investigator for this project is Graham Cochran (614-688-4246 or cochran.99@osu.edu). You may also contact me if you have any questions about the project by phone (740-653-5419 x19) or email (epley.24@osu.edu).

For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251.

If you agree to participate in this research project, in the following email you will click on the link to be taken to the questionnaire. Those who agree to participate will be entered into a drawing for a $25 gift card to use toward their camp programming needs. Odds of winning a gift card are 1 in 45.

I appreciate your time and contributions to this important project!

Hannah K. Epley
Extension Educator,
4-H Youth Development
If you are not a county or state 4-H professional and believe you should not be on this list, please respond to this email and I will remove you so you do not receive future email reminders to complete the questionnaire!
Email Invitation with Link to Complete Questionnaire

Subject: Please Participate-Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Study

Dear Colleague,

Currently, the Ohio 4-H program does not have a design or set of competencies in place for Ohio 4-H camp counselors. In order to identify the skills and competencies that camp counselors need to enable them to contribute to a quality camping experience, a model of core competencies needs to be determined. This will enable 4-H professionals to have an end goal of developing specific skills and competencies of 4-H camp counselors and have a safe and successful camping program. The model developed will contain descriptions and illustrations of core competencies. This is where I need your help.

Research is needed to develop and validate a competency model for Ohio 4-H camp counselors. The model we develop will contain descriptions and illustrations of core competencies, basic knowledge, skills, attitudes, and observable behaviors that contribute to excellence in the workplace. The research will consist of multiple phases to review existing information and to gather input from key internal stakeholders and individuals from across the organization who work with these teen camp counselors. There will be opportunities for a number of individuals to be involved.

You are being asked to participate in this project because you were identified as an Ohio 4-H professional. You work with these teen camp counselors when planning and implementing your camp programs. Therefore, we think your input will help develop and refine our list of competencies that counselors need to be successful now and in the future. Specifically I am asking you to help with this study by completing a web-based questionnaire. You will be asked to provide feedback on a list of competencies, descriptions, and behavioral definitions and to rate each on relevance and frequency of use. The information you provide will be a valuable part of developing a competency model for Ohio 4-H camp counselors.

You are not required to participate in this project and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time. Information you provide will be confidential. By completing the questionnaire, you are agreeing to participate in the project and have the information you submit be used for research purposes. There is no penalty if you choose not to participate.

The Principal Investigator for this project is Graham Cochran (614-688-4246 or cochranch.99@osu.edu). You may also contact me if you have any questions about the project by phone (740-653-5419 x19) or email (epley.24@osu.edu).

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800-678-6251.

If you agree to participate in this research project, click on the link to be taken to the questionnaire. The survey will be open until March 13, 2014. Those who agree to participate will be entered into a drawing for a $25 gift card to use toward their camp programming needs. Odds of winning a gift card are 1 in 45.

I appreciate your time and contributions to this important project!

Hannah K. Epley
Extension Educator,
4-H Youth Development

[Questionnaire URL Here]
Online Questionnaire

Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Study

Thank you for your interest in supporting the Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Study by completing a questionnaire.

As a reminder, your individual responses are confidential. Your response to questions in the questionnaire will be combined with other employees' responses and used to create Draft 5 of the Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Model. You are not required to participate in this project. By completing the questionnaire you are agreeing to participate in the project and have the information you submit be used for research purposes. There is no penalty if you choose not to participate and you may withdraw your consent to participate at any time prior to submitting your questionnaire response.

If you have questions about the study, please contact me by phone (740-653-5419 x19) or email (epley.24@osu.edu).

Thank you,

Hannah K. Epley
Extension Educator, 4-H Youth Development

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES
Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Study

Background Information
Since December, I have been conducting research to develop a competency model for Ohio 4-H camp counselors. In my initial email asking you to complete the questionnaire, I attached two documents:

1. Roles and Responsibilities of Ohio 4-H Camp Counselors (click here for document)
2. Draft 4 Ohio 4-H Camp Counselors Core Competencies (click here for document)

Please use the hotlinks to print out and review these documents if you have not already done so!

These two documents were developed using:
- A review of numerous studies on competency models related to youth workers and the American Camp Association
- Interviews with Ohio 4-H Administration
- Group Session with the Camping Design Team and focus groups (composed of 4-H professionals representing various locations and campsites throughout the state).

As a 4-H professional in the organization, we would like your opinions. This is especially important because we want our competency model to describe the critical competencies required for high performing camp counselors. We want you to describe what high performing camp counselors do.

Questionnaire Instructions
If you have reviewed the two documents mentioned above, I expect the entire questionnaire to take you no more than 30-40 minutes to complete. You may want to print and have both documents on hand for reference as needed.

The questionnaire will have 20 pages and the footer at the bottom of the page will tell you which page you are on. You can use your back button to go forward and backward through the questionnaire until hitting submit on the final page.

If you encounter technical issues, please let me know and I'll provide another link for you to use to complete the questionnaire.
Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Study

Core Competencies
Core competencies are a broad set of competencies relevant across job groups. They are the basic knowledge, attitudes, skills, and observable behaviors that lead to excellence in the workplace (in this instance, the camping program). A competency model is a narrative description of the critical competencies required for successful or exemplary performance. Competency models should only include the most important competencies that really have an impact on excellent performance.

You have had a chance to review the Draft 4 Ohio 4-H Camp Counselors Core Competencies. In this section, you will be asked to indicate how important you think each of the competencies is as well as the key actions that describe them.

There will be one page for each competency and it's key actions in the current model and a final ending page.
On each page, enter your ratings and add additional comments you may have with respect to clarity or suggestions for changes. The model should make sense to you and the camp counselors you work with, so I'm particularly interested in suggestions you have about areas of concern.

Your ratings and comments will be used to create the next draft of the model.

Then hit "next" to move to the next page. The current page and total number of pages will be at the bottom for your reference.
Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Study

1. Child & Adolescent Development Knowledge

Definition: Understands youth and their needs, along with the ages and stages of youth development; has an understanding of behavior management techniques and guidelines and puts knowledge to practice.

Rate the importance of this competency.

- 1-Not Important
- 2-Slightly Important
- 3-Moderately Important
- 4-Very Important
- 5-Essential

2. There are four key actions for this competency. Rate the importance of each.

Key action: Demonstrates awareness of various learning styles and camper needs related to ages of campers by engaging appropriately in conversation or regarding physical needs.

- 1-Not Important
- 2-Slightly Important
- 3-Moderately Important
- 4-Very Important
- 5-Essential

Key action: Plans activities and programs appropriate for camper ages, stages, and abilities and not counselor interests; adjusts the rules and objectives as needed.

- 1-Not Important
- 2-Slightly Important
- 3-Moderately Important
- 4-Very Important
- 5-Essential

Key action: Demonstrates awareness of different behavior management techniques by redirecting campers or managing situations.

- 1-Not Important
- 2-Slightly Important
- 3-Moderately Important
- 4-Very Important
- 5-Essential

Key action: Explains rules to campers to ensure an understanding of expectations and how it relates to camp.

- 1-Not Important
- 2-Slightly Important
- 3-Moderately Important
- 4-Very Important
- 5-Essential
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Study</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3. Additional comments about clarity, suggestions for changes, or comments about this competency overall:</td>
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Page 5
Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Study

4. Communication

Definition: Communicates effectively with others using a variety of methods including active listening, observation, direct conversation, and public speaking, in both individual and group settings; has conflict mediation skills.

Rate the importance of this competency.

- 1-Not Important
- 2-Slightly Important
- 3-Moderately Important
- 4-Very Important
- 5-Essential

5. There are six key actions for this competency. Rate the importance of each.

Key action: Delivers clear messages when speaking using appropriate inflection of tone, volume, and proper pause; captivates the audience when speaking.

- 1-Not Important
- 2-Slightly Important
- 3-Moderately Important
- 4-Very Important
- 5-Essential

Uses nonverbal communication that is congruent with the intended message.

- 1-Not Important
- 2-Slightly Important
- 3-Moderately Important
- 4-Very Important
- 5-Essential

Speaks directly to individuals on their particular level.

- 1-Not Important
- 2-Slightly Important
- 3-Moderately Important
- 4-Very Important
- 5-Essential

Key action: Demonstrates effective listening skills; listens to others, shows interest in what they are saying, checks for understanding.

- 1-Not Important
- 2-Slightly Important
- 3-Moderately Important
- 4-Very Important
- 5-Essential

Key action: Uses communication tools, methods, and attention grabbing techniques based on the situation and need of recipients.

- 1-Not Important
- 2-Slightly Important
- 3-Moderately Important
- 4-Very Important
- 5-Essential
Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Study

Key action: Addresses conflicts that may arise and resolves the issue by effectively communicating with others.


6. Additional comments about clarity or suggestions for changes or comments about this competency overall:
7. Cultural Awareness

Definition: Understands and accepts differences in others; appreciates different talents; relates and connects with diverse groups of people including but not limited to various cultures, special needs, and backgrounds.

Rate the importance of this competency.

1-Not Important  2-Slightly Important  3-Moderately Important  4-Very Important  5-Essential

8. There are four key actions for this competency. Rate the importance of each.

Key action: Conveys respect for individuals who have different perspectives related to culture, religion, socioeconomic status, special needs, and opinions or ideas and embraces the differences.

1-Not Important  2-Slightly Important  3-Moderately Important  4-Very Important  5-Essential

Challenges others if a bias is observed.

1-Not Important  2-Slightly Important  3-Moderately Important  4-Very Important  5-Essential

Key action: Seeks out individuals who have different backgrounds from themselves and expands their own awareness.

1-Not Important  2-Slightly Important  3-Moderately Important  4-Very Important  5-Essential

Key action: Welcomes others who are different with a positive attitude and makes sure all individuals are involved regardless what their difference is; makes adaptations to activities to include everyone.

1-Not Important  2-Slightly Important  3-Moderately Important  4-Very Important  5-Essential
9. Additional comments about clarity or suggestions for changes or comments about this competency overall:
## Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Study

### 10. Health, Wellness, and Risk Management

**Definition:** Is watchful and knows what to look for regarding potential health and safety concerns and how to deal with and react to situations; has knowledge of emergency procedures and the protocol to take if they arise; has knowledge of how to manage their own stress, support the physical and emotional well-being of the camp community, and basic first aid skills.

**Rate the importance of this competency.**

- [ ] 1-Not Important
- [ ] 2-Slightly Important
- [ ] 3-Moderately Important
- [ ] 4-Very Important
- [ ] 5-Essential

### 11. There are four key actions for this competency. Rate the importance of each.

**Key action:** Addresses safety issues or threats that may arise by preparing the environment for safe success; keeps camper safety at the forefront of their mind.

- [ ] 1-Not Important
- [ ] 2-Slightly Important
- [ ] 3-Moderately Important
- [ ] 4-Very Important
- [ ] 5-Essential

**Key action:** Has an understanding of safety protocols and what to do in an emergency situation; reacts to the situation according to these protocols.

- [ ] 1-Not Important
- [ ] 2-Slightly Important
- [ ] 3-Moderately Important
- [ ] 4-Very Important
- [ ] 5-Essential

**Key action:** Recognizes the seriousness of an event, behavior, or action and calmly and appropriately reacts to the situation.

- [ ] 1-Not Important
- [ ] 2-Slightly Important
- [ ] 3-Moderately Important
- [ ] 4-Very Important
- [ ] 5-Essential

**Knows when to seek help and report violations.**

- [ ] 1-Not Important
- [ ] 2-Slightly Important
- [ ] 3-Moderately Important
- [ ] 4-Very Important
- [ ] 5-Essential
12. Additional comments about clarity or suggestions for changes or comments about this competency overall:
13. Personal Commitment

Definition: Is committed to the philosophy and goals of camp and devotes themselves to the position; has a sense of selflessness; takes ownership and has “buy-in” to the influence and impact they have on the program.

Rate the importance of this competency.

☐ 1-Not Important  ☐ 2-Slightly Important  ☐ 3-Moderately important  ☐ 4-Very Important  ☐ 5-Essential

14. There are three key actions for this competency. Rate the importance of each.

Key action: Makes every decision with the best interest of the campers in mind, creates an environment for the campers to enjoy, and puts the camper’s needs first.

☐ 1-Not Important  ☐ 2-Slightly Important  ☐ 3-Moderately important  ☐ 4-Very Important  ☐ 5-Essential

Key action: Attends trainings and planning meetings, spends extra time preparing for camp, and is engaged in all aspects of camp, not just what one likes. Makes camp a priority.

☐ 1-Not Important  ☐ 2-Slightly Important  ☐ 3-Moderately important  ☐ 4-Very Important  ☐ 5-Essential

Key action: Has a positive outlook on camp, desires to work as a team to have a positive impact on the program.

☐ 1-Not Important  ☐ 2-Slightly Important  ☐ 3-Moderately important  ☐ 4-Very Important  ☐ 5-Essential

15. Additional comments about clarity or suggestions for changes or comments about this competency overall:
Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Study

16. Professional Development

Definition: Has a willingness to be coached and challenged; accepts feedback and
guidance from adults and peers; seeks opportunities to continually improve knowledge,
skills, and capabilities; develops job-seeking skills (including completion of an application,
references, screening, and selection process).

Rate the importance of this competency.

☐ 1-Not Important  ☐ 2-Slightly Important  ☐ 3-Moderately Important
☐ 4-Very Important  ☐ 5-Essential

17. There are four key actions for this competency. Rate the importance of each.

Key action: Seeks and employs critiques and performance feedback from peers and staff members.

☐ 1-Not Important  ☐ 2-Slightly Important  ☐ 3-Moderately Important
☐ 4-Very Important  ☐ 5-Essential

Evaluates self and understands why some things did or did not work.

☐ 1-Not Important  ☐ 2-Slightly Important  ☐ 3-Moderately Important
☐ 4-Very Important  ☐ 5-Essential

Key action: Makes a connection between being a counselor and later when applying for
college or jobs and develops the skills that will assist in performing well (e.g. completing
application, interviewing, reflection).

☐ 1-Not Important  ☐ 2-Slightly Important  ☐ 3-Moderately Important
☐ 4-Very Important  ☐ 5-Essential

Key action: Seeks out opportunities and extra training to directly impact and enhance their role in the camping program; sets goals and pushes themselves to learn something new.

☐ 1-Not Important  ☐ 2-Slightly Important  ☐ 3-Moderately Important
☐ 4-Very Important  ☐ 5-Essential
Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Study

18. Additional comments about clarity or suggestions for changes or comments about this competency overall:
19. Professionalism

Definition: Demonstrates behaviors that reflect high levels of maturity, responsibility, flexibility and adaptability, honesty and trustworthiness; has an appropriate sense of humor; has a positive attitude; energetically shares knowledge; avoids a sense of entitlement; is engaged and respects people and things; has customer service and maintains confidentiality.

Rate the importance of this competency.

| 1 - Not Important | 2 - Slightly Important | 3 - Moderately Important | 4 - Very Important | 5 - Essential |

20. There are seven key actions for this competency. Rate the importance of each.

Key action: Demonstrates maturity by differentiating between being a camper and a counselor; does not get defensive when their ideas are challenged.

| 1 - Not Important | 2 - Slightly Important | 3 - Moderately Important | 4 - Very Important | 5 - Essential |

Key action: Demonstrates appropriate language, actions, and behaviors while at camp and also outside of camp (school, church, fair, etc.).

| 1 - Not Important | 2 - Slightly Important | 3 - Moderately Important | 4 - Very Important | 5 - Essential |

Key action: Able to adjust roles willingly if plans change.

| 1 - Not Important | 2 - Slightly Important | 3 - Moderately Important | 4 - Very Important | 5 - Essential |

Key action: Maintains confidentiality regarding medical needs, special conditions, or incidents that may arise.

| 1 - Not Important | 2 - Slightly Important | 3 - Moderately Important | 4 - Very Important | 5 - Essential |

Key action: Engaged with campers, counselors, and staff members.

| 1 - Not Important | 2 - Slightly Important | 3 - Moderately Important | 4 - Very Important | 5 - Essential |
Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Study

Key action: Treats others with respect; is inclusive of all individuals.
- 1-Not Important
- 2-Slightly Important
- 3-Moderately Important
- 4-Very Important
- 5-Essential

Key action: Does what needs to be done with a positive attitude and is prepared for activities and events.
- 1-Not Important
- 2-Slightly Important
- 3-Moderately Important
- 4-Very Important
- 5-Essential

21. Additional comments about clarity or suggestions for changes or comments about this competency overall:
22. Program Planning

Definition: Designs, creates, and plans for appropriate programs and workshops to engage all participants; is prepared to implement these programs.

Rate the importance of this competency.

- 1-Not Important  
- 2-Slightly Important  
- 3-Moderately Important  
- 4-Very Important  
- 5-Essential

23. There are four key actions for this competency. Rate the importance of each.

Key action: Contributes meaningfully to committees, brings ideas and voices opinions when planning events.

- 1-Not Important  
- 2-Slightly Important  
- 3-Moderately Important  
- 4-Very Important  
- 5-Essential

Key action: Generates ideas that are new or creative but incorporates an educational component to the activity or program.

- 1-Not Important  
- 2-Slightly Important  
- 3-Moderately Important  
- 4-Very Important  
- 5-Essential

Key action: Thoughtfully plans lessons, generating and understanding a detailed list of steps while keeping in mind the ages of campers, available location and timeframe, and the finances and resources needed while relating activities to the goals of camp.

- 1-Not Important  
- 2-Slightly Important  
- 3-Moderately Important  
- 4-Very Important  
- 5-Essential

Key action: Works to plan and create program with a team and includes resource people as needed.

- 1-Not Important  
- 2-Slightly Important  
- 3-Moderately Important  
- 4-Very Important  
- 5-Essential

24. Additional comments about clarity or suggestions for changes or comments about this competency overall:
25. Role Model

Definition: Is someone who others aspire to be like; models, demonstrates, and teaches positive values; has fun in a positive and responsible way.

Rate the importance of this competency.

1-Not Important  2-Slightly Important  3-Moderately Important  4-Very Important  5-Essential

26. There are four key actions for this competency. Rate the importance of each.

Key action: Maintains positive image and acts appropriately in all areas of life (online, school, church, sports, etc.).

1-Not Important  2-Slightly Important  3-Moderately Important  4-Very Important  5-Essential

Key action: Betters others around them by giving credit to peers or staff and enabling campers to succeed.

1-Not Important  2-Slightly Important  3-Moderately Important  4-Very Important  5-Essential

Key action: Leads by example and has fun while following the camp rules.

1-Not Important  2-Slightly Important  3-Moderately Important  4-Very Important  5-Essential

Is engaged and shows respect for all persons, places, and things.

1-Not Important  2-Slightly Important  3-Moderately Important  4-Very Important  5-Essential

27. Additional comments about clarity or suggestions for changes or comments about this competency overall:
Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Study

28. Self-Direction

Definition: Takes initiative and does things from start to finish with all the details and without being asked; works unsupervised; admits and recognizes mistakes when they are made.

Rate the importance of this competency.

- 1: Not Important
- 2: Slightly Important
- 3: Moderately Important
- 4: Very Important
- 5: Essential

29. There are five key actions for this competency. Rate the importance of each.

Key action: Identifies what needs to be accomplished and takes action before being asked; looks into the future to prepare the setting.

- 1: Not Important
- 2: Slightly Important
- 3: Moderately Important
- 4: Very Important
- 5: Essential

Key action: Takes initiative to generate ideas or play games during transition or down time; includes teachable moments as they arise.

- 1: Not Important
- 2: Slightly Important
- 3: Moderately Important
- 4: Very Important
- 5: Essential

Key action: Is prepared to lead an activity but changes plans if needed.

- 1: Not Important
- 2: Slightly Important
- 3: Moderately Important
- 4: Very Important
- 5: Essential

Key action: Performs with minimal supervision or direction and follows through on assignments or tasks without being reminded.

- 1: Not Important
- 2: Slightly Important
- 3: Moderately Important
- 4: Very Important
- 5: Essential

Key action: Is willing to take ownership for successes and failures; works toward achieving group (and not individuals) success.

- 1: Not Important
- 2: Slightly Important
- 3: Moderately Important
- 4: Very Important
- 5: Essential
Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Study

30. Additional comments about clarity or suggestions for changes or comments about this competency overall:

[Blank space for comments]
31. Supportive Relationships

**Definition:** Is accepting and empathetic toward others, caring and kind, and responsive to needs; creates a welcoming environment and puts campers first.

**Rate the importance of this competency.**

- [ ] 1-Not Important
- [ ] 2-Slightly Important
- [ ] 3-Moderately Important
- [ ] 4-Very Important
- [ ] 5-Essential

32. There are three key actions for this competency. Rate the importance of each.

**Key action:** Attentive to the needs of others (e.g. illness, preparation for activities, accident) and treats them as they would like to be treated.

- [ ] 1-Not Important
- [ ] 2-Slightly Important
- [ ] 3-Moderately Important
- [ ] 4-Very Important
- [ ] 5-Essential

**Key action:** Uses empathy to read others (e.g. homesick, struggling, not included); acts accordingly to engage them.

- [ ] 1-Not Important
- [ ] 2-Slightly Important
- [ ] 3-Moderately Important
- [ ] 4-Very Important
- [ ] 5-Essential

**Key action:** Creates a welcoming environment for campers and their parents; makes them feel like they are special.

- [ ] 1-Not Important
- [ ] 2-Slightly Important
- [ ] 3-Moderately Important
- [ ] 4-Very Important
- [ ] 5-Essential

33. Additional comments about clarity or suggestions for changes or comments about this competency overall:
34. Teaching and Facilitating

Definition: Teaches and leads activities with ease; interacts with, engages, and motivates children; facilitates hands-on or experiential learning.

Rate the importance of this competency.

☐ 1 Not Important    ☐ 2 Slightly Important    ☐ 3 Moderately Important    ☐ 4 Very Important    ☐ 5 Essential

35. There are four key actions for this competency. Rate the importance of each.

Key action: Involves all youth in activities through motivation or guided direction while creating a fun and engaging environment.

☐ 1 Not Important    ☐ 2 Slightly Important    ☐ 3 Moderately Important    ☐ 4 Very Important    ☐ 5 Essential

Is enthusiastic while encouraging youth, regardless of what the task may be.

☐ 1 Not Important    ☐ 2 Slightly Important    ☐ 3 Moderately Important    ☐ 4 Very Important    ☐ 5 Essential

Key action: Takes time to practice and prepare before leading an activity or session and is willing to research ideas as needed but is able to be spontaneous and alter plans as needed.

☐ 1 Not Important    ☐ 2 Slightly Important    ☐ 3 Moderately Important    ☐ 4 Very Important    ☐ 5 Essential

Key action: Employs a variety of teaching methods including demonstration, visual, and hands on learning, and relates the activity to life outside of camp.

☐ 1 Not Important    ☐ 2 Slightly Important    ☐ 3 Moderately Important    ☐ 4 Very Important    ☐ 5 Essential

36. Additional comments about clarity or suggestions for changes or comments about this competency overall:

[Blank space for comments]
Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Study

37. Teamwork and Leadership

Definition: Effectively participates and works as a member of a team; is supportive of peers and other staff; is approachable and has organizational skills, the ability to lead or follow, and sees the “big picture” or goals of camp; understands and follows directions; serves in a supervisory role.

Rate the importance of this competency.

☐ 1-Not Important  ☐ 2-Slightly Important  ☐ 3-Moderately Important  ☐ 4-Very Important  ☐ 5-Essential

38. There are three key actions for this competency. Rate the importance of each.

Key action: Supportive of other’s ideas and allows individuals to be in a leadership role and assists them to be successful; shares the workload to provide opportunities for all individuals.

☐ 1-Not Important  ☐ 2-Slightly Important  ☐ 3-Moderately Important  ☐ 4-Very Important  ☐ 5-Essential

Key action: Assumes the leadership role when appropriate but does not always need to be in charge and allows others to lead.

☐ 1-Not Important  ☐ 2-Slightly Important  ☐ 3-Moderately Important  ☐ 4-Very Important  ☐ 5-Essential

Key action: Develops constructive and cooperative working relationships with others.

☐ 1-Not Important  ☐ 2-Slightly Important  ☐ 3-Moderately Important  ☐ 4-Very Important  ☐ 5-Essential

39. Additional comments about clarity or suggestions for changes or comments about this competency overall:
Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Study

40. Thinking and Problem Solving

Definition: Acquires information and uses thinking skills including creativity and critical thinking to prevent and solve problems; exercises fairness and moral integrity and makes sound judgments; anticipates consequences of actions.

Rate the importance of this competency.

☐ 1: Not Important  ☐ 2: Slightly Important  ☐ 3: Moderately Important  ☐ 4: Very Important  ☐ 5: Essential

41. There are four key actions for this competency. Rate the importance of each.

Key action: Identifies potential problems before they occur and takes action to prevent or handle the threat; works with others to solve problems if needed.

☐ 1: Not Important  ☐ 2: Slightly Important  ☐ 3: Moderately Important  ☐ 4: Very Important  ☐ 5: Essential

Key action: Uses creativity to plan activities or solve problems and is not afraid to plan something (e.g., theme, event, game) that has never been conducted before.

☐ 1: Not Important  ☐ 2: Slightly Important  ☐ 3: Moderately Important  ☐ 4: Very Important  ☐ 5: Essential

Key action: Reflects upon performance, experience, and activities and alters ideas as needed.

☐ 1: Not Important  ☐ 2: Slightly Important  ☐ 3: Moderately Important  ☐ 4: Very Important  ☐ 5: Essential

Key action: Employs sound judgment when faced with confrontation, potential breaking of rules, and strives to ensure fairness of all participants.

☐ 1: Not Important  ☐ 2: Slightly Important  ☐ 3: Moderately Important  ☐ 4: Very Important  ☐ 5: Essential

42. Additional comments about clarity or suggestions for changes or comments about this competency overall:

[Blank space for text input]

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### Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Study

#### 43. Understands Organizational and Camp Environment

**Definition:** Understands the 4-H organization and philosophy behind it; has a sense of community and citizenship within the camping program; is knowledgeable about whatever content area (nature, technology, horse, etc.) that is the focus of the camp; commits to personal wellness and lives within the camp routine; withdraws from cell phones or other technologies if needed.

**Rate the importance of this competency.**

- [ ] 1-Not Important
- [ ] 2-Slightly Important
- [ ] 3-Moderately Important
- [ ] 4-Very Important
- [ ] 5-Essential

#### 44. There are five key actions for this competency. Rate the importance of each.

**Key action:** Identifies needs of self and campers and learns what is expected of them; generates new ideas suitable for the camp environment.

**Key action:** Understands that camp is a special place and can make a difference in a child's life.

**Key action:** Understands the philosophy and why and how a 4-H camp is conducted and the outcomes that arise for the campers.

**Is focused on their job as a counselor.**

**Key action:** Has a basic understanding of the rules and what is acceptable and is willing to explain and follow the rules, even if they do not agree with them.
45. Additional comments about clarity or suggestions for changes or comments about this competency overall:
46. Any final thoughts or suggestions about the competency model?
**Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Study**

**What is your gender?**
- [ ] Female
- [ ] Male

**What EERA are you located?**
- [ ] Buckeye Hills
- [ ] Crossroads
- [ ] Elie Basin
- [ ] Heart of Ohio
- [ ] Maumee Valley
- [ ] Miami Valley
- [ ] Ohio Valley
- [ ] Top of Ohio
- [ ] Western Reserve

**How many years have you worked in Extension overall?**

**How many years have you worked in Ohio State University Extension?**

**Including this current year, how many years have you served as a 4-H camp director or assistant camp director?**
This is the final page of the Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competency Study. Hitting submit at the bottom of this page will close your entry. Be sure you are finished before hitting the submit button.

Thank you!

The Ohio State University
College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences
Appendix G: Roles and Responsibilities of Ohio 4-H Camp Counselors Draft A

The following are roles and responsibilities of Ohio 4-H camp counselors. While specific duties of counselors may vary from county to county and camp to camp, these are consistent at all camps. They are not listed by importance.

- Assume for safety of campers at all times including in cabins, sessions, and large group activities
- Be aware of child protection regulations
- Identify and respond to camper behavior issues
- Ensure campers’ health and hygiene, e.g. brushing teeth, eating meals, taking medication, etc.
- Promote camper participation
- Serve on committees or other groups to plan programs at camp
- Assist staff and other counselors with camp activities; work as a team to implement the activities
- Lead and supervise campers in activities at camp including but not limited to songs, teambuilding challenges, group activities, challenges, etc.
- Teach campers at workshops or during other components at camp (table setting, song leading, etc.)
- Attend required trainings prior to camp
- Know and understand all safety guidelines associated with the camp and program areas
- Follow and enforce camp rules
- Conduct self in an appropriate manner before, during, and after camp while serving as a role model to others
- Mentor campers to encourage positive youth development and enhancement of life skills
Appendix H: Competencies and Ideas Generated from Interview I with State 4-H Administrators
(duplicates and similar ideas are included)

- Ability to follow instructions; really understand and follow instructions of the camp director or whomever they are working with
- Ability to recognize and admit mistakes when they're made
- Ability to teach
- Ability to work in a group or on a team of other camp counselors, camp staff
- Ability to work independently
- Application
- Appropriate or successful job-seeking skills
- Basic first aid
- Benefit the camp counselors more than benefit the campers they're working with
- Commitment to the camp itself
- Conflict resolution
- Contribute to the planning
- Creating the execution of a program workshop or activity
- Creative
- Creativity
- Creativity
- Dealing with homesickness
- Decision-making
- Dependable
- Dependable around the pool
- Devote themselves to that unpaid position
- Engage all of the campers
- Follow-through
- Fun
- Fun person
- Good at engaging other campers
- Honesty
- Interview
- Job-seeking skill experience
- Job-seeking skills
- Lead the recreation
- Leadership
- Leadership
• Leadership
• Leadership
• Positive interpersonal skills
• Problem solving
• Public-speaking skills
• Pull the shy or introvert campers out and make them a part of the group and make them grow
• Punctuality
• Reference
• Reliability
• Responsible
• Responsible youth
• Selection and screening process
• Sense of humor
• Training
Appendix I: Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competencies Draft 1

This draft has been developed by using a variety of internal and external sources. For this research project, the focus is on developing a competency model that includes core competencies, a competency definition, and key actions for each. Here are definitions that might be helpful when reviewing this information:

- **Competencies**-observable elements including the knowledge, individual skills, attitudes, and other characteristics that are associated with high performance
- **Core competencies**-“the ‘demonstrated capacities’ that forms a foundation for high quality performance in the workplace” This workplace may include campsites or camping programs in Ohio.
- **Competency title and definition**-a term and associated description of the knowledge, skills, abilities, and observable behaviors that represent the competency identified
- **Key actions**-general descriptions of behaviors that illustrate a competency

### Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Competency</th>
<th>Supporting Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child and Adolescent Development</td>
<td>Youth and their needs; behavior management techniques and guidelines; ages and stages of youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Competence</td>
<td>Understands differences in others; accepting and empathy towards others; appreciate different talents; relate and connect with diverse groups of people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Wellness</td>
<td>Basic first aid skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>Willingness to be coached and challenged; accept feedback and guidance; job-seeking skills (application, reference, selection and screening)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Responsible; flexible and adaptable; honest and trustworthy; ability to lead or follow; understands and follows directions; public-speaking skills; positive and responsible fun; appropriate sense of humor; positive role model; positive attitude; energetically share knowledge; avoid sense of entitlement; engaged; caring and kind; responsive to needs; organization skills; sees the “big picture”; perseverance; supervisory role; respect people and things; customer service; maintains confidentiality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Planning and Management</th>
<th>Designs or creates and plans for and implements programs and workshops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prosocial Connectedness</td>
<td>Committed to the philosophy and goals of camp; takes ownership and has “buy-in” to the influence and impact on the program; devotes themselves to position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk Management</td>
<td>Reads situations; have knowledge of emergency procedures; know what to look for and how to deal/react to situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Direction</td>
<td>Does things from start to finish with all the details; works unsupervised; self-starter; takes initiative; admits and recognize mistakes when they are made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork and Working with Others</td>
<td>Works in a group or on a team; supportive of peers and other staff; approachable; has communication skills; brings people together to feel and function as a group; demonstrates effective customer service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking and Problem Solving</td>
<td>Creative; makes sound judgments about moral issues; exercise fairness and moral integrity; dissipate consequences of actions; conflict mediation skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand Camp Environment</td>
<td>Knowledgeable about whatever content area (nature, technology, horse, etc.) camp is; commit to personal wellness and live within routine; withdraw from cell phones or other technologies if needed; understands the 4-H organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Empowerment</td>
<td>Teach and lead activities; selflessness; interact with, engage, and motivate children; facilitate hands-on or experiential learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix J: Roles and Responsibilities of Ohio 4-H Camp Counselors Draft B

The following are roles and responsibilities of Ohio 4-H camp counselors. While specific duties of counselors may vary from county to county and camp to camp, these are consistent at all camps. They are not listed by importance.

- Assume responsibility for safety of campers at all times including in cabins, sessions, and large group activities
- Be aware of child protection regulations and report any child abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect in accordance with university policy
- Identify and respond to camper behavior issues
- Ensure campers’ health and hygiene, e.g. brushing teeth, eating meals, taking medication, etc.
- Promote camper participation
- Serve on committees or other groups to plan programs at camp
- Assist staff and other counselors with camp activities; work as a team to implement the activities
- Lead and supervise campers in activities at camp including but not limited to songs, teambuilding challenges, group activities, challenges, etc.
- Teach campers at workshops or during other components at camp (table setting, song leading, etc.)
- Attend required trainings prior to camp
- Know and understand all safety guidelines, including emergency procedures, associated with the camp and program areas
- Follow and enforce camp rules
- Conduct self in an appropriate manner before, during, and after camp while serving as a role model to campers and peers
- Mentor campers to encourage positive youth development and enhancement of life skills
- Market and promote camp
- Serve in a leadership and teaching role to other counselors
Appendix K: Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competencies Draft 2

This draft has been developed by using a variety of internal and external sources. For this research project, the focus is on developing a competency model that includes core competencies, a competency definition, and key actions for each. Here are definitions that might be helpful when reviewing this information:

- **Competencies**: observable elements including the knowledge, individual skills, attitudes, and other characteristics that are associated with high performance
- **Core competencies**: “the ‘demonstrated capacities’ that forms a foundation for high quality performance in the workplace” This workplace may include campsites or camping programs in Ohio.
- **Competency title and definition**: a term and associated description of the knowledge, skills, abilities, and observable behaviors that represent the competency identified
- **Key actions**: general descriptions of behaviors that illustrate a competency
### Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competencies
(These are not listed by importance)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential Competency</th>
<th>Supporting Concepts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child and Adolescent Development Knowledge</td>
<td>Understands youth and their needs; behavior management techniques and guidelines; ages and stages of youth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Has communication skills; public-speaking skills; conflict mediation skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Competence</td>
<td>Understands and accepts differences in others; appreciates different talents; relates and connects with diverse groups of people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health, Wellness, and Risk Management</td>
<td>Reads situations; have knowledge of emergency procedures; know what to look for and how to deal/react to situations; knowledge of basic first aid skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Commitment</td>
<td>Committed to the philosophy and goals of camp; takes ownership and has “buy-in” to the influence and impact on the program; devotes themselves to position; selflessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>Willingness to be coached and challenged; accepts feedback and guidance; develops job-seeking skills (application, reference, selection, and screening)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionalism</td>
<td>Responsible; flexible and adaptable; honest and trustworthy; appropriate sense of humor; positive attitude; energetically share knowledge; avoid sense of entitlement; engaged; respect people and things; customer service; maintains confidentiality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Planning</td>
<td>Designs or creates and plans for and implements programs and workshops</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosocial Connectedness</td>
<td>Caring and kind; responsive to needs; accepting and empathy towards others; create a welcoming environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Model</td>
<td>Positive and responsible fun; positive role model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Direction</td>
<td>Does things from start to finish with all the details; works unsupervised; self-starter; takes initiative; admits and recognize mistakes when they are made; perseverance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching and Facilitating</td>
<td>Teaches and leads activities; selflessness; interacts with, engages, and motivates children; facilitates hands-on or experiential learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teamwork and Leadership</td>
<td>Works in a group or on a team; supportive of peers and other staff; approachable; brings people together to feel and function as a group; ability to lead or follow; understands and follows directions; organization skills; sees the “big picture”; supervisory role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking and Problem Solving</td>
<td>Creative; makes sound judgments about moral issues; exercise fairness and moral integrity; dissipate consequences of actions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understands Organizational and Camp Environment</td>
<td>Knowledgeable about whatever content area (nature, technology, horse, etc.) camp is; commit to personal wellness and live within routine; withdraw from cell phones or other technologies if needed; understands the 4-H organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix L: Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competencies Draft 3

This draft has been developed by using a variety of internal and external sources. For this research project, the focus is on developing a competency model that includes core competencies, a competency definition, and key actions for each. Here are definitions that might be helpful when reviewing this information:

- **Competencies**-observable elements including the knowledge, individual skills, attitudes, and other characteristics that are associated with high performance
- **Core competencies**-“the ‘demonstrated capacities’ that forms a foundation for high quality performance in the workplace” This workplace may include campsites or camping programs in Ohio.
- **Competency title and definition**-a term and associated description of the knowledge, skills, abilities, and observable behaviors that represent the competency identified
- **Key actions**-general descriptions of behaviors that illustrate a competency
**Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competencies**
(These are not listed by importance)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child and Adolescent Development Knowledge</td>
<td>Understands youth and their needs, along with the ages and stages of youth development; has an understanding of behavior management techniques and guidelines and puts knowledge to practice.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Key actions*

- Aware of various learning styles and camper needs related to ages of camper regarding conversation or physical needs.
- Plans activities and programs appropriate for camper ages, stages, and abilities and not counselor interests; adjusts the rules and objectives as needed.
- Aware of and implements different behavior management techniques to redirect campers or manage situations.
- Explains rules to campers to ensure an understanding of expectations and how it relates to camp.

| Communication | Communicates effectively with others using a variety of methods including active listening, observation, direct conversation, and public speaking, in both individual and group settings; has conflict mediation skills. |

*Key actions*

- Delivers clear messages when speaking using appropriate inflection of tone, volume, and proper pause; uses nonverbal communication that is congruent with the intended message; speaks directly to individual on their particular level.
- Demonstrates effective listening skills; listens to others, shows interest in what they are saying, checks for understanding.
- Uses communication tools, methods, and attention grabbing techniques based on the situation and need of recipients.
- Addresses conflicts that may arise and resolves the issue by effectively communicating with others.
| Cultural Awareness | Understands and accepts differences in others; appreciates different talents; relates and connects with diverse groups of people including but not limited to various cultures, special needs, and backgrounds.  

**Key actions**  
- Conveys respect for individuals who have different perspectives related to culture, religion, socioeconomic status, special needs, and opinions or ideas and embraces the differences.  
- Seeks out individuals who have different backgrounds from themselves and expands their own awareness.  
- Welcomes others who are different with a positive attitude and makes sure all individuals are involved regardless what their difference is; makes adaptations to activities to include everyone. |
| Health, Wellness, and Risk Management | Is watchful and knows what to look for regarding potential health and safety concerns and how to deal and react to situations; has knowledge of emergency procedures and the protocol to take if they arise; has knowledge of how to manage their own stress, support the physical and emotional well-being of the camp community, and basic first aid skills.  

**Key actions**  
- Foresee safety issues or threats that may arise and prepares the environment for safe success; keeps camper safety at the forefront of their mind.  
- Has an understanding of safety protocols and what to do in an emergency situation.  
- Recognize the seriousness of an event, behavior, or action and calmly and appropriately react to the situation. |
| **Personal Commitment** | Is committed to the philosophy and goals of camp and devotes themselves to the position; has a sense of selflessness; takes ownership and has “buy-in” to the influence and impact they have on the program.  

**Key actions**  
- Makes every decision with the best interest of the campers, creates an environment for the campers to enjoy and puts the camper’s needs first.  
- Attends trainings and planning meetings, spends extra time preparing for camp, and is engaged in all aspects of camp, not just what one likes. Makes camp a priority.  
- Has a positive outlook on camp, desires to work as a team to have a positive impact on the program. |
| **Professional Development** | Has a willingness to be coached and challenged; accepts feedback and guidance from adults and peers; seeks opportunities to continually improve knowledge, skills, and capabilities; develops job-seeking skills (including completion of an application, references, screening, and selection process).  

**Key actions**  
- Seeks and employs critiques and performance feedback from peers and staff members. Evaluates self and understands why some things did or did not work.  
- Makes a connection between being a counselor and later when applying for college or jobs and develops the skills that will assist in performing well (e.g. completing application, interviewing, reflection).  
- Seeks out opportunities and extra training to directly impact and enhance their role in the camping program. |
| Professionalism | Demonstrates behaviors that reflect high levels of maturity, responsibility, flexibility and adaptability, honesty and trustworthiness; has an appropriate sense of humor, a positive attitude; energetically shares knowledge; avoids a sense of entitlement; is engaged and respects people and things; has customer service and maintains confidentiality. |
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| Program Planning | Designs, creates, and plans for appropriate programs and workshops to engage all participants; is prepared to implement these programs.  

*Key actions*  
- Contributes meaningfully to the committees, brings ideas and voices opinions when planning events.  
- Generates ideas that are new or creative but incorporates an educational component to the activity or program.  
- Thoughtfully plans lessons, generating and understanding a detailed list of steps while keeping in mind the ages of campers, available location and timeframe, and the finances and resources needed while relating activities to the goals of camp.  
- Works to plan and create program with a team and includes resource people as needed. |
| Role Model | Is someone who others aspire to be like; models, demonstrates, and teaches positive values; has fun in a positive and responsible way.  

*Key actions*  
- Maintains positive image and acts appropriately in all areas of life (online, school, church, sports, etc.).  
- Betters others around them by giving credit to peers or staff and enabling campers to succeed.  
- Leads by example and has fun while following the camp rules. Is engaged and shows respect for all persons, places, and things. |
| Self-Direction | Takes initiative and does things from start to finish with all the details without being asked; works unsupervised; admits and recognizes mistakes when they are made.  

*Key actions*

- Identifies what needs to be accomplished and takes action before being asked; looks into the future to prepare setting.
- Takes initiative to generate ideas or play games during transition or down time; includes teachable moments as they arise.
- Prepared to lead an activity but changes plans if needed.
- Performs with minimal supervision or direction and follows through on assignments or tasks without being reminded.
- Willing to take ownership for successes and failures; works toward achieving group (and not individuals) success. |
| Supportive Relationships | Is accepting and empathetic towards others, caring and kind, and responsive to needs; creates a welcoming environment and puts campers first.  

*Key actions*

- Attentive to the needs of others (e.g. illness, preparation for activities, accident) and treats them as they would like to be treated.
- Uses empathy to read others (e.g. homesick, struggling, not included); acts accordingly to engage them.
- Creates a welcoming environment for campers and their parents; makes them feel like they are special. |
| Teaching and Facilitating | Teaches and leads activities with ease; interacts with, engages, and motivates children; facilitates hands-on or experiential learning.  

*Key actions*

- Involves all youth in activities through motivation or guided direction while creating a fun and engaging environment. Is enthusiastic while encouraging youth, regardless of what the task may be.
- Takes time to practice and prepare before leading an activity or session and is willing to research ideas as needed but is able to be spontaneous and alter plans as needed.
- Employs a variety of teaching methods including demonstration, visual, and hands on learning, and relates the activity to life outside of camp. |

| Teamwork and Leadership | Effectively participates and works as a member of a team; is supportive of peers and other staff; is approachable and has organizational skills, the ability to lead or follow, and sees the “big picture” or goals of camp; understands and follows directions; serves in a supervisory role.  

*Key actions*

- Supportive of other’s ideas and allows individuals to be in a leadership role and assists them to be successful; shares the workload to provide opportunities for all individuals.
- Aware of strengths and weaknesses in the group and how all can contribute to the team.
- Takes charge of situations when appropriate, but does not always need to be in charge and allows others to lead. |
| Thinking and Problem Solving | Acquires information and uses thinking skills including creativity and critical thinking to prevent and solve problems; exercises fairness and moral integrity and makes sound judgments; anticipates consequences of actions.  

**Key actions**

- Identifies potential problems before they occur and takes action to prevent or handle the threat; works with others to solve problems if needed.
- Uses creativity to plan activities or solve problems and is not afraid to plan an event that has never been conducted before.
- Reflects upon performance, experience, and activities and alters ideas as needed.
- Employs sound judgment when faced with confrontation, potential breaking of rules, and ensuring for fairness of all participants. |

| Understands Organizational and Camp Environment | Understands the 4-H organization and philosophy behind it; has a sense of community and citizenship within the camping program; knowledgeable about whatever content area (nature, technology, horse, etc.) camp is; commits to personal wellness and lives within the camp routine; withdraws from cell phones or other technologies if needed.  

**Key actions**

- Identifies needs of self and campers and learns what is expected of them; generates new ideas for the environment.
- Understands camp is a special place and can make a difference in a child’s life; is focused on their job as a counselor.
- Understands the philosophy and why and how a 4-H camp is conducted and the outcomes that arise for the campers.
- Has a basic understanding of the rules and what is acceptable and is willing to explain and follow the rules, even if they do not agree with them. |
Appendix M: Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Core Competencies Draft 4

This draft has been developed by using a variety of internal and external sources. For this research project, the focus is on developing a competency model that includes core competencies, a competency definition, and key actions for each. Here are definitions that might be helpful when reviewing this information:

- **Competencies**-observable elements including the knowledge, individual skills, attitudes, and other characteristics that are associated with high performance
- **Core competencies**-“the ‘demonstrated capacities’ that forms a foundation for high quality performance in the workplace” This workplace may include campsites or camping programs in Ohio.
- **Competency title and definition**-a term and associated description of the knowledge, skills, abilities, and observable behaviors that represent the competency identified
- **Key actions**-general descriptions of behaviors that illustrate a competency
Ohio 4-H Camp Counselor Competencies
(These are not listed by importance)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child and Adolescent</td>
<td>Understands youth and their needs, along with the ages and stages of youth development; has an understanding of behavior management techniques and guidelines and puts knowledge to practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Knowledge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Key actions*

- Demonstrates awareness of various learning styles and camper needs related to ages of campers by engaging appropriately in conversation or regarding physical needs.
- Plans activities and programs appropriate for camper ages, stages, and abilities and not counselor interests; adjusts the rules and objectives as needed.
- Demonstrates awareness of different behavior management techniques by redirecting campers or managing situations.
- Explains rules to campers to ensure an understanding of expectations and how it relates to camp.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Communicates effectively with others using a variety of methods including active listening, observation, direct conversation, and public speaking, in both individual and group settings; has conflict mediation skills.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Key actions</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Delivers clear messages when speaking using appropriate inflection of tone, volume, and proper pause; captivates the audience when speaking.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Uses nonverbal communication that is congruent with the intended message.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Speaks directly to individuals on their particular level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Demonstrates effective listening skills; listens to others, shows interest in what they are saying, checks for understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Uses communication tools, methods, and attention grabbing techniques based on the situation and need of recipients.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Addresses conflicts that may arise and resolves the issue by effectively communicating with others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Awareness</td>
<td>Understands and accepts differences in others; appreciates different talents; relates and connects with diverse groups of people including but not limited to various cultures, special needs, and backgrounds.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Key actions</strong></td>
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<td>• Conveys respect for individuals who have different perspectives related to culture, religion, socioeconomic status, special needs, and opinions or ideas and embraces the differences.</td>
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<td>• Challenges others if a bias is observed.</td>
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<td>• Seeks out individuals who have different backgrounds from themselves and expands their own awareness.</td>
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<td>• Welcomes others who are different with a positive attitude and makes sure all individuals are involved regardless what their difference is; makes adaptations to activities to include everyone.</td>
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</table>
| Health, Wellness, and Risk Management | Is watchful and knows what to look for regarding potential health and safety concerns and how to deal with and react to situations; has knowledge of emergency procedures and the protocol to take if they arise; has knowledge of how to manage their own stress, support the physical and emotional well-being of the camp community, and basic first aid skills.  

**Key actions**  
- Addresses safety issues or threats that may arise by preparing the environment for safe success; keeps camper safety at the forefront of their mind.  
- Has an understanding of safety protocols and what to do in an emergency situation; reacts to the situation according to these protocols.  
- Recognizes the seriousness of an event, behavior, or action and calmly and appropriately reacts to the situation.  
- Knows when to seek help and report violations. |
| Personal Commitment | Is committed to the philosophy and goals of camp and devotes themselves to the position; has a sense of selflessness; takes ownership and has “buy-in” to the influence and impact they have on the program.  

**Key actions**  
- Makes every decision with the best interest of the campers in mind, creates an environment for the campers to enjoy, and puts the camper’s needs first.  
- Attends trainings and planning meetings, spends extra time preparing for camp, and is engaged in all aspects of camp, not just what one likes. Makes camp a priority.  
- Has a positive outlook on camp, desires to work as a team to have a positive impact on the program. |
| Professional Development | Has a willingness to be coached and challenged; accepts feedback and guidance from adults and peers; seeks opportunities to continually improve knowledge, skills, and capabilities; develops job-seeking skills (including completion of an application, references, screening, and selection process).

*Key actions*

- Seeks and employs critiques and performance feedback from peers and staff members.
- Evaluates self and understands why some things did or did not work.
- Makes a connection between being a counselor and later when applying for college or jobs and develops the skills that will assist in performing well (e.g. completing application, interviewing, reflection).
- Seeks out opportunities and extra training to directly impact and enhance their role in the camping program; sets goals and pushes themselves to learn something new. |
Professionalism

Demonstrates behaviors that reflect high levels of maturity, responsibility, flexibility and adaptability, honesty and trustworthiness; has an appropriate sense of humor; has a positive attitude; energetically shares knowledge; avoids a sense of entitlement; is engaged and respects people and things; has customer service and maintains confidentiality.

Key actions

- Demonstrates maturity by differentiating between being a camper and a counselor; does not get defensive when their ideas are challenged.
- Demonstrates appropriate language, actions, and behaviors while at camp and also outside of camp (school, church, fair, etc.).
- Adjusts roles willingly if plans change.
- Maintains confidentiality regarding medical needs, special conditions, or incidents that may arise.
- Engaged with campers, counselors, and staff members
- Treats others with respect; is inclusive of all individuals.
- Does what needs to be done with a positive attitude and is prepared for activities and events.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Planning</th>
<th>Designs, creates, and plans for appropriate programs and workshops to engage all participants; is prepared to implement these programs.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key actions</strong></td>
<td>- Contributes meaningfully to committees, brings ideas and voices opinions when planning events.</td>
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<td>- Generates ideas that are new or creative but incorporates an educational component to the activity or program.</td>
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<td>- Thoughtfully plans lessons, generating and understanding a detailed list of steps while keeping in mind the ages of campers, available location and timeframe, and the finances and resources needed while relating activities to the goals of camp.</td>
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<td>- Works to plan and create program with a team and includes resource people as needed.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Role Model</th>
<th>Is someone who others aspire to be like; models, demonstrates, and teaches positive values; has fun in a positive and responsible way.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key actions</strong></td>
<td>- Maintains positive image and acts appropriately in all areas of life (online, school, church, sports, etc.).</td>
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<td>- Betters others around them by giving credit to peers or staff and enabling campers to succeed.</td>
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<td>- Leads by example and has fun while following the camp rules.</td>
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<td>- Is engaged and shows respect for all persons, places, and things.</td>
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</table>
| Self-Direction | Takes initiative and does things from start to finish with all the details and without being asked; works unsupervised; admits and recognizes mistakes when they are made.  

**Key actions**  
- Identifies what needs to be accomplished and takes action before being asked; looks into the future to prepare the setting.  
- Takes initiative to generate ideas or play games during transition or down time; includes teachable moments as they arise.  
- Is prepared to lead an activity but changes plans if needed.  
- Performs with minimal supervision or direction and follows through on assignments or tasks without being reminded.  
- Is willing to take ownership for successes and failures; works toward achieving group (and not individuals) success. |
| Supportive Relationships | Is accepting and empathetic towards others, caring and kind, and responsive to needs; creates a welcoming environment and puts campers first.  

**Key actions**  
- Attentive to the needs of others (e.g. illness, preparation for activities, accident) and treats them as they would like to be treated.  
- Uses empathy to read others (e.g. homesick, struggling, not included); acts accordingly to engage them.  
- Creates a welcoming environment for campers and their parents; makes them feel like they are special. |
| Teaching and Facilitating | Teaches and leads activities with ease; interacts with, engages, and motivates children; facilitates hands-on or experiential learning.  

*Key actions*  
- Involves all youth in activities through motivation or guided direction while creating a fun and engaging environment.  
- Is enthusiastic while encouraging youth, regardless of what the task may be.  
- Takes time to practice and prepare before leading an activity or session and is willing to research ideas as needed but is able to be spontaneous and alter plans as needed.  
- Employs a variety of teaching methods including demonstration, visual, and hands on learning, and relates the activity to life outside of camp. |

| Teamwork and Leadership | Effectively participates and works as a member of a team; is supportive of peers and other staff; is approachable and has organizational skills, the ability to lead or follow, and sees the “big picture” or goals of camp; understands and follows directions; serves in a supervisory role.  

*Key actions*  
- Supportive of other’s ideas and allows individuals to be in a leadership role and assists them to be successful; shares the workload to provide opportunities for all individuals.  
- Identifies the strengths and weaknesses in the group and draws upon the strengths to achieve a common goal.  
- Assumes the leadership role when appropriate but does not always need to be in charge and allows others to lead.  
- Develops constructive and cooperative working relationships with others. |
<p>| Thinking and Problem Solving | Acquires information and uses thinking skills including creativity and critical thinking to prevent and solve problems; exercises fairness and moral integrity and makes sound judgments; anticipates consequences of actions. |
| Key actions |
| • Identifies potential problems before they occur and takes action to prevent or handle the threat; works with others to solve problems if needed. |
| • Uses creativity to plan activities or solve problems and is not afraid to plan something (e.g., theme, event, game) that has never been conducted before. |
| • Reflects upon performance, experience, and activities and alters ideas as needed. |
| • Employs sound judgment when faced with confrontation, potential breaking of rules, and strives to ensure fairness of all participants. |</p>
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Understands Organizational and Camp Environment</th>
<th>Understands the 4-H organization and philosophy behind it; has a sense of community and citizenship within the camping program; is knowledgeable about whatever content area (nature, technology, horse, etc.) that is the focus of the camp; commits to personal wellness and lives within the camp routine; withdraws from cell phones or other technologies if needed.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Key actions | • Identifies needs of self and campers and learns what is expected of them; generates new ideas suitable for the camp environment.  
• Understands that camp is a special place and can make a difference in a child’s life.  
• Is focused on their job as a counselor.  
• Understands the philosophy and why and how a 4-H camp is conducted and the outcomes that arise for the campers.  
• Has a basic understanding of the rules and what is acceptable and is willing to explain and follow the rules, even if they do not agree with them. |