



The University of Georgia

Graduate Portfolio in Community Engagement
COVER SHEET

Date of Submission: April 1, 2013 (due April 1 or November 1 for review cycle)

Name: Katherine Soule

Department and Major: Recreation and Leisure Studies Degree: PhD

Expected Semester/Year of Graduation: August 2013

Email: [Redacted] Preferred Phone: [Redacted]

Mailing Address: [Redacted]

Portfolio Faculty Mentor Name: Corey Johnson Email: [Redacted]

Title of Community Engagement Portfolio Project: Supporting Children and Families in Vuln

Project is: Engaged Research Engaged Teaching Engaged Service & Outreach

Workshop Attendance Dates: (if via GRSC 7870S or 7970S, indicate semester/year) 03/20/13

- Introduction to Community Engagement 3/20/13
Preparing the Graduate Portfolio in Community Engagement

Sample Portfolios will be available online via the Office of Service-Learning's website.

- May we include your Portfolio on the website? Yes No

Please include all the following with your Portfolio submission, assembled as a single PDF:

- This Cover Sheet
Personal Engagement Philosophy (2 pages)
Description and Self-Assessment of Community Engagement Project/Activity including
Narrative overview/description (1 page)
Impact/anticipated impact (1-2 pages)
Reflective assessment, linking to engagement philosophy and future (2 pages)
Curriculum Vitae, including relevant engagement experiences (2-4 pages)
Letter of support from faculty mentor (1-2 pages)
Appendices with any additional supporting information, including community feedback; List content here:

- 1. Community feedback: Letter from [Redacted], Director of Camping Services, Camp Twin Lakes
2. Samples of Student Reflections
3. Course Evaluations

Table with 2 columns: For OSL Use, Date received; Outcome of Review; v. 2.15.13

Personal Engagement Philosophy Statement

Briefly stated, I believe that teaching should be a dynamic, relational process that, when successful, births an atmosphere conducive to multiple ways of learning. Connecting teaching with community engagement provides me an opportunity to facilitate a reciprocal exchange of knowledge and service between students and their communities. I believe that engaged teaching should foster a learning environment that is built upon community partnership, service, co-education, and reflection. In my own engaged teaching experiences, my goals are to 1) promote personal growth within students as well myself as the educator; 2) address relevant issues for improving the wellbeing of youth, families, and communities; and 3) develop sustainable relationships between community partners and the university that allow for a sharing of resources and enhance opportunities for student learning. My personal engagement philosophy is closely entwined with my commitment to experiential education.

To meet my own teaching goals, I connect experiential education theories with engaged teaching, creating a space for students to have successful learning without taking a spotlight role. I have developed this philosophy through my doctoral assistantship experience, which has provided me with the invaluable opportunity to teach ECHD 4052S, Supporting Children and Families in Vulnerable Situations. Coming into this instructor role, I was well positioned as this previously developed service-learning course had clear academic goals, structured opportunities for service, and reflective components. Through this position, I strive to empower students to develop knowledge rather than absorb it, an effort that has challenged me to find innovative ways to facilitate students' learning. Two areas I have focused on are incorporating additional opportunities for student-led learning and reflection. By increasing opportunities for student-led learning in the classroom, I prompt students to have a personal stake in their learning. Through

additional reflection components, as well as detailed explanations of critical reflection, I ask the students to connect their service experiences to the course content and academic goals through reflective writing and discussion. (Please see samples of student reflections in Appendices).

Beyond teaching, community engagement links with my professional aspirations to focus on improving the wellbeing of youth, families, and communities through engaged research, community programming, and outreach. As my career in academia continues to unfold, I plan to build effective and sustainable community partnerships between my university and its larger communities. Through these community partnerships, I hope to design and instruct service-learning courses for undergraduate and graduate students. Additionally, I plan to conduct action and applied research in order to help community partners in their efforts to identify and address relevant issues in their communities. Finally, through these courses and research I seek to reinforce individuals' sense of civic responsibility and desire to attend to social issues through community outreach and service. My interest in community engagement currently enhances my efforts to facilitate a reciprocal exchange of knowledge and service between the university and its communities, while also developing a learning atmosphere conducive to multiple ways of learning. As I am committed to reciprocity, co-education, and service, I anticipate that however my career path in academia unfolds, I will seek out ways to promote community engagement.

Project Description

In my doctoral assistantship, I have instructed ECHD4052S (Supporting Children and Families in Vulnerable Situations) for the past four semesters. This is a service-learning course in Counseling and Human Development department and has been offered during Fall and Spring semesters for the past four years. My instruction for this course started at the beginning of the third year. Through engaged teaching practices, I facilitate students' investigation of ways to support children and families that have been affected by life-changing situations in order to enhance the students' academic learning while addressing needs of numerous community partners. I have been particular attentive to promoting open and clear communication with the community partners. The primary community partner is Camp Twin Lakes, a network of camps that provide facilities and programming for numerous additional partnering organizations (such as Camp Sunshine, Fugees Family, or Hemophilia of Georgia). Together these partnering organizations serve children and families in challenging life situations, including having severe and chronic medical conditions, surviving war, and experiencing the loss of a family member. I work closely with staff from Camp Twin Lakes and their partner organizations to identify areas of need and then work with the students to address these needs. Throughout and between semesters, I follow-up with the community partners to ascertain if their needs are being met and how their needs may be changing. I have also incorporated the community partners as co-educators and they have imparted valuable knowledge and experience to the students. Additionally, I have been thoughtful about incorporating reflection activities throughout the semester (as writing assignments in addition to one-on-one and group reflection) to assist students in connecting their service experiences with course learning and objectives. In these ways, I strive to ensure that the course is of mutual benefit for students and community partners.

Evidence of Impact

Through engaged teaching, I strive to ensure that both the students and the community partners experience mutually beneficial outcomes. From course evaluations, conversations with students, students' written reflections, and exam material, I have found that most of the students who have completed this course under my instruction experience numerous benefits. These benefits include a deeper connection to the course material, and often material from other courses. On a course evaluation, one student explained: "Being able to attend a couple weekends at camp helped to solidify what I had learned in the classroom." Students have frequently shared that this course has enabled them to see how theories or ideas discussed in class have been implemented or brought to life through their service learning. On a course evaluation one student shared: "The way that the content was presented was very appropriate and I believe that the "hands-on" opportunities at camp really made me more aware of types of situations that I will experience in the future. I can only learn so much in the classroom, so it was great to see how this knowledge applied to real world situations." (Please see course evaluations in Appendices.)

Additionally, many students have the opportunity to work with a specific population that they were previously unfamiliar with (such as teens with cancer or child refugees). Students have explained how these experiences have changed their viewpoints about a certain population of people. For example, students have reported developing a greater understanding of what it means to be a child living with obesity, as well as the challenges that these children's families may experience. For myself, the greatest evidence of impact is when students decide to continue to serve beyond the classroom environment as a result of their learning in this course. Many students have volunteered directly with the partnering organizations, while others have made a career choice based on these experiences. One student sent me an email after completing the

course and shared that the course “really showed me a different part of medicine. The class was much different from my normal schedule of upper level science classes. It allowed me to learn and experience how different families cope with different situations and hardships. I enjoyed going to camp and meeting families who have faced life changing situations. This experience has further established why I want to become a doctor.”

Like the students, our community partners have also reported numerous benefits. Camp Twin Lakes perceives the students’ service, as well as the opportunity to work with the university as a great benefit. Many of the organization’s volunteers and staff members were former students who took a service-learning course with Camp Twin Lakes at one time. As requested (and with the students’ permission), class-generated materials have been made available for the Director of Camping Services. This material provided information from the students’ learning and reflections in working with a particular camp partner. (Please see the letter of feedback provided from [REDACTED], Director of Camping Services in Appendices.)

In addition, I have received positive feedback from Camp Twin Lakes’ partner organizations. Like Camp Twin Lakes, these partners report that they appreciate the students’ service, as well as the partnership with The University of Georgia. For example, a coordinator from a partnering organization sent me an email saying, “Thank you so much for facilitating a great partnership between your students and our families. We enjoyed getting to know you, your family and the students and I so appreciated their energy, enthusiasm and willingness to pitch in wherever needed. This is a great partnership and I hope it will continue to grow.” These partnering organizations have also expressed their appreciation for my attentiveness to communication and addressing their needs. Overall, I am pleased to share that my efforts have resulted in positive outcomes for the students, Camp Twin Lakes, and partnering organizations.

Reflective Assessment

I am immensely grateful for the opportunity to teach ECHD 4052S. Over the four semesters I taught this course, I have experienced both challenge and growth, which has enabled me to develop and refine my personal teaching philosophy. As discussed in my personal engagement philosophy statement, my commitment to experiential education and community engagement are closely related. In teaching ECHD 4052S, I have strived to foster a learning environment for students that is built upon reciprocal community partnership, service, co-education, and reflection. Overall, I believe that I was successful in these efforts. The existing design of this course has made it easy for me to facilitate opportunities for students to engage in service that addresses relevant issues for improving the wellbeing of youth, families, and communities. From the beginning, I have been attentive to the successful development and maintenance of reciprocal community partnerships, focusing on clear and frequent communication with the community partners. Positive feedback from these partners as well as my faculty helped me see that my efforts were both effective and valued.

After the first semester I taught this course, I realized that I had missed opportunities for the students to learn directly from the community partners. Therefore, in the following semesters I was mindful in arranging opportunities for co-education, encouraging the community partners to directly share their knowledge and expertise with the students. In reflecting on students' feedback, these efforts truly enriched the students' learning opportunities. On a course evaluation, a student shared: "I learned more from actually meeting and interacting with the campers, parents, and camp staff than any other part of the class." Similarly, those partners who were most interested in sharing their knowledge also seemed to develop stronger community with the students, which resulted in the most effective student service.

Another area where I have been able to assess and make changes for improvement was in my role as the instructor. One of my goals for teaching is to promote personal growth within students as well as myself as the educator. The reflection assignments were an excellent source of this growth. I believe that writing the reflections and engaging in reflective discussion throughout the semester helped students to more clearly identify areas of learning and personal growth. For myself, I have struggled with some student feedback that my instructions and expectations for assignments, particularly in regards to reflections, were unclear. This struggle included feeling disappointed that I was not meeting the students' needs, having the desire to improve my instruction, and not knowing how to more clearly convey the purpose of the assignment. I tried, with varying success, to address this concern over the next two semesters. However, after becoming familiar with the DEAL model for critical reflection during the Building Effective Community Partnerships for Service-Learning last November, I have been able to use this model to more clearly explain the purpose, value, and expectations for this assignment. So far this semester, students seem to be more comfortable with the assignment and are making stronger connections between their service experiences and the course content.

I have learned a great deal about teaching and community engagement through the past four semesters, which has helped me to extend my personal growth edges. By combining an experiential education and community engagement approach, I have come to develop an instructional style that facilitates co-education, develops community partnerships, and embraces student-led learning. These experiences have helped me build a firm foundation for my future efforts in engaged teaching, and community engagement in general. In my future career, I believe this foundation will enhance my efforts to utilize key tenets of community engagement to improve the wellbeing of youth, families, and communities.

KATHERINE E. SOULE



EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND

Degree/Certificate

	<i>Date of Completion</i>
<i>The University of Georgia</i>	
Ph.D., Recreation and Leisure Studies	August 2013 (Anticipated)
Graduate Certificate in Qualitative Research Methods	August 2013 (Anticipated)
Certificate in Grant Writing	March 2013
<i>California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo</i>	
M.S., Agriculture, emphasis in Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Management	June 2009
B.A., English	December 2003
Certificate of Technical Communication	June 2003

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

The University of Georgia

Instructor of Record, Doctoral Assistantship, Recreation and Leisure Studies	2011-present
Undergraduate Advisor, Recreation and Leisure Studies	2012, Fall

California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

Research/Teaching Assistant, Recreation, Parks, & Tourism Administration	2007-present
Technical Writer, Horticulture & Crop Science	2005-2012
Teaching Assistant, Biological Sciences	2009, Spring

INSTRUCTIONAL INVOLVEMENTS

Instructor of Record, The University of Georgia

2011-present	ECHD 4052S: Supporting Children and Families in Vulnerable Situations <i>Responsibilities:</i> Develop and deliver classroom lectures and class activities related to programming for positive youth development, risk management, and integration of family and community support. Coordinate multiple organizations, agencies, and businesses in the community to enable students to spend two full weekends working with youth and families in the field, as well as evaluations of an additional youth program service provider. Supervise and evaluate students six weekends per semester. Facilitate group and individual debriefing.
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RLST 2000: Leisure in a Diverse Society

Responsibilities: Intentional development and delivery of classroom lectures and activities that match course objectives related to cultural diversity, institutionalized discrimination, and social change. Establish a learning environment that fosters exploration, respect, and personal growth opportunities. Connect students with various opportunities that provide exposure to cultures outside of their personal life experiences. Facilitate critical reflection, cultural awareness, and respect for diversity.

RESEARCH & SCHOLARLY ACTIVITIES

* Please note that my last name was Wassenberg until March 22, 2010 and then became Soule

Selected Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

Goldenberg, M., & **Soule, K.** (In Press). A four-year follow-up of means-end outcomes from outdoor adventure programs. *Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning*.

Soule, K. E., & Goldenberg, M. (2012). Qualitative outcomes of participation in fishing components of NOLS courses. *Journal of Youth Development: Bridging Research & Practice*, 7(1), 71-81.

Goldenberg, M., **Wassenberg, K.**, Greenwood, J., Hendricks, W., Jacobs, J., & Cummings, J. (2010). A qualitative investigation of Californian youth interests in the outdoors. *Journal of Youth Development: Bridging Research & Practice*, 5(1), 31-41.

Soule, K. E. (2nd Revision). Nature's Role in the Cultivation of Spirituality in Children with Chronic or Severe Medical Conditions. *Journal for the Study of Spirituality*. (Originally submitted June 2012.)

Swanson, P. W., **Soule, K.**, & Varcoe, K. P. (2nd Revision). Evaluating changes in teen financial literacy: A comparison between 1998 and 2008 teen surveys. *California Agriculture*. (Originally submitted June 2012).

Powell, G., **Soule, K. E.**, & Johnson, C. (In development). *Moving beyond instruments: Assessing student outcomes with authentic measures*. Being developed for submission to *Scholé: A Journal of Leisure Studies and Recreation Education*, special issue: Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

Selected Peer-Reviewed Presentations

Soule, K. E. (2013, March). *Negotiating Attachment Parenting Motherhood: The Role of the Dialogical Self*. Paper presented at the 2013 Annual Meeting of the Southeastern Psychological Association, Atlanta, GA.

Soule, K., Goldenberg, M., & Hill, E., & Gomez, E. (2013, February). *Means-End Analysis Of Hiking Experiences*. Paper presented at the 2013 Southeastern Recreation Research Conference, Athens, GA.

Soule, K. E. (2012, October). *Speaking of Fathers at Playgrounds*. Paper presented at the 7th International Conference on the Dialogical Self, Athens, GA.

Soule, K. E., & Goldenberg, M. (2012, May). *Female Long-distance Hikers: A Third-wave Feminist Examination*. Paper presented at the Eighth International Congress of Qualitative Inquiry. Chicago, IL.

Soule, K. E. (2012, April). "You need to find another park": A Feminist Discussion of Acceptance of Fathers at Playgrounds. Paper presented at the 2012 Northeastern Recreation Research Symposium, Cooperstown, NY.

Soule, K. E., & Goldenberg, M. (2012, April). "Raised in a concrete jungle": Experiences of Female Pacific Crest Trail Hikers. Paper presented at the 2012 Northeastern Recreation Research Symposium, Cooperstown, NY.

RELATED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

March, 2013	Re-Imagining Leisure: Dismantling the Box that Contains Us, Seminar
January, 2013	Simplicity Parenting for Care Professionals, Workshop
November, 2012	Building Effective Community Partnerships for Service-Learning, Seminar

SERVICE

University Service

2012-present	Student Academic Honesty Council, Graduate Student Panelist <i>The University of Georgia</i>
2012, April	Night of the Arts, Event Supervisor This fundraising event was designed to increase awareness and funds in honor of Camp Twin Lakes as a component of RLST 7130. I supervised over 460 student hours and the event raised more than \$1,400 for Camp Twin Lakes. <i>The University of Georgia</i>
2011-present	Money Talks Workgroup Member <i>University of California Cooperative Extension, Riverside</i>
2008, Winter	Assessment and Evaluation, San Luis Obispo County 4H Presentation Day <i>University of California Cooperative Extension, San Luis Obispo</i>
2007-2008	Preface Discussion Facilitator <i>California Polytechnic State University</i>
2005, Summer	Eat Smart. Play Hard. Program Implementation <i>University of California Cooperative Extension, San Luis Obispo</i>
2003, Spring	Advanced Professional Writing, Student Supervisor Facilitated collaboration on the development of the Report to the Community for the University of California Cooperative Extension, San Luis Obispo, as well six technical writing projects for organizations in the community. <i>California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo</i>
2003, Spring	Collection of Evaluation Data for the Lunch Box Program <i>University of California Cooperative Extension, San Luis Obispo</i>
2000	Organized community food drive <i>Mustang Maniacs, CPSU Student Spirit Organization, San Luis Obispo, CA</i>

Community Service

2009, January	Homeless Shelter Overflow, Night Volunteer <i>Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa</i>
2007-2008	Volunteer Trail Patrol <i>City of San Luis Obispo</i>
2007-2008	Habitat Restoration Crew Member <i>City of San Luis Obispo</i>



The University of Georgia

**Department of Counseling and Human Development Services
Recreation and Leisure Studies Program**

March 28, 2013

Dear Community Engagement Portfolio Review Committee:

It is my distinct pleasure to have served as Katherine Soule's Community Engagement Mentor for the past two years she has spent with us in the Recreation and Leisure Studies Program at the University of Georgia. Katherine is bright, academically oriented, a committed leader, a strong pedagogue and a compassionate graduate teaching assistant who is committed to improving the lives of college students and our community through instruction, service, social justice, service-learning.

In my position as Program Coordinator and as her instructor for Experiential Education, I have had the opportunity to witness Katherine's talents for critical thinking, analytic writing, supervision of undergraduate students, course design and implementation and stewardship. I have observed these things in her execution of ECHD 4052S: Supporting Children and Families in Vulnerable Situations, or what we affectionately call the Camp Twin Lakes course. She has instructed this course for the past four semesters and spends most of her weekends at camp helping students as they navigate the provision of youth development services for those children who have a disability or are ill. Not all graduate teaching assistants have been successful in the delivery of this type of instruction; however, Katherine has exceeded all of our expectations. Katherine has a thorough grasp of the processes of service learning and an ability to provide constructive feedback to others (students, peers, and supervisors) in a way that is rarely encountered in a doctoral student. It is hard for us to imagine the course continuing without her. She has become the resident expert and her direct supervisors Dan Matthews (Camp Twin Lakes) and Gwynn Powell (UGA Supervisor) have repeatedly sang her praises and asked me what we can do to keep Katherine around another year. She also consistently is celebrated by the agencies that utilize Camp Twin Lakes and the UGA students via their course evaluations, which are always outstanding.

In addition to her teaching assignment, I had the opportunity to see Katherine's facilitation skills in action as part of her Experiential Education class she took with me 2012. In that course experience, Katherine supervised 8 undergraduate students who were developing and implementing a major special fundraising event, Night of the Arts. The goal was to raise awareness and funds for her community partner. Katherine managed the project in a calm-confident manner, supporting the undergraduate students, and attentively listening and responding appropriately to our community partner. She was also masterful in designing reflection strategies.

In both of these scenarios Katherine makes the stakeholders (students and community partners) feel safe to explore alternative ideas, perspectives, and programmatic solutions. The students always rise to her high expectations and provide a valuable community service, while learning a great deal about themselves and the course content. As you can see, I think very highly of Katherine Soule. She is academically gifted and a young, but highly effective pedagogue and community change agent. She has been a delightful addition to our program, college, and university and we are glad to see her graduate, but hate to see her

go. If I can offer any additional information regarding her portfolio consideration, please do not hesitate to contact me [REDACTED].

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Corey W. Johnson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Corey W. Johnson, Associate Professor
Associate Department Head & Program Coordinator

APPENDICES

1. Appendix A: Feedback from Community Partner: Letter from [REDACTED], Director of Camping Services, Camp Twin Lakes
2. Appendix B: Student Reflection #1 (Spring 2013)
3. Appendix C: Student Reflection #2 (Spring 2013)
4. Appendix D: Abbreviated Course Evaluations



March 28, 2013

Dr. Paul Matthews
Office of Service Learning
University of Georgia
Athens, Georgia 30602

Dear Dr. Matthews:

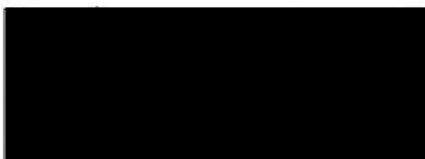
It is with a great deal of pleasure that I write this letter of support for Katherine Soule's Graduate Portfolio in Community Engagement. I have worked with Katherine for two years in her work with the course ECHD 4052: Supporting Children and Families in Vulnerable Situations. She has been an organized and energizing force for the program. She has helped UGA and CTL develop a wonderfully mutually beneficial partnership. Our campers and their families' benefited greatly from having the students participate in our weekend camp.

Camp Twin Lakes has been the beneficiary of numerous students who have completed academic projects under Ms. Soule's tutelage. We have gone on to employ a number of her students in programmatic roles, along with several who have volunteered with one of our Camp Partners.

Ms. Soule's teaching goes well beyond the classroom. It was evident to me that this service learning experience was effective in teaching the students about the lives and struggles of families that have a child with an illness, disability, or other life challenge. Ms. Soule's leadership of the class cannot be overemphasized in accomplishing this for the students, and for the benefit for our campers. We have worked with a number of graduate instructors of this and other courses from UGA, as well as other institutions. Katherine Soule stands out as the strongest of all of them.

I am sure that you will have access to Katherine Soule's other credentials and accomplishments, so I will not belabor the point of repeating them here. I support her with enthusiasm and absolute confidence in her past achievements and future potential. She has been a tremendous asset to UGA, Camp Twin Lakes, and the children of Georgia.

If I may answer any further questions, please call me at 706-557-9070. Thank you for the consideration of this letter.



Director of Camping Services

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Camp Reflection

Camp Blue Skies is, without a doubt, one of the most illuminating experiences of my life. As much of an impact that it had on me, I have no doubt that this camp left more of an impression on the incredible campers than it did on me. Camp Blue Skies is designed to allow adults with developmental disorders, such as Down's syndrome, Asperger's syndrome, and autism to experience life in ways they are unable to at home. Relationships are fostered between the campers, their cabins, the counselors, and the directors. Emotions run rampant the entire week. Tears of joy are shed, shouts of excitement are screamed, and everlasting best friends are made. While the exhilaration of camp momentarily lets the campers forget about their condition, we as counselors cannot overlook this aspect. At camp, we want to give campers life skills that they can apply to daily life. In order to satisfy this desire of ours, we have to have a comprehensive understanding of the conditions that affect these counselors. Medically, we can partially understand the pathophysiology. Socially; however, we must rely on the information that family members can contribute. During my conversations with the different family members, I came to understand much more about the conditions that affect some of the campers, and this drastically changed the preconceptions that I entered into this experience having.

“Emma¹ is a 23 year old woman with Down's syndrome”. This is how I would have described Emma before camp. Now, after talking with her, and her sister, I have come to the decision that I will never define someone by their condition. Emma is a passionate woman, enthusiastic about trying new things, and very social. Within minutes of meeting Emma, she felt completely comfortable around me, and wanted to hold my hand whenever

¹ I, Katherine Soule, have replaced all names with pseudonyms.

we walked from place to place. In talking with Emma's sister, I discovered that Emma is just like anybody else. She can live independently, cook, clean, bicycle, and work all on her own. It is the decision making process that is the hardest for her. Emma's older sister told me that Emma doesn't even like to pick out what to wear in the morning. Difficult choices are one of things that set her off, and when that happens, she has to get away from people for a few hours to settle down.

As I talked with John's parents, they helped me understand what it was like living with someone like John. Autism has few physical manifestations, but profound mental implications. John fixates on certain topics. While I was with him and his parents, I found out that his fixation was churches. He would ask me all kinds of questions about church (documented in the attached notes). His parents noted that this behavior was difficult to deal with in different environments. John's unintentional misreading of social cues inhibits him from acting entirely appropriately in every situation. At school, John was educated on an IEP, individualized educational plan, in the special education program. One-on-one interaction with his teachers allowed him to flourish. His parents said that once he satisfied his curiosity with each person's church background, he could focus on the material at hand for a while. As far as his parents' opinions on living with him, they said that they were blessed. They said that patience was a virtue they developed through John.

How can Camp Blue Skies use family input such as this to generate an unforgettable experience for the campers? Respectfully, many of the campers have developmental disorders that place them at the same level of cognitive ability as people younger than them. Camp Blue Skies will not be able to cure the campers, but has the potential to help the campers develop long-term skills by instilling in them the values of positive development, as

we have discussed in class. While these values are “designed” for youth, they are applicable to individuals of any age. Camp Twin Lakes in Rutledge offers an array of activities, with highly compassionate counselors that allow campers to overcome their fears with both physical and psychological safety, foster relationships with other campers and the counselors, and provide opportunities for the campers to belong. A particularly social camper came up to me one night and told me that he was tired of being the “weird one, the outcast.” He just wanted to belong, and as the week progressed, I asked other counselors to check on him for me. They said that at the dance that Thursday night, several new friends surrounded him and that he had a huge smile plastered on his face. That is why camp exists. That is why programs such as Camp Blue Skies are important. The social connections so critical for positive development are fostered here. Camp Twin Lakes is designed for support, and that is extremely evident here. The appropriate structure is maintained from start to finish, and the campers feel safe the entire time.

On a personal level, this experience was about overcoming preconceptions that limited my compassion for this population. But this experience was so much greater than that for the campers. The counselors could see relationships developing between campers very clearly. Even though campers are discouraged from exchanging numbers, I know that several of these campers are going to remain friends for a very long time. Without a doubt, I will be partaking in camps like this again. Experiences like this are rare, and when we can embark upon new journeys such as these, they make the world a little better of a place to be.

Camp Reflection

“My favorite part about camp is having the chance to meet other warriors. I see Cancer as a battle, and it’s so awesome and rewarding to meet other survivors who have fought the same battle.” The preceding quote was said to me during a conversation with a 16 year old camper named Daniel at the Camp Sunshine Teen Retreat this past weekend. It summarizes perfectly my sentiments towards the camp and all of the wonderful people I met. During my time there, I learned so much about Cancer and the effects it has on both the people who suffer from it and on those closest to them. To be completely honest, prior to this weekend, I had no idea there were so many different types of Cancer. Nor, did I even know the difference between Chemotherapy and Radiation Treatment.

¹Daniel suffered from a rare brain cancer known as Medulloblastoma, and he is currently 5 years post diagnosis and underwent 4 years of treatment. He was diagnosed at the age of 10 in July 2007, just mere weeks before the start of his 5th grade year. He mentioned that not only was it a tough time for him, but it was also rough on his family. Upon his diagnosis, he said the doctor told them that, “every year approximately 1,000 children are diagnosed with Medulloblastoma, 200 are able to receive treatment, and only 20 survive.” Daniel said the doctor cautioned his parents to avoid looking up information about his condition on search engines, out of fear that it would cause them to worry and panic more. Instead, he merely instructed them to follow his orders and those of the other doctors and nurses within the hospital. I actually had the opportunity to speak with Daniel’s mother, and she spoke very highly of Camp Sunshine and its programs. She even went so far as to say, “he [Daniel] loves coming to camp, because here he is no longer considered ‘the different one’.”

¹ I, Katherine Soule, replaced all names with pseudonyms

Another camper I had the privilege of conversing with was 18 year old, Greg. Greg received his original diagnosis in 2nd grade. At the time of his diagnosis, he was experiencing severe headaches and facial seizures and his mother assumed he simply needed glasses. However, upon taking him to the doctor it was discovered that he had a brain tumor. He underwent quite a few surgeries to have the tumor removed, however they were unsuccessful. He relapsed on four separate occasions. As far as treatment goes, he has only undergone Chemotherapy one time via IV, but he has had it in pill form. He has also had radiation treatment. Recently, the radiation has made the left side of his body weak and he has trouble walking and performing basic tasks with his left arm. Because of this, he goes to leg therapy every Monday and arm therapy every Wednesday. When asked how his condition has affected his family, he mentioned that it has caused them to be overly concerned at times but overall it has brought them closer together. His favorite part of camp is having the chance to take part in all of the activities and interacting with his friends.

When reflecting on my experiences from this past weekend working alongside Camp Twin Lakes and Camp Sunshine staff, I can honestly say that they were very effective at offering support and opportunities for positive youth development. In fact, upon checking-in at CTL I saw a sign posted in the main office that read, “providing places and paths for children with illnesses and life challenges to experience the joys of childhood and grow in their confidence and capabilities.” This mission is in alignment with our course content, especially the features of positive youth development which suggests that the key to promoting positive development in adolescents is by grasping an understanding of the factors that contribute to their healthy development. Specifically as it pertains to the domains: physical, intellectual, psychological/emotional, and social development.

Camp Sunshine is a wonderful place that promotes inclusivity and a sense of community. Not only do they hold programs in a safe/secure environment, but they also encourage supportive relationships, promote an environment where each and every camper has an opportunity to belong, enforces positive social norms, and provides opportunities for skill building (Eccles and Gootman). Their goal is to allow children who have suffered from Cancer or are currently battling it to be normal kids. They provide a safe space for them to interact with others who share similar experiences as them and to not be viewed merely as the 'kid with Cancer.' Not only did they host a plethora of skill-building and team building exercises, but they also allowed attendees to be creative in arts and crafts, and forget about their physical handicaps through activities like rock climbing, zip-lining, and a host of other options. In addition to this, they also encourage self-confidence and growth within each and every camper. I think one of the major things I took away from my weekend at Camp Sunshine is that all of the young men and women affected by Cancer are still like every other teenager. They laugh, cry, over exaggerate, and have the same 'teenage problems' we all had growing up.

Abbreviated¹ Course Evaluations

Semester: FALL 2011

Instructor: KATHERINE ELIZABETH SOULE Course: ECHD 4052S Call#: 50061

N = 14 n = 5 Rsp. Rate = 36%

Please provide feedback on the instructor(s) of this class.

- Instruction in the class was clear, though some of the online activities were not as clear as I would have liked.
 - The instruction during this course was very clear and comprehensive. I felt like everything was clearly articulated and I always knew what to expect. I also felt well prepared for the camp weekends because of class instruction.
 - The instruction was great! We all learned so much from Katherine and loved having her as our instructor. She was always helpful and willing to do whatever she could to make sure we understood what was expected of us. She really made this a wonderful experience for all of us.
 - Very well taught, teacher was approachable and easy to get along with
-

Q18. Please provide feedback on the content and format of this class.

- I feel that the camp was the biggest component of this class and attributed to the largest portion of learning. However, I feel that the tests and assignments were sometimes a lot more difficult than expected and possibly unnecessary for this type of field experience class
 - Lessons were redundant but still relevant. Sometimes not very interesting but worth spending three hours in class in order to be prepared for camp
 - The content of this course was all relevant to working with families in vulnerable situations.
 - The content was well organized and understandable.
-

Q19. What else would you like to say about this class?

- I enjoyed the format of the class. I liked that we were able to spend two full weekends at camp. I also liked that we did not meet every week for this class, but rather met to prepare and reflect upon weekends at camp.
- I thought the format was perfect. We had just the right amount of course instruction on Wednesday nights. I loved getting to visit twin lakes prior to our 1st weekend at camp as well. It made me more comfortable when we started the weekend. I also loved just getting to be at twin lakes for 2 weekends out of the year in general. I know that I will continue to volunteer with these camps as the years go on. Twin lakes is such a wonderful place, I will never forget

¹ In condensing the course evaluations, I have included students written comments from each semester. I was deliberate about selecting comments that were representative of all students' feedback (positive and critical). If desired, I would be pleased to provide the evaluations in their entirety.

the 2 weekends I spent there. Like I previously said, I hope to spend many weekends there in the years to come.

- the field experience was amazing and getting to go to camp was something i'll never forget. you really learn a lot more doing it that way

*Q20. How did the fact that the course was held at camp influence your learning experience?

- hugely. Hands on experience really lets you try out the skills you talk about in class and not just be tested over them.
- I learned more by spending time at camp. I am not much of a camper and did not know much about camp prior to this experience. I now feel very different about camp and feel like I understand how camps are run, especially when families are invited.
- It got us invested in our learning. Learning about how to be a good leader in the classroom and then getting a chance to put it into action at camp made learning particularly interesting and fun.
- The camps were the most important/educational aspects of the class.
- The majority of the "learning" took place at camp. Being able to apply book/online lessons in real life experiences was very rewarding.

Semester: SPRING 2012

Instructor: KATHERINE ELIZABETH SOULE Course: ECHD 4052S Call#: 01994

N = 19 n = 15 Rsp. Rate = 79%

Please provide feedback on the instructor(s) of this class.

- Instruction was good. Expectations were not clearly stated enough.
- Katharine did a good job of instructing us to prepare us. I felt like I learned a lot because of instruction.
- Katherine did a great job teaching this class. I believe some essays/ writings were graded more harsh than it should have for a non english class
- Katherine was very helpful, reachable by email or office hours at host times, and clearly wanted students to get the most from her instruction. The fact that the class only met 6 times made it hard to form a close student/teacher bond with her, which made me more reluctant to contact her directly during the first half of the semester. If she had explained the assignments more fully in class, I might have been more prepared for the grading style and the expectations of the assignments. Overall, I enjoyed Katherine's instruction and felt that she wanted students to succeed.
- Professor Soule is good instructor, I just wish she would come across as more warm and friendly (which I know she is) from time to time.
- The overall instruction was good; however, I thought expectations for writing assignments were not clearly laid out in the beginning. Perhaps too much emphasis was even put on the actual writing content. Some of the instructions on the assignments and midterm were also confusing and difficult to interpret what exactly it was asking of us.
- Very good! I really appreciated Katherine's willingness to interact with us, her quick response to emails, and her willingness to discuss our camp experiences with us.

Please provide feedback on the content and format of this class.

- - contained very interesting information, useful for many areas of life
- I learned a lot! The content was very relevant to what I want to do upon graduation and even introduced me to new passions and experiences. I was challenged by the content and like having to be creative in our assignments.
- The book was not that useful. The experiences at camp were what makes the class worth taking.
- The content of this class was very relevant and prepared me for attending class.
- The content was clearly aligned with the goals of the class
- The content was okay, sometimes a bit redundant. I liked attending the camps.
- The content was perfect. I really liked everything that we learned and was able to apply all of it to the camp weekends.

What else would you like to say about this class?

- I enjoyed the fact that this class only met 6 times throughout the semester because of my busy schedule, but the fact that this forced assignments and assessments to be on ELC was extremely frustrating. Online assignments do not lend themselves to flexibility, and glitches with the system of the complications of the class webpage made it hard to figure out what assignments were due when, and what was expected of students.
- I often did not know how my assignments were going to be graded. I felt like the content of my papers were not important, only the grammar.
- loved format, some classes were way too long
- The classes were stretched out too long for what we learned. They could have been shorter with the same content being learned.
- The format was good. Being in the field is where you learn the most.
- The format was great! The number of class meetings was perfect, and the online midterm and final are very nice and convenient.
- The six meetings and camp weekends was a great way to put our learning into immediate

How did your experiences at camp attribute to your learning?

- a lot. Learned more in the field than in the classroom.
- attending camp was extremely beneficial to our learning. It gave us the opportunity to apply what we had learned as well as to learn from experience
- I absolutely think that my experience at camp was integral to my understanding of the material I learned in class. Camp solidified and personified the concepts presented in class, and enriched my learning experience in a way that I could never have received in class. I would definitely suggest keeping at least two camp experiences throughout the semester, and possibly adding more or moving them towards the beginning of the semester in place of other assignments.
- It put everything into something viable. I was able to connect what we learned in class with something that was real. I was also able to see how certain situations played out. It taught me to be flexible with programming and vulnerable situations because nothing will ever go as planned.
- It was great hands on experience. It was challenging and forced students to step outside of their box. Also, it was cool to get to analyze and evaluate the camp's structures and organization. Great learning experience!
- It was great to supplement information in class.
- It was my favorite part of the class. It definitely helped my learning.
- LOVED CAMP!!
- The experiences at camp were some of the best experiences I have had at the University of Georgia.

- They were the core of my learning experience. I learned more from actually meeting and interacting with the campers, parents, and camp staff than any other part of the class.

Semester: FALL 2012

Instructor: KATHERINE ELIZABETH SOULE Course: ECHD 4052S Call#: 01999

N = 14 n = 9 Rsp. Rate = 64%

Please provide feedback on the instructor(s) of this class.

- Katherine was a great teacher. I really learned a lot about counseling and how medical conditions affect families. I have taken three counseling classes previously, and she was my favorite teacher by far.
 - Katherine was very welcoming to questions and comments. Material was presented in a logical, entertaining, and effective way.
 - My only suggestion would be to be more specific about assignment expectations.
 - The class relied heavily on student participation and open discussion which I believe to be the best way to encourage learning.
 - The instructor did a great job in providing clear instructions of all material in the class.
 - The instructor did not always do a good job of informing the students on what to expect when it came to camp or the assignments in the class. Many things were last minutes and unorganized. Many of the assignments were graded unfairly. There was too much of a focus on grammar than the actual content of the material. She did not seem to have the right personality for the course.. need to be more outgoing.
 - The powerpoints were helpful with learning the material as well as the many in-class group learning assignments.
-

Please provide feedback on the content and format of this class.

- Course content was well developed. At times I felt overworked, but in retrospect the course was much shorter than the semester.
 - Out of the three counseling courses that I have taken at UGA, this has been my favorite. I learned more about counseling, family dynamics, and field-intensive investigations of medical conditions than in any other class. I know that this class will strongly prepare me for my future career.
 - The content was very helpful in learning. Some of the content should have focused more on how to deal with kids in vulnerable situations. Much of the material was geared towards healthy children instead of children with illness. The assignments were all very helpful in learning though.
 - The course material was extremely relevant and the textbook was especially useful.
 - There was a lot of content in the class, but it did very well to prepare the class for camp.
-

What else would you like to say about this class?

- Because the class was much shorter than a normal class, there was an intense work load which was difficult to manage at times.
- Because there were only 5 classes, the workload was very intense at some points throughout the semester. Overall, I did like the format, but I would love to be able to attend more weekends at camp!
- Classes were long, but the way it was divided didn't make it drag on. It was refreshing to have a course that I was able to put a lot of input into during discussions.

- I enjoyed having the five long courses in addition to the two weekends at camp. It provided a great learning environment.
 - I thought it was difficult to find out what was due when, and what was expected. Different things were all written/explained in different places and it was really hard to find what was expected of us that week. Also, the things required to do before camp was very unclear.
 - It was extremely helpful to prepare in the classroom before heading to camp and then be able to debrief afterwards.
 - The format of the class was well structured. The instructor provided us with details and steps of what we needed to do each week and what was due.
-

How did the fact that the course was held at camp influence your learning experience?

- Being able to attend a couple weekends at camp helped to solidify what I had learned in the classroom and allowed me to gain first hand experience working with families going through many life challenges. I would not have been able to gain such skills within a classroom setting.
- Having the course at camp made it unlike any learning experience I have ever had. I truly enjoyed the hands-on experience!
- I learned about how camp affects people as well as how vulnerable situations impact people. It was a great way to apply classroom information into real life.
- I loved every minute of it. It challenged me, helped me learn the material and gain experience, but most importantly, it helped me grow as a person.
- It gave us students a hands on experience instead of just learning from the classroom about what you can expect at camps and what may occur. We actually got to experience that, and with different disabilities which helps us in covering a variety of areas for our futures.
- The camp was great! The experience was so helpful. Definitely an integral part in the learning experience for the course. The field experience was great for being able to apply many of the things we learned.
- The way that the content was presented was very appropriate and I believe that the "hands-on" opportunities at camp really made me more aware of types of situations that I will experience in the future. I can only learn so much in the classroom, so it was great to see how this knowledge applied to real world situations.
- Yes! The camp experience was both rewarding and educational. I would recommend this class to anyone!