


A large teal circular graphic with a circuit board pattern, containing the text 'Spy Hop' and 'EVALUATION REPORT'.

*Spy Hop*

**EVALUATION  
REPORT**

A solid teal horizontal bar.

2011-2012

# Empowering Youth Through Creative Technologies

2011-2012 Evaluation Report  
for Spy Hop Productions

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Spy Hop Productions (Spy Hop) is a nonprofit youth media arts and educational enrichment center located in downtown Salt Lake City. Spy Hop's mission is to mentor young people in the digital media arts to help them find their voice, tell their stories, and be empowered to affect positive change in their lives, their communities, and the World. In 2011-12, Spy Hop served 1,833 students through classes in film, audio, music, and design.

This evaluation report details information gathered to assess the impact of programming in the 2011-2012 program year and to identify lessons learned for program improvement. Data collected included program records, end of class youth surveys, youth journal reflections, a student focus group and a survey of program alumni.



Findings indicate that Spy Hop's programs are consistently strong, are delivered in alignment with best practices in youth programming, develop important student skills, and impact youth attitudes and behaviors in ways that set them up for life success.

- **Spy Hop delivers programs of consistent quality that result in youth satisfaction.**

This year's evaluation revealed that not only do youth participants give Spy Hop programs high marks, but that these high ratings are consistent year after year and across program types.

- **Spy Hop successfully balances high expectations and youth choice.**

Spy Hop has prioritized holding high expectations for its students while providing youth with the freedom to influence class content and pace. Research into youth programming affirms that these are qualities of highly effective youth programs, yet it can be challenging to do both well, simultaneously.<sup>1</sup> Nonetheless, student survey results and comments show that Spy Hop students are challenged to meet high standards of learning and accomplishment while also having freedom of choice and opportunities to contribute and influence the class. Year over year comparison data shows that these program qualities are consistent over time within Core Programs.

- **Technology and digital media engage youth and encourage personal expression.**

Spy Hop mentors young people in the digital media arts in part to help them find their voice and tell their stories. To this end, Spy Hop specializes in teaching creative technologies that are appealing to youth and creating a class culture that encourages artistic self-expression using digital media. Surveys affirm that the current array of classes attract and engage

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<sup>1</sup>Smith, C., & Hohmann, C. (2005). Full findings from the Youth PQA validation study. Ypsilanti, MI: HighScope Educational Research Foundation.

students and that, once in the classes, these youth are encouraged to use their developing technology skills to communicate what matters to them.

- **Spy Hop fosters safe space and community building in its Core Programs.**

Spy Hop is committed to creating a program atmosphere that fosters the psychological and emotional safety of all participants. Research has shown that welcoming and supportive environments that afford psychological and emotional safety are fundamentally important characteristics of high quality youth programming.<sup>2</sup> As concluded in last year's evaluation, creating a safe and supportive environment is one of Spy Hop's program delivery strengths.

- **Spy Hop develops digital literacy, including technology skills and media literacy.**

Spy Hop classes are structured to develop youth skills using technology and digital media. Spy Hop serves a population that largely has access to computers and the Internet, but provides them access to professional equipment and software that they would not have access to otherwise. Each class addresses a different form of digital media and the specific learning objectives vary accordingly. However, all classes support students to understand what specific types of technology are, how each works, what purposes each can serve, and how each can be used efficiently and effectively to achieve specific goals. This evaluation suggests that Spy Hop builds youth skills using technology for communication and for artistic and creative expression.

- **Spy Hop fosters interpersonal skills including teamwork, collaboration, and communication.**

Spy Hop classes are typically structured to require teamwork and collaboration. Students work together, in an interdependent fashion, to achieve a shared goal, the final product for the class. This requires that the youth trust and respect one another, communicate effectively, and cooperate with members of the team. Current students report learning a great deal about teamwork and collaboration at Spy Hop, while Spy Hop alumni give the highest ratings to Spy Hop impact on their ability to work on diverse teams.

- **Spy Hop encourages self-management and high productivity.**

Spy Hop classes are project-based and afford students ample opportunity to practice skills associated with self-management and high productivity. Self-management skills, including the ability to regulate one's own behavior and emotions to reach goals, are important for school and workplace success. High productivity, also considered an important 21st century workplace skill, includes prioritizing, planning and managing for results, effective use of real-world tools, and the ability to produce relevant, high-quality products.

- **Spy Hop nurtures positive identity development and future orientation.**

Positive identity includes being aware of one's own talents and skills and a belief in one's own abilities. Future orientation includes both awareness of the range of possible options for the future and clarification of and optimism about one's own personal goals. Like last

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<sup>2</sup> Smith, C., & Hohmann, C. (2005). Full findings from the Youth PQA validation study. Ypsilanti, MI: HighScope Educational Research Foundation.

year's evaluation, this evaluation found that students credit Spy Hop with helping them identify their own talents, gain confidence and clarify their goals for the future.

- **Spy Hop lays a foundation for community connectedness and social responsibility.**

Spy Hop encourages students to see the connections between their use of media and their ability to promote social good in the communities to which they belong. Civic and social responsibility, global awareness, and cultural literacy are considered 21st century workplace skills. Evaluation results suggest that fostering community connectedness is a program outcome, but not as pronounced, at least in the short term, as other program outcomes.

- **Alumni report that Spy Hop contributed to their post-secondary success.**

This evaluation examined Spy Hop's impact on preparing students for post-secondary success by asking Core Program participants, past and present, to self-report their relevant experiences. Spy Hop increases high school aged student confidence in their preparation for media-related study and career, while alumni report that Spy Hop's strongest supports of their post-secondary experience are in the areas of exploring career options.

- **Spy Hop is a valuable community-based prevention program that decreases youth risk factors and fosters protective factors.**

Spy Hop reduces alienation among its participants while fostering interaction and good relationships among pro-social peers around positive activities. Spy Hop instructors provide youth regular contact with supportive adults, while the classes and Open Mic Program serve as a valuable community-level protective factor that provide opportunities and rewards for pro-social participation. It is reasonable to assume that by decreasing risk factors and increasing protective factors at the individual, peer and community level, Spy Hop decreases youth risk for substance abuse, violence, and other adverse outcomes.



# INTRODUCTION

## About Spy Hop

Spy Hop opened its doors in 1999 in Salt Lake City, Utah serving 12 students. Currently Spy Hop provides approximately 2,000 youth annually (ages 7 – 24) with hands-on and mentorship-based programs in film, music, radio, and digital design during the critical after-school hours of 4-8 pm. Recognized by the White House as one of the top arts and humanities based organizations in the country, Spy Hop was chosen as a finalist for the 2010 National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award given by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

The **values** that guide Spy Hop's programming and organizational culture are:

- **Transformation:** Transformative nature of human relationships as a force of good.
- **Diversity:** All art, including digital media, is at its core about expression of individualism.
- **Empowerment:** When Spy Hop students gain digital media knowledge, they are empowered to move from being a passive consumer of media to an active and engaged producer.
- **Innovation:** Embracing the progressive nature of innovation by continuously adapting to the changing cultural and technological landscapes.
- **Community:** Commitment to our own small community has the ability to create dramatic social change in the larger communities all around us.

Spy Hop's **programmatic goals** are to:

- Provide high-quality, safe out-of-school-time programming for K-12 youth.
- Foster personal and artistic expression through the use of emerging digital technologies and the media arts.
- Develop 21<sup>st</sup> century educational and workplace readiness skills.
- Promote positive youth development and social and emotional competencies.
- Increase media literacy, personal awareness and community and global connections.

In 2011-12, Spy Hop served 1,833 students through classes and other programming in film, audio, music, and design. Spy Hop students range in age from 7 to 20, with an average student age of 15. Males make up 74% of Spy Hop's student body, while females comprise 26% of students served. Almost half (48%) of students served reported to be of an ethnic minority and additionally students reported a total of 25 different languages spoken in the home. Students came from a total of 114 schools from across the Wasatch Front.

Spy Hop Core Programs are delivered in Spy Hop's classrooms at their downtown facility. In 2011-2012, 258 students enrolled in these classes and workshops, which typically met twice a week for a few weeks in a row, or for a full year; an additional 640 students participated in the weekly drop-in Open Mic Program. Spy Hop also served 935 students through collaborations with community partner organizations and public schools designed to bring Spy Hop classes to students who otherwise would not have access. Spy Hop Productions also partnered with four Utah Title 1 junior high schools to provide an afterschool media arts program that gave participating students opportunities to learn about storytelling through the digital arts medium of their choice.

### **About the Evaluation**

This evaluation report details information gathered to assess the impact of programming in the 2011-2012 program year and to identify lessons learned for program improvement. The evaluation process was a collaborative effort guided by an external evaluation consultant, with Spy Hop program staff taking a meaningful role in designing a program logic model, determining evaluation questions, collecting data, and interpreting results.

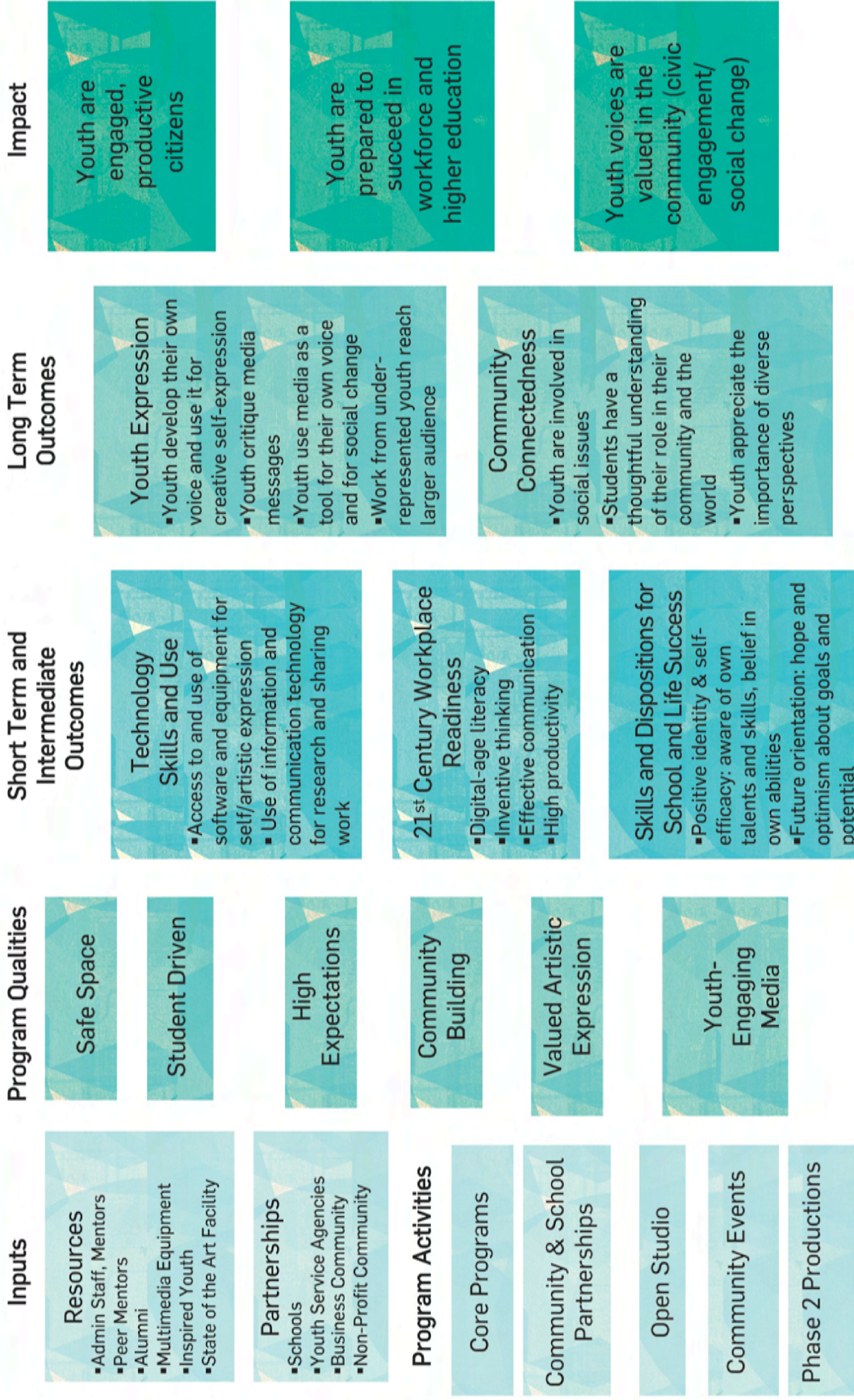
### **Evaluation Design and Guiding Questions**

Evaluation questions were guided by Spy Hop's Logic Model, which outlines the organization's intentions about program qualities, participants' experiences, and the program's impact on participant skills, attitudes and beliefs, and behaviors. The specific evaluation questions were:

- To what extent is Spy Hop delivering high quality programs (defined as consistent with the logic model and research-based best practices)?
- To what extent do Spy Hop classes foster technology access, skills and use, and 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace readiness skills?
- To what extent does Spy Hop participation shift skills, dispositions, and attitudes that are associated with school and life success?
- To what extent do Spy Hop classes decrease risk factors and increase protective factors at the individual, peer, and community levels?
- What evidence is there that Spy Hop impacts youth behaviors and their experiences of success in work, in the community, and in life overall?



# Spy Hop Productions Logic Model



## Data Sources and Response Rates

The following data sources were used in this evaluation.

Core Programs (September 2011 - August 2012, with 2010-2011 results included for comparison):

- **Online Surveys** - Online surveys were completed by 215 students from 14 Spy Hop classes, reflecting a response rate of 83%. Youth who enrolled in Core Programs completed an online end of class survey. Surveys included a mix of Likert scale and open-ended questions about program qualities, program impact, and participant satisfaction.
- **Youth Journals** - Youth who enrolled in intermediate and advanced Core Programs completed online journals at occasional intervals during their class experience. Each journal entry consisted of responses to up to six open-ended questions designed to elicit qualitative feedback about the student experience. 219 unique journal entries (compared to 202 in 2010-11) were completed in 14 classes.
- **Student Focus Group** - Sixteen current Spy Hop students participated in a focus group-style discussion facilitated by a Spy Hop staff member. The focus group was recorded, transcribed, and analyzed by the evaluation consultant.
- **Intake Forms** – Student demographic data including student access to technology was collected from 55 intake forms from Core Program students.

Core Programs
Loud and Clear Youth Radio
Media Labs
Multimedia Apprenticeship
Musicology
Spy Hop Records
Reel Stories
Write Shoot Ride
Watch This
Open Mic
Pitch Nic (Narrative & Documentary)

Community Programs Partners
Bennion Elementary
Division of Youth Services Boys & Girls Group Home
Decker Lake Youth Center
Horizonte Training Center
Whittier Elementary
Salt Lake Early Intervention

Community Programs (September 2011 - August 2012)

- **Paper Surveys** - Students from eight partner sites completed 244 surveys. Surveys were designed to measure student program satisfaction, program qualities and impact. In order to minimize the length of the survey, each student completed one of three versions with only five questions each.

Junior High Programs
Kearns Junior High
Northwest Junior High
Matheson Junior High
West Lake Junior High

Junior High Programs (September 2011 – August 2012)

- **Paper Surveys** - Students from after school programs delivered at three junior high sites completed 47 surveys, reflecting a response rate of 85%. Surveys were designed to measure student satisfaction and program impact as well as collect demographic data on students participating in the programs.

Spy Hop Core Class Alumni (September 2009 – September 2012):

- **Online Survey** - Beginning in 2009, Spy Hop has administered an annual alumni survey (planned in collaboration with the Utah Education Policy Center). The survey is emailed to past program participants who have “aged out” of the programs. This report includes information gathered from four years of annual survey results. 105 alumni responded to this survey for the first time between 2009-12. Additionally, 26 of the 2009-10 respondents completed the survey a second time in 2011-12.

Open Mic Program

- **Intake Forms** – Data on access to technology was collected from 112 intake forms from youth in the Open Mic Program.



*“Spy Hop has always had nothing but a positive effect on my life. More than anything, it has been a huge boost to my self esteem. I always feel valued at Spy Hop and as a result I feel more confident in my everyday life and interactions with others.”*

# FINDINGS: PROGRAM QUALITY

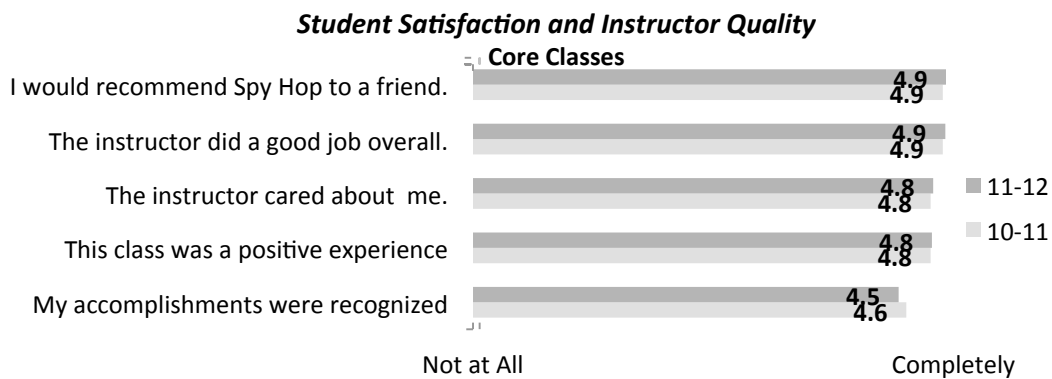
For decades, youth advocates have argued for increased availability of out-of-school time programming for children and teens. Researchers have demonstrated that regular attendance at high quality youth programs is associated with desirable outcomes including improved academic performance, social skills, and interpersonal behavior and decreased risky behavior and misconduct.<sup>3</sup> More recently, the youth development field has increased its focus on program quality. Researchers have uncovered evidence that effective youth programs share certain qualities while desirable program outcomes are by no means guaranteed by every youth program.<sup>4</sup> This year’s evaluation aimed to examine the extent to which Spy Hop delivers high quality programs as defined by its organizational values and by research-based best practices.

## Spy Hop delivers programs of consistent quality that result in youth satisfaction.

Spy Hop strives to provide high-quality youth programs that engage youth. This year’s evaluation revealed that not only do youth participants give Spy Hop program high marks, but that these high ratings are consistent year after year and across program types.

### Core Programs

Student satisfaction is particularly important for Spy Hop’s programs, which require participants travel to the classes on their own initiative. On end of class surveys, most (84%) students agreed *completely* that, “This class was a positive experience overall” (which is similar to last year’s 85% rate). Also, instructors continued to earn exceptionally high youth ratings.



3 Mahoney, J., Vandell, D. L., Simpkins, S., & Zarrett, N. (2009). Adolescent out-of-school activities. In R. M. Lerner & L. Steinberg (Eds.), *Handbook of adolescent psychology*, 3rd Ed. (pp.228-269). New York: John Wiley.

Vandell, D. L., Reisner, E. R. & Pierce, K. M. (2007). Outcomes linked to high-quality afterschool programs: Longitudinal findings from the Study of Promising Afterschool Programs. Report to the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

4 Durlak, J. A., Weissberg, R. P., & Pachan, M. K. (2010). A meta-analysis of afterschool programs that seek to promote personal and social skills in children and adolescents. *American Journal Community Psychology*, 16, 294-309.

Westmoreland, H. & Little, P. (2006). Exploring quality standards for middle school after school programs: What we know and what we need to know. Harvard Family Research Project, Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Smith, C., Akiva, T., Sugar, S., Lo, Y. J., Frank, K. A., Peck, S. C., Cortina, K. S., & Devaney, T. (2012). Continuous quality improvement in afterschool settings: Impact findings from the Youth Program Quality Intervention study.

Washington, DC: The Forum for Youth Investment.



Core class participant comments illustrate high levels of satisfaction and instructor quality.

*"I just finished musicology... it turned out to be one of the best times I ever had."*

*"[The best thing about Spy Hop was] how effective instruction allowed for quick completion of a project. The instructor was willing to go over things already covered in case someone didn't understand."*

### Community Programs

Spy Hop surveyed Community Program participants for the first time this year and reported high rates of satisfaction. When asked, "If you had a choice, would you sign up for another Spy Hop class?" almost all (97%) students answered yes. Youth comments indicated they would like to sign up for another Spy Hop class because it is fun, while several students also commented on the quality of the instructors.

*"The teacher is super way nice and we always have fun with the Spy Hop people."*

*"The teachers are very open and helpful. They taught me how to do stop motion filmmaking animation. Thank you all for helping brighten my day."*

Community Program participants were asked how strongly they agreed with the statement, "My accomplishments were recognized by the instructor," as one measure of instructor quality. Their responses were similar to those of Core Program students, with students indicating high agreement.

### **Student Satisfaction and Instructor Quality Community Partnerships and Core Classes**



### Junior High Programs

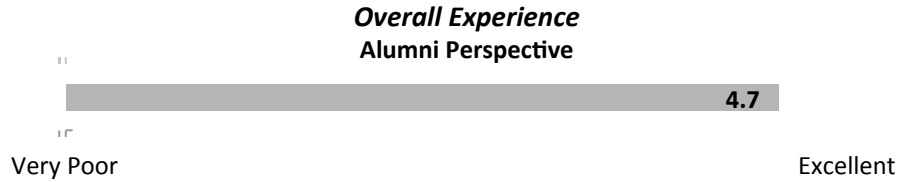
This year, Spy Hop created a new initiative to expand after school programming in partnership with selected Utah Title 1 junior high schools. Students in these Junior High Programs were also asked about the quality of their experience on end of program surveys. Though they were slightly less likely than Core Program students to agree *completely*, after school students gave very high satisfaction ratings.

### **Student Satisfaction and Instructor Quality Junior High and Core Classes**



## Alumni Perspective

Most (71%) of alumni rated their Spy Hop experience as excellent.



Several alumni mentioned the quality of the instructors and mentors as the thing they most valued about their participation in Spy Hop.

*"[I most valued the] mentoring from industry professionals and networking."*

*"The teachers and mentors at Spy Hop are fantastic. They would teach me up to a certain point, then allow me to do whatever I thought was best."*

*"I felt that all the instructors really wanted us to succeed and were always very encouraging."*

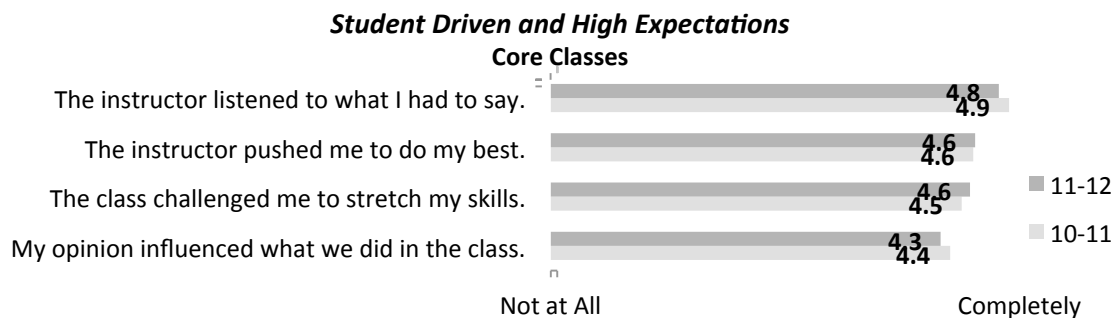
*"The amount of freedom we are given at Spy Hop is brilliant and allows us to come up with something new and original."*

## Spy Hop successfully balances high expectations and youth choice.

Spy Hop has prioritized holding high expectations for its students while providing youth with freedom to influence class content and pace. Research into youth programming affirms that these are qualities of highly effective youth programs, yet it can be challenging to do both well, simultaneously.<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, student survey results and comments show that Spy Hop students are challenged to meet high standards of learning and accomplishment while also having freedom of choice and opportunities to contribute and influence the class. Year over year comparison data shows that these program qualities are consistent over time within Core Programs.

### Core Programs

Core Program student surveys indicate the classes are student driven yet demanding. Their responses to relevant survey items were almost identical to those of students surveyed in the previous year.



<sup>5</sup>Smith, C., & Hohmann, C. (2005). Full findings from the Youth PQA validation study. Ypsilanti, MI: HighScope Educational Research Foundation.

Several students chose to elaborate on the freedom they experienced in Spy Hop classes through their responses to survey, journal, and focus group questions.

*"[The best thing about Spy Hop was] being able to completely design the format and everything about the class. We put everything together and learned to work as a team."*

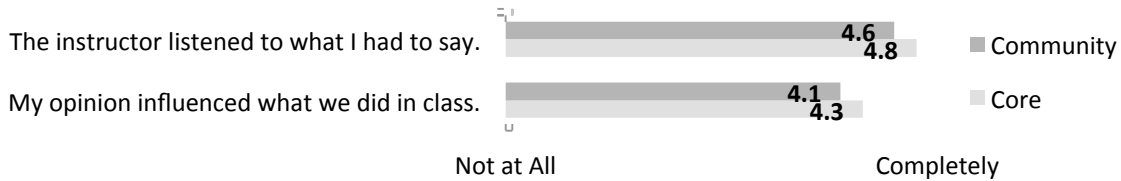
*"[Because of this class,] I saw positively how to work the hardest that I could to try to do the best that I can."*

*"[The best thing about Spy Hop is] that you're not given a subject to do [your project] on. You get to choose what you want to do; you're not given it."*

### Community Programs

Students in Community Programs also reported that their classes were student driven and held high expectations for participants but to a slightly lesser degree than in the Core Programs.

**Student Driven and High Expectations  
Community Programs and Core Classes**



In responses to survey questions, several students commented on how their opinions and ideas influenced what they did in class.

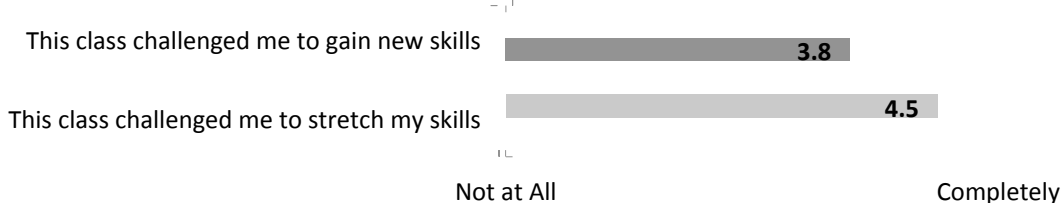
*"The best thing about this class was getting to include my ideas."*

*"We got to work on real things, like experiences that we had or something that made us happy."*

### Junior High Programs

Students in after school classes were asked if the class challenged them to gain new skills. More than half (57%) agreed *a great deal* or *completely*. This rating was lower than that of Core Programs, although slight differences in item wording might contribute to the differences.

**Technology Skills  
Junior High Programs**



Several students used open-ended questions to mention how they appreciate that their own voices were valued.

*"[In this class, I learned that] my ideas and points matter!"*

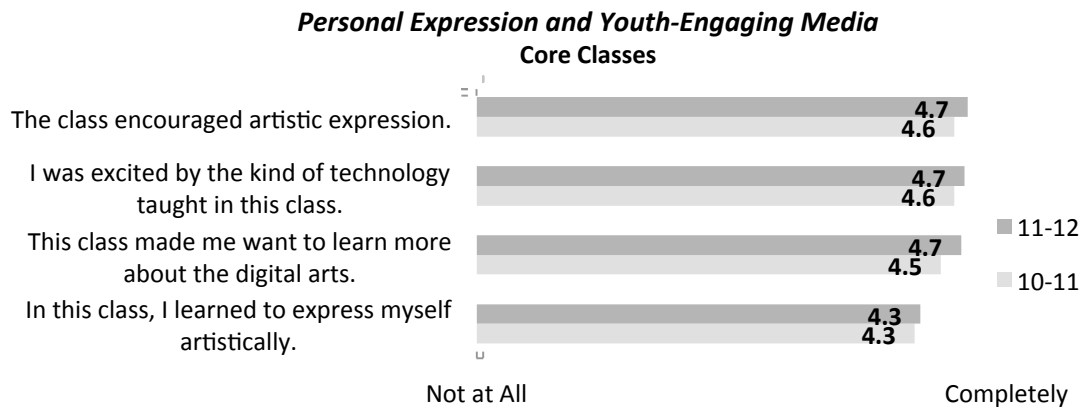
*"[My favorite thing was] how it was us that made our own music."*

## Technology and digital media engage youth and encourage personal expression.

Spy Hop mentors young people in the digital media arts in part to help them find their voice and tell their stories. To this end, Spy Hop specializes in teaching creative technologies that are appealing to youth and creating a class culture that encourages artistic self-expression using digital media. Surveys affirm that the current array of classes attracts and engages students and that, once in the classes, these youth are encouraged to use their developing technology skills to communicate what matters to them.

### Core Programs

Core class participants reported that the classes are engaging and encourage artistic expression at higher rates than they did last year.



On surveys, students commented on the opportunities for artistic expression and media engagement.

*"I got to learn about software and techniques that I was really interested in."*

*"I have learned [at Spy Hop] that I can be very creative, at all times. I have learned that I have creative thoughts running through my mind at all times of the day. I am more confident in my designs, than I was when I first started here."*

*"[The best thing about Spy Hop is] we get to make up all the music and, basically, the music explains what you like to listen to and it explains how you feel."*

### Community Programs

Community Program students reported high levels of artistic expression and youth-engaging media in a pattern that is similar to responses on Core Program surveys.



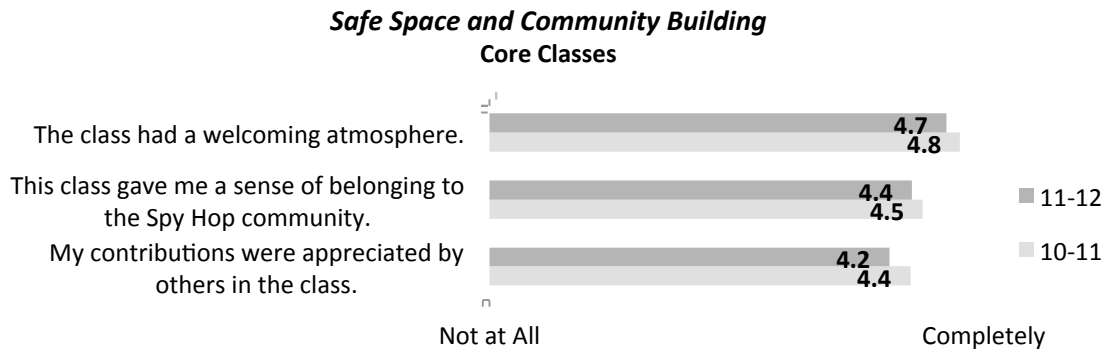


## Spy Hop fosters safe space and community building in its Core Programs.

Spy Hop is committed to creating a program atmosphere that fosters the psychological and emotional safety of all participants. Research has shown that welcoming and supportive environments that afford psychological and emotional safety are fundamentally important characteristics of high quality youth programming.<sup>6</sup> As concluded in last year's evaluation, creating a safe and supportive environment is one of Spy Hop's program delivery strengths.

### Core Programs

This year, Core Program students rated their experience slightly lower than did last year's: three out of four (78%) students agree *completely* that, "This class had a welcoming atmosphere," compared with 83% last year.



Student comments show that the programs are characterized by a safe and supportive environment.

*"One of the coolest things is that we were encouraged to write our own songs, as well as expressing ourselves and not having to worry about ridicule from telling how we feel. I felt very comfortable and was always looking forward to class... It's like a home away from home."*

*"It's a creative atmosphere. It's a judgment-free zone. I like the opportunity to learn from other people here because everyone has their own experiences and I've never been afraid to go ask somebody, 'Oh, you did this? Can you show me how?'"*

### Community and Junior High Programs

Safe space and community building were not directly addressed on surveys for these programs and the topic did not emerge in open-ended responses.

<sup>6</sup> Smith, C., & Hohmann, C. (2005). Full findings from the Youth PQA validation study. Ypsilanti, MI: HighScope Educational Research Foundation.

# FINDINGS: 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY SKILLS AND DISPOSITIONS FOR SCHOOL AND WORKPLACE SUCCESS



A recent report from the National Research Council, Education for Life and Work, asserts that “business, political and educational leaders are increasingly asking schools to integrate the development of skills such as problem solving, critical thinking and collaboration into the teaching and learning of academic subjects.”<sup>7</sup> Often referred to as 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, these have been a focus of Spy Hop’s programs for many years. Spy Hop strives to impact digital literacy (including technology and media literacy), interpersonal skills (including communication, teamwork, and collaboration), self-management skills (productivity and self-direction), and community connectedness. This year’s evaluation aimed to examine the extent to which Spy Hop classes foster these 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace readiness skills.

School success is often measured through standardized tests that measure knowledge or the acquisition of specific kinds of information. However, other types of learning are also important for impacting success in school. Dispositions, attitudes, or internalized mindsets can play an important role in determining whether or not a student is engaged in academic behaviors that are necessary for school success. In particular, self-management, positive identity, positive beliefs about one’s future potential, goals and choices, and the intention of pursuing long-term educational and vocational goals each are strong predictors of academic success.<sup>8</sup> This year’s evaluation also aimed to examine the extent to which Spy Hop classes foster dispositions and attitudes that are associated with school and life success.

**Spy Hop serves a population that largely has access to a computer and the Internet, but provides them access to professional equipment and software that they would not have access to otherwise.**

This year’s evaluation questions clarified Spy Hop’s goal to increase access to technology among youth who have limited access and took initial steps to explore the degree of technology access among current program participants. This initial data collection suggests that most, but not all, Spy Hop students have access to computers and the Internet at home, but fewer have access to the professional hardware and software they use in Spy Hop classes.

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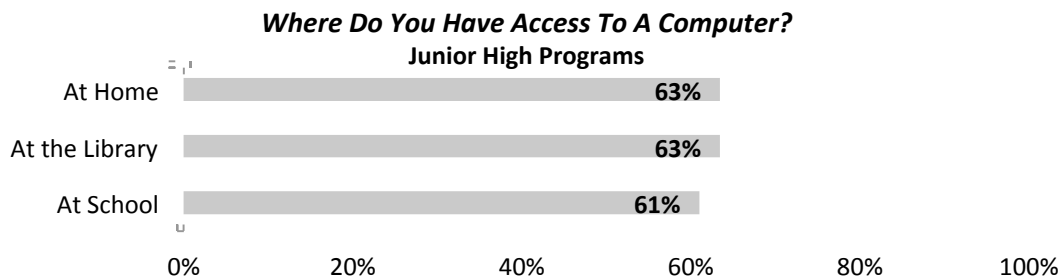
<sup>7</sup> National Research Council (July 2012). Education for life and work: Developing transferable knowledge and skills in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The National Academies.

<sup>8</sup> Lopez, S. J. (2009). Hope, academic success, and the Gallup Student Poll. *Gallup Student Poll*. Retrieved from <http://www.gallupstudentpoll.com/122168/hope-academic-success-gallup-student-poll.aspx>

Information about technology access was gathered from 329 students who enrolled in Spy Hop programs during the 2011-2012 year. This data shows that nearly all Spy Hop youth have access to a computer (92%) and the Internet (89%) at home. It also suggests that the Open Mic Program attracts students without a computer at home at the highest rates, with 19% of Open Mic students reporting no computer access at home.

Student Report of Computer Access At Home		
Program Type	Yes	No
Open Mic	81% (91)	19% (21)
Core Programs	97% (157)	3% (5)
Younger Youth Programs <sup>9</sup>	0%	100% (54)

Junior High Program surveys asked students to report their computer access. Six out of ten students in Junior High Programs have access to a computer either at home, at a library, or at school as illustrated in the figure below.



Interestingly, almost 40% of these students reported no computer access at school, while other students at the same schools report computer access. Ten students (21%) report no access at all.

Access to technology was not addressed on Community Program surveys.

Though many Spy Hop students have access to computers and the Internet in their homes, they report that Spy Hop introduces them to equipment and software that they wouldn't otherwise have access to. Students in Core Programs appreciate that Spy Hop gives them the ability to access new types of technology; some chose to highlight this in open-ended survey responses.

*"[One of my favorite things about Spy Hop is] it gives you the opportunity to have access to Final Cut Pro and HMCs and Pro Tools and all these programs and equipment that you don't have access to otherwise. When you go to college and you're studying they start you off on the little cameras, but at Spy Hop you get started off with DVX, the HMC, the DSLRs, so it's really progressive and cool. "*

*"[The best thing about Spy Hop was] that I could have access to use real and actual studio equipment. "*

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<sup>9</sup> Programs for youth ages 7-12

*"[Unlike at school], at Spy Hop there is plenty of professional grade equipment available for use and the workstations have all the necessary programs for design applications. The classes are small and personal enough for individual instruction and mentorship. I enjoy the more professional environment offered at Spy Hop."*

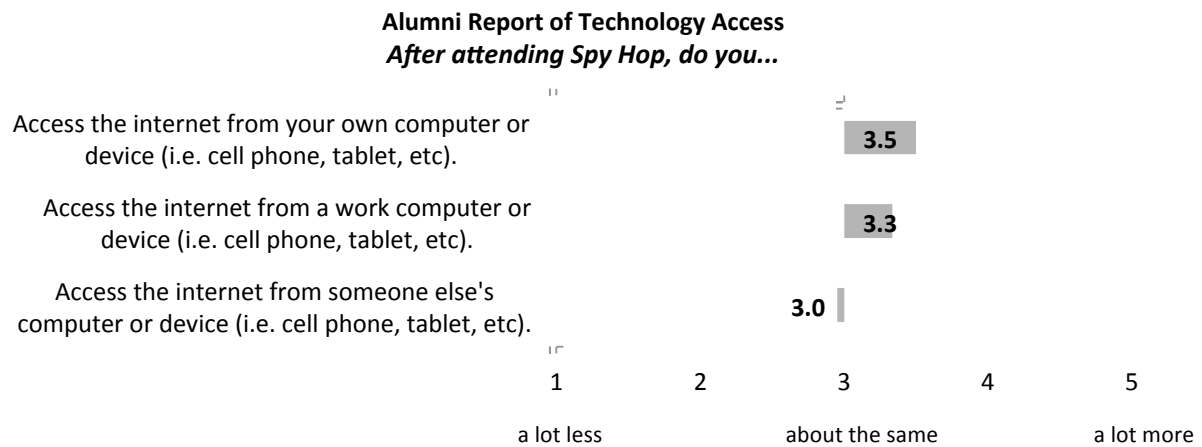
*"My school doesn't have any film programs so it is nice to be able to go in after school and learn about filmmaking and be with other people who love to do what I do."*



*"The best things [about this program] were that I got to learn how to use some programs that I didn't know about."*

## Alumni Perspective

For the first time this year, Core Program alumni were asked about their access to and use of technology. They report that they currently are most likely to access the Internet from their personal computer at home (82% do so on a daily basis) and their cell phone (68% do so on a daily basis). They also report that their access of the computer and the Internet from their own device increased after Spy Hop.



### **Spy Hop develops digital literacy, including technology skills and media literacy.**

Spy Hop classes are, first and foremost, structured to develop youth skills using technology and digital media. Each class addresses a different form of digital media and the specific learning objectives vary accordingly. However, all classes support students to understand what specific types of technology are, how each works, what purposes each can serve, and how each can be used efficiently and effectively to achieve specific goals. This evaluation suggests that Spy Hop builds youth skills using technology for communication and for artistic and creative expression.

Because the learning objectives for each class vary, end of class surveys do not include specific items about technology skills development. Nonetheless, students mentioned how Spy Hop helps them to develop new skills around technology usage.

*"I walked into this class with no knowledge of Ableton other than the fact that it is a music production software. After this class I feel like I have a very broad knowledge of the Ableton software and how to utilize everything it offers to make my creative visions realities."*

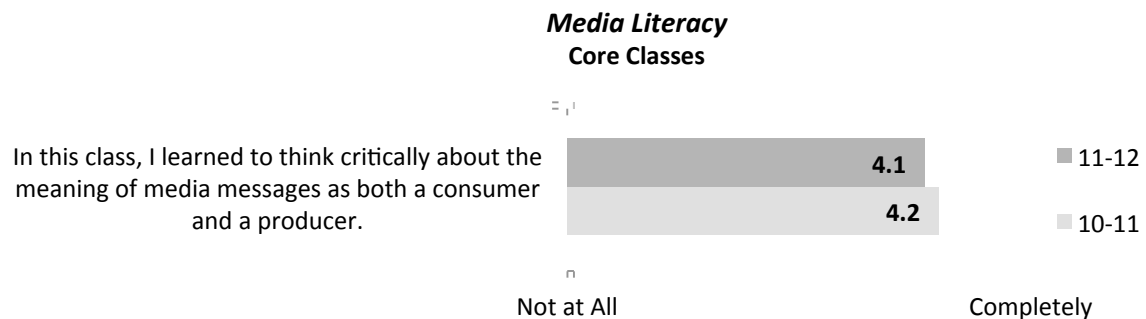
*"[In my last Spy Hop class,] I learned a lot of technical stuff: how to use Pro Tools, how to set up a stage, where specific amplifiers go, how to mic a drum kit, as well as better collaboration skills when it comes to music."*

*“In school, [as a result of my time in Spy Hop,] I’ve been given more opportunities, film-wise. I got into classes I couldn’t have otherwise, including Film 3 (without doing Film 1 or 2) and Independent Screenwriting (I am the only person in the class).”*

*“My experiences in the Design programs at Spy Hop have given me a lot to think about. I have learned much more about the trials and processes involved in creating video games and Web Applications. Since I use these almost every day, it is beneficial for me to have a better understanding of the work put in to create our modern technological world.”*

*“[When telling a friend about Spy Hop, I would say] there are new means of technology we do not know that we learn here.”*

Spy Hop also strives to develop media literacy. Core Program participants report and describe an increased understanding of what goes into media message delivery and increased ability to critically examine those messages.



*“I have a greater appreciation for the work that goes into creating modern day digital media. I have learned that even the culturally under-appreciated video game media can deliver strong messages and have important relevance to society. Spy Hop has provided me with what I believe is a fairly accurate ‘behind the scenes’ look at what really goes on in the development of technology and media.”*

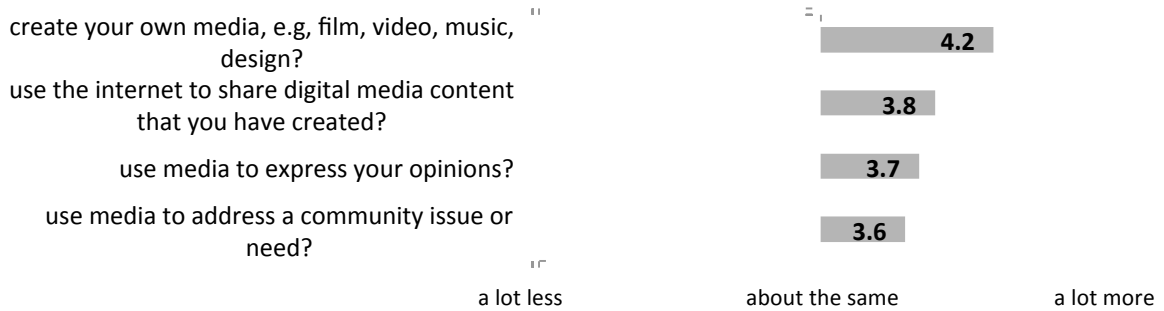
*“Spy Hop makes me realize how difficult it is to produce pieces, and how much effort goes into things.”*

*“It feels like I have a better general knowledge of the media, how it’s done, etc, than most people do. I notice more details related to the making of movies while watching them, giving me a much better understanding.”*

Alumni Perspective

The Alumni report gives good evidence that Spy Hop teaches youth the skills they need to use technology for communication, creative expression, and other real-world uses.

**Alumni Perspective**  
***After attending Spy Hop, do you...***



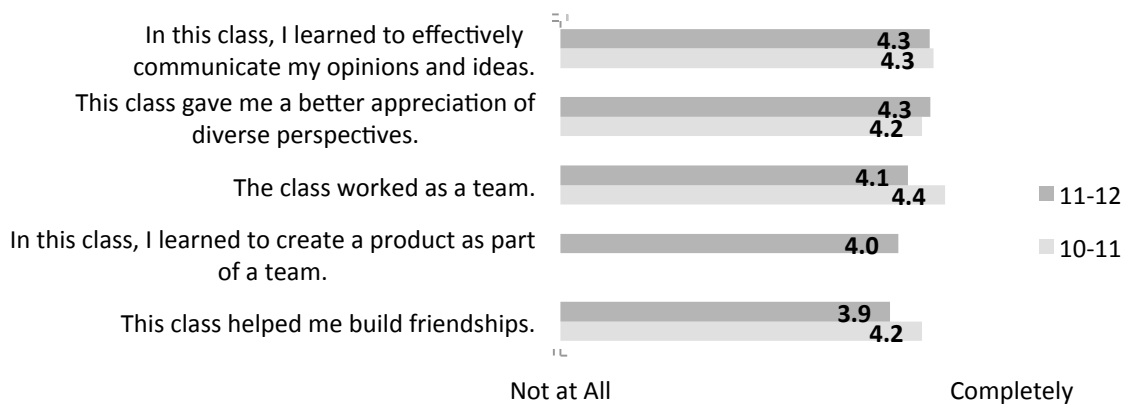
**Spy Hop fosters interpersonal skills including teamwork, collaboration, and communication.**

Spy Hop classes are typically structured to require teamwork and collaboration. Students work together, in an interdependent fashion, to achieve a shared goal, the final product for the class. This requires that the youth trust and respect one another, communicate effectively, and cooperate with members of the team. Current and past participants report learning a great deal about teamwork and collaboration at Spy Hop.

Core Programs

Core class students reported developing skills associated with teamwork. Their comments underscore survey ratings.

***Collaboration, Teamwork and Communication***  
**Core Classes**



*“Spy Hop helped me work on my group skills. Each time I take a class here I feel more comfortable talking to the newer people and working with them.”*



*"I learned how to overcome obstacles as a team and step up as a team leader and do what was needed to make the ending product a success."*

*"I learned how to be patient. Usually when I got partnered with somebody to work on some-thing that I started... they would usually throw out ideas and I would usually ignore it because "Hey! I started it! Back off!" But now it's like, "Hey, that's actually a pretty cool idea," and, "How do you like it?" and it turns out better than it would have if I had just done it by myself."*

Community Programs

Community Programs students were asked to report on teamwork, collaboration and interactive communication. The chart below illustrates that Community Programs students respond similarly to core class participants.

Several students also commented on the opportunities to develop effective communication and teamwork skills when describing what they liked best about this class:

*"The best thing about this class was learning how to communicate with my team."*

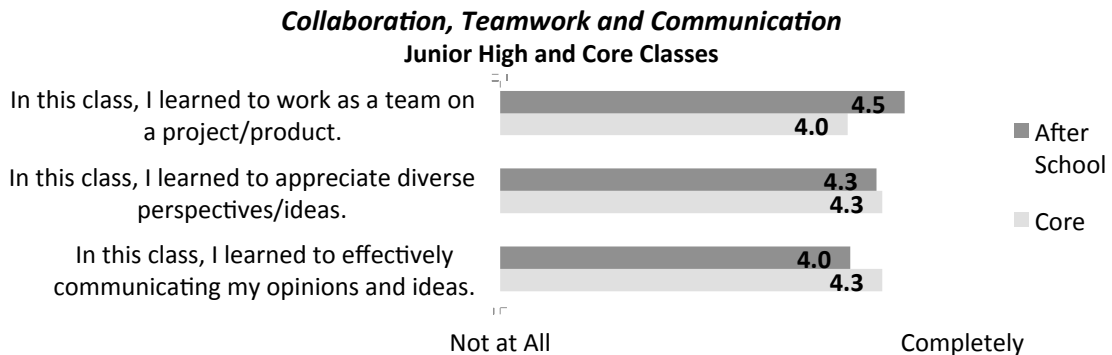
*"I liked that everyone was able to get along and work as a team."*

*"[The most important thing I learned in this class was] How to work together to make movies."*

*"[The best thing about this class was] that everyone was able to get along and work as a team, and I had fun."*

Junior High Programs

Students in the Junior High Programs were asked if they developed communication and teamwork skills during their Spy Hop classes. Interestingly, after school classes earned higher student ratings than did the Core Programs, suggesting this is a strength of the after school classes.



### Alumni Perspective

Alumni were asked to rate the extent to which their Spy Hop experience contributed to a variety of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills. Alumni gave the highest ratings to Spy Hop's contributions to their teamwork skills.



*"There was a sense of community and mutual understanding--that we all wanted to be there to learn about the same things. It was good to work as a team on such an intense project, although I will say it hasn't always gone as planned-- that's sort of the thrill of documentary that I have come to learn and love. The movie rarely goes as you think it will."*

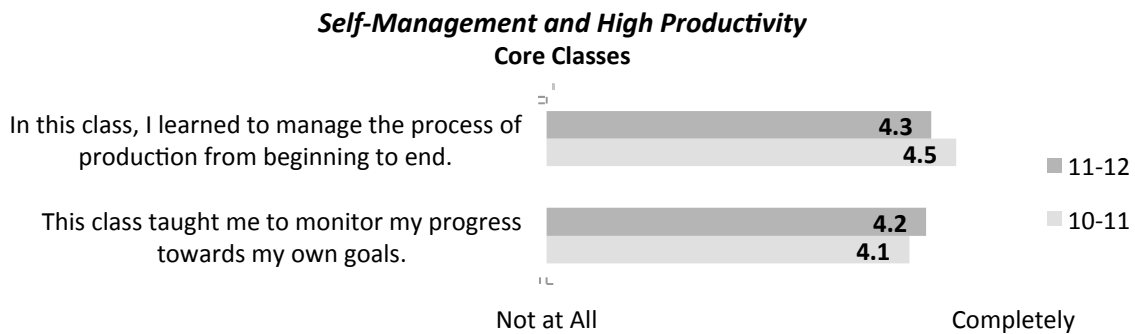
*"Spy Hop helped my problem solving skills and taught me how to work with a group cooperatively. It also allowed me to work with a wide array of different people from different cultures."*

## Spy Hop encourages self-management and high productivity.

Spy Hop classes are project-based and afford students ample opportunity to practice skills associated with self-management and high productivity. Self-management skills, including the ability to regulate one’s own behavior and emotions to reach goals, are important for school and workplace success. High productivity, also considered an important 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace skill, includes prioritizing, planning and managing for results, effective use of real-world tools, and the ability to produce relevant, high-quality products.

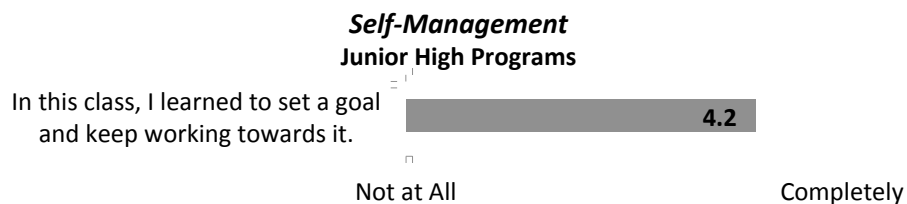
### Core Programs

Students in Core Programming reported learning how to monitor their own progress towards goals and manage production from beginning to end.



*"[Spy Hop] helped me out with time management because I spend a lot of time here and have multiple projects that have deadlines. On top of that, there's school and homework so it's helped me work on figuring out my priorities and scheduling my time at Spy Hop and at home and with friends and getting everything done in a timely fashion."*

### Junior High Programs



Students in Junior High Programs reported learning to set and work towards goals.

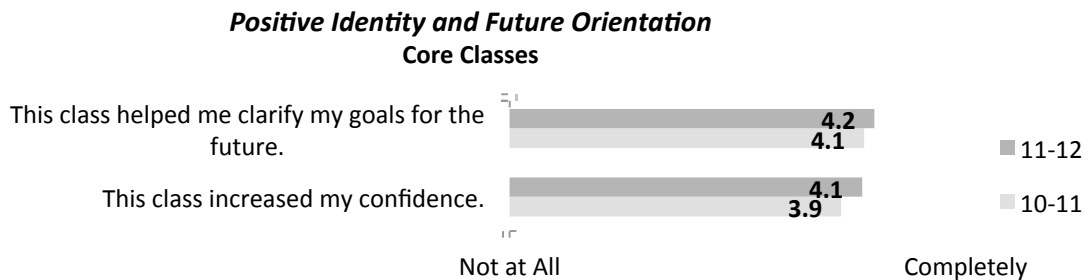
Self-management and high productivity were not a focus of the evaluation of Community Programs, in part because these programs tend to have fewer sessions (in some cases, they are one-time workshops) and don't focus on long-term projects.

## Spy Hop nurtures positive identity development and future orientation.

Positive identity includes being aware of one’s own talents and skills and a belief in one’s own abilities. Future orientation includes both awareness of the range of possible options for the future and clarification of and optimism about one’s own personal goals. Like last year’s evaluation, this evaluation found that students credit Spy Hop with helping them identify their own talents, gain confidence and clarify their goals for the future.

### Core Programs

Students in Core Programs report that Spy Hop helped them clarify their future goals and increased their confidence.



The quotes below illustrate how Spy Hop helps students to develop a positive identity and future orientation.

*“I think that coming to Spy Hop has helped me build up my design skills, which gives me more confidence in my talent and ability.”*

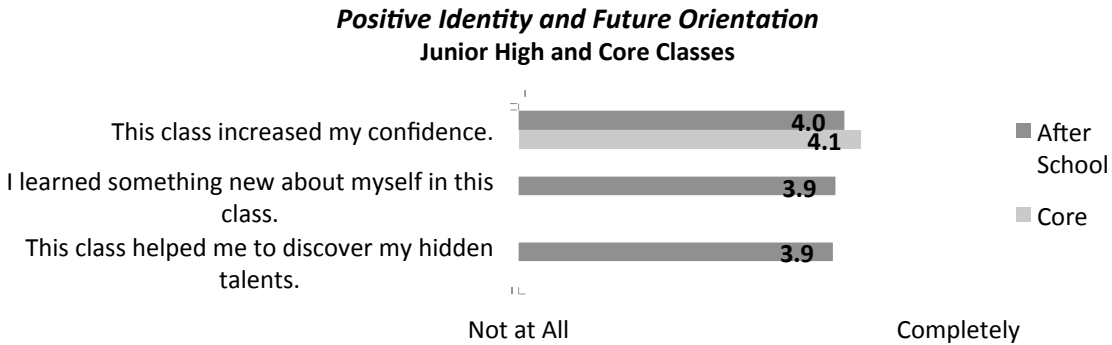
*“I think Spy Hop changed the way I look at the world because I used to see doing things like making videos as an almost impossible task to accomplish. I see now that there are so many opportunities.”*

### Community Programs

The Community Programs survey did not ask specific questions about developing personal skills and dispositions; however, some students chose to comment on Spy Hop’s impact on their understanding of their own talents and interests.

## Junior High Programs

Students in the Junior High Programs agreed that the classes helped them learn about themselves and their own talents, and increased their confidence.



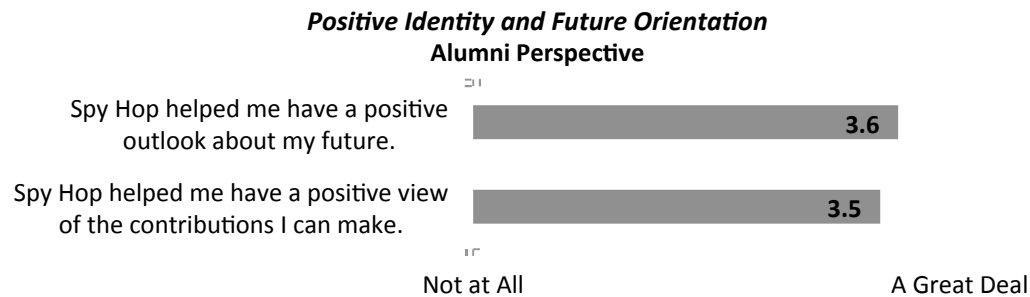
*"[I liked this class] Because I found out that I love making movies and being creative."*

*"It [this class] was new to me and now I found that I have a new talent."*

*"[I learned] I want to work with music. Now I know that, before I didn't."*

## Alumni Perspective

Alumni reported that Spy Hop helped them develop a positive outlook regarding their talents and future possibilities.



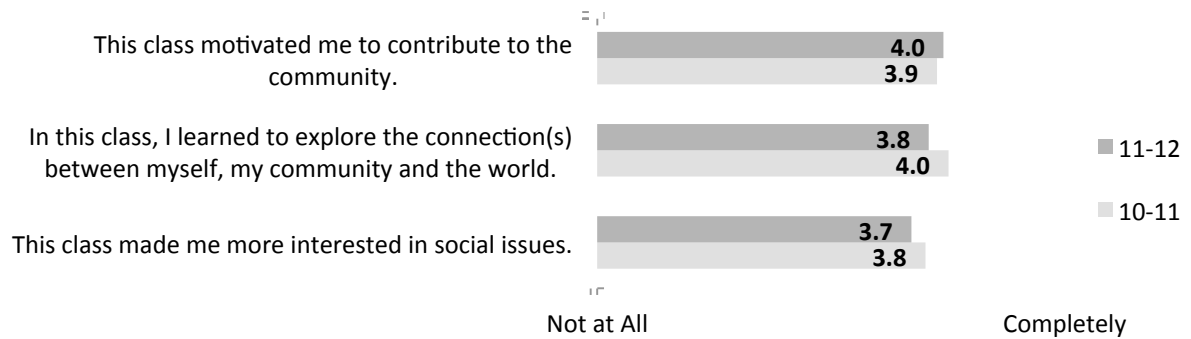
**Spy Hop lays a foundation for community connectedness and social responsibility.**

Spy Hop encourages students to see the connections between their use of media and their ability to promote social good in the communities to which they belong. Civic and social responsibility, global awareness, and cultural literacy are considered 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace skills.

Core Programs

Students in Core Programming report that Spy Hop fosters their sense of connection to the community, though items evaluating this outcome receive some of the lowest ratings on surveys when compared to other survey items. These results suggest that fostering community connectedness is a program outcome, but not as pronounced, at least in the short term, as other program outcomes.

**Community Connectness and Social Responsibility  
Core Programs**

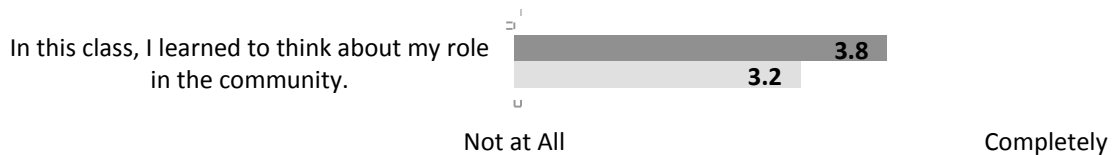


*“I really didn't feel like I had much connection to my community before coming [to Spy Hop], but interacting with people all over the state and being with something that's so integrated into the community, it became a very strong focus for me.”*

Community and Junior High Programs

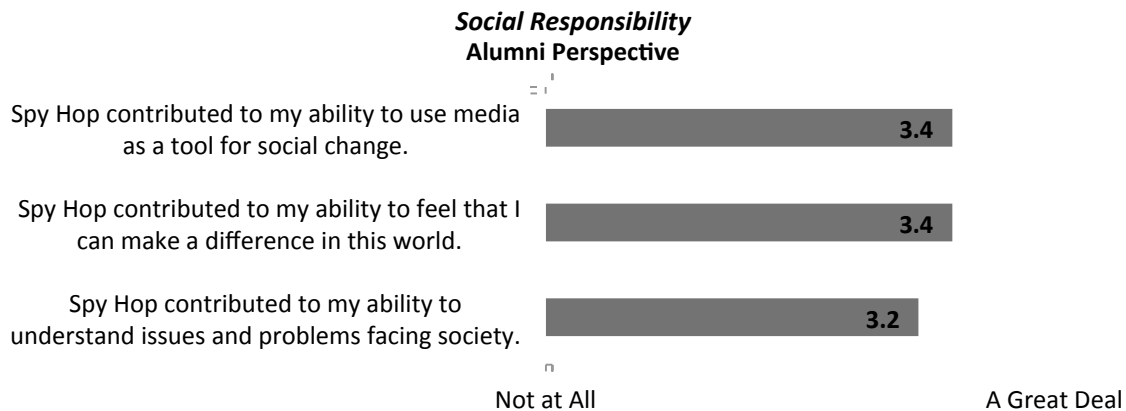
Community and Junior High Program students report the class taught them to think about their role in the community *quite a bit* or *some*, which is not as strong of a rating as other items received.

**Community Connectedness  
Community and Junior High Programs**



### Alumni Perspective

The alumni survey results suggest that Spy Hop does impact community connectedness and social responsibility, but that only after a few years away from the program do program participants realize this impact. A majority (57%) of alumni reported that Spy Hop helped them feel they can make a difference in the world *a great deal*. Just under half (45%) of alumni indicated that Spy Hop aided them in understanding the problems facing society *a great deal*.

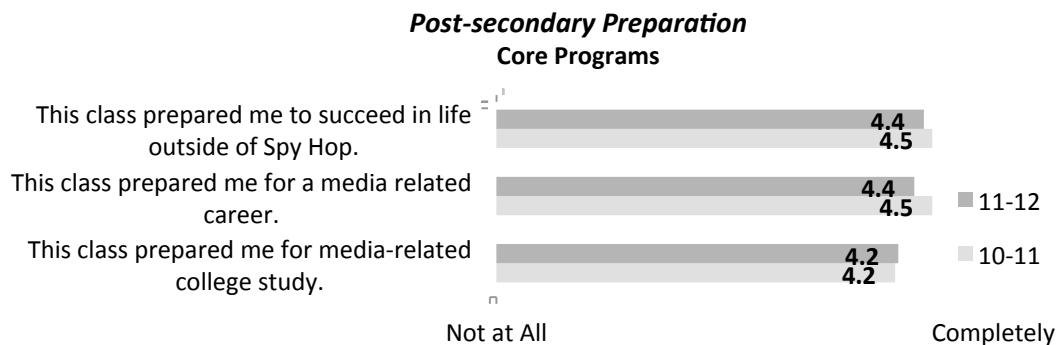


### Alumni report that Spy Hop contributed to their post-secondary success.

This evaluation examined Spy Hop’s impact on preparing students for post-secondary success by asking Core Program participants, past and present, to self-report their relevant experiences. Spy Hop increases high school aged student confidence in their preparation for media-related study and career, while alumni report that Spy Hop’s strongest supports of their post-secondary experience are in the areas of exploring career options.

### Core Programs

Current Core Program students are typically in high school, so their ratings of Spy Hop’s impact on their post-secondary success are predictions of their actual preparedness, but they do indicate each student’s current sense of confidence or optimism about their future. Students believe that Spy Hop is preparing them for their future.



*“Now that I am in the Film Apprenticeship I feel much more accomplished. I am now completing my goal of finding a beginning. I think that Spy Hop Productions is heading me down the path of a film career. I've always wanted to be a film director, I just didn't know how to get there. Now I do.”*

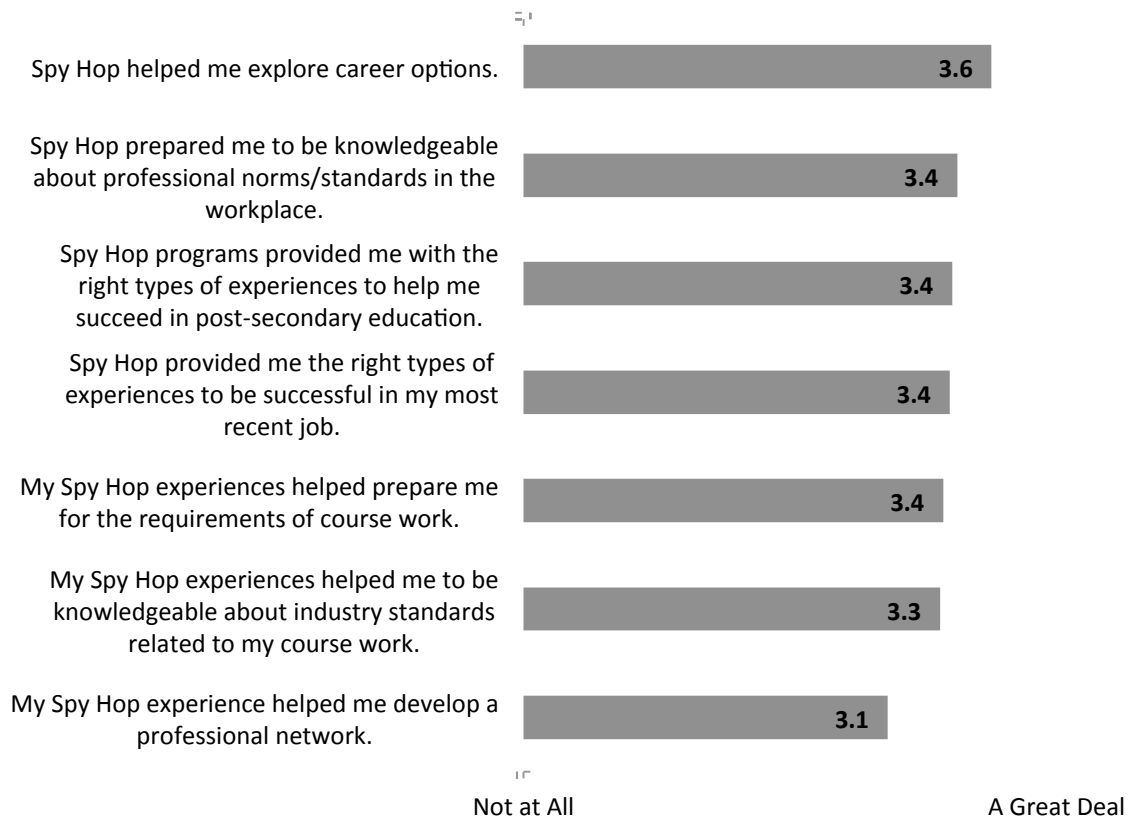


*"I really enjoyed the new things I got to learn in Adobe programming, because they will be applicable to my freelance work and newspaper class."*

Alumni Perspective

Program alumni provided detailed ratings on the ways in which Spy Hop supported their post-secondary success.

**Post-secondary Preparation  
Alumni Perspective**







# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings indicate that Spy Hop’s programs are consistently strong, are delivered in alignment with best practices in youth programming, develop important student skills, and impact youth attitudes and behaviors in ways that set them up for life success.

## **Program Quality**

This evaluation examined to what extent Spy Hop delivers high quality programs. Findings reveal that Spy Hop programs excel at maintaining a skill-building focus while encouraging students to collaborate in teams and make meaningful choices about the process and content of their work. It is noteworthy that student survey responses provide consistently high ratings of not only Spy Hop’s Core Programs, but also the Community Programs and Junior High School Programs, as this is the first year when the evaluation explored these off-site programs.

For some indicators of program quality, Community and Junior High Programs received slightly lower ratings than did Core Programs. Core Programs received higher ratings on fostering a safe space and nurturing a sense of belonging among students. This is predictable, as Spy Hop staff cannot control the atmosphere to the same degree when they are visitors in another program’s space. Also, Core Programs typically meet twice a week for at least 3 weeks, and do not allow for “drop in” participation, whereas Community Programs may meet for only one session and students sometimes “drop-in” to Junior High Programs but do not attend consistently enough to bond with the group. Despite these real-world challenges to delivering programs in the community, Community and Junior High Program staff should reflect on this first year of evaluation data and identify opportunities for improvement based on participant feedback.

Moving forward, Spy Hop should follow through with its plans to enhance its evaluation with use of the Youth Program Quality Assessment (YPQA) observation tool. The YPQA is a research-validated and field-tested structured observation tool designed to evaluate the quality of youth programs and identify staff training needs. It reflects research on best practices in youth programming and provides a way to measure program qualities in the areas of safe environment, supportive environment, interaction and engagement. Use of this tool can provide insight into program delivery strengths and opportunities for improvement and form the backbone of a continuous quality improvement strategy.

## **21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills and Dispositions that Foster Post-Secondary Success**

This evaluation was designed to provide insight into the extent to which Spy Hop classes foster youth skills. Specifically, Spy Hop sets forth to develop 21<sup>st</sup> century workplace skills including digital literacy, effective communication and high productivity. Also, Spy Hop aims to foster skills and dispositions that can transfer beyond the Spy Hop classroom and foster success in school and life. This evaluation provides evidence that students gain skills in these areas as a result of their Spy Hop participation.

This evaluation found that Spy Hop excels at fostering teamwork, collaboration and communication skills; Spy Hop classes foster self-management and high productivity; and Spy Hop fosters positive identity and future orientation. Spy Hop should continue to explore its impact on community connectedness and social responsibility; while results suggest that Spy Hop does make an impact in this area, these survey questions continue to earn lower ratings than others.

For the first time, this evaluation explores the amount of computer and Internet access students have outside of Spy Hop's classroom. Preliminary findings suggest that Spy Hop serves a population that, for the most part, has access to information and communication technology, but Spy Hop greatly increases access to professional software and hardware required to build digital literacy. The exception to this is the Open Mic Program, which serves a higher proportion of students who do not have good computer or Internet access. Spy Hop does encourage students in the Open Mic Program, which is drop-in and has relatively few barriers to participation, to enroll in other Core Programs that further digital access and literacy; however, preliminary data suggests that it is the students with computer access at home who are more likely to enroll in these Core Programs. Moving forward, Spy Hop should determine how it can best encourage and support more students with limited technology access to advance through its class offerings, perhaps through focus groups with students who have limited technology access. Also, Spy Hop should track student enrollment patterns among this subset of students to measure its success.

## **Prevention**

Spy Hop is interested in understanding the extent to which their classes decrease risk factors and increase protective factors at the individual, peer and community levels. Risk factors are conditions that increase the likelihood that youth will get into trouble or expose themselves to danger. Protective factors are safeguards that promote resiliency and enhance a young person's ability to resist risks or hazards and make good decisions. This evaluation underscores Spy Hop's role as a community-based prevention program that decreases youth risk factors and fosters protective factors.<sup>10</sup>

Spy Hop reduces alienation among its participants while fostering interaction and good relationships among pro-social peers around positive activities. Spy Hop instructors provide youth regular contact with supportive adults. Spy Hop makes a valuable contribution to community-level protective factors by providing opportunities and rewards for pro-social participation. Although the Open Mic Program was not a focus of this evaluation, it is a drop-in program open to all youth, and expands Spy Hop's reach as a community asset well beyond those students enrolled in its other Core Programs.

It is reasonable to assume that by decreasing risk factors and increasing protective factors at the individual, peer and community level, Spy Hop decreases youth risk for substance abuse, violence, and other adverse outcomes.

## **Recommendations for Future Evaluation**

This evaluation relies heavily on student self-report that is largely gathered through surveys. The evaluation could be improved both by revising existing surveys and expanding data sources beyond student self-report.

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<sup>10</sup> Proven Risk and Protective Factors, [www.findyouthinfo.gov/research.shtml](http://www.findyouthinfo.gov/research.shtml), accessed on January 9, 2013

This is the first year student surveys were administered in the Community and Junior High Programs. The evaluators and staff should reflect on this first effort and revise the surveys as necessary to maximize learning moving forward. Also, it is important to make sure that these surveys are appropriate given the literacy skills and age of students in these programs, which serve a wide range of students.

Core Programs have used the same end of class survey for many years. Staff and evaluators should reflect on this survey and consider adjustments for the 2013-2014 year. Since Spy Hop receives consistently high ratings on many questions, the organization is not learning new things by asking the same questions repeatedly. Also, students who enroll in multiple Spy Hop classes are asked to complete the same survey repeatedly, which can contribute to “survey-fatigue” and result in invalid responses. Staff should consider identifying a small set of core questions that are asked year after year as quality-control benchmarks, and replacing certain questions with new ones that will glean new lessons about the program delivery and impact and engage students in completing the survey. Additionally, staff should explore the idea of varying survey questions based on the content or level (beginning versus advanced) of the class. Finally, questions about student access to technology are asked inconsistently across program types; these questions should be reviewed and consistently asked so meaningful comparisons can be made.

Self-report on surveys is a popular data collection method because of its relative low cost, ease of administration, and limited time required to manage the data. However, self-reports via written surveys have some limitations, and might not always provide a valid measure of the indicators of focus. Responses are potentially influenced by “social desirability;” in other words, youth might report what they believe others want them to say rather than what they believe to be true. Or, youth might report their “truth,” but their self-assessment might not be an accurate reflection of (or prediction of) their skills or behaviors. Given the limitations of student self-report, Spy Hop should set long-term goals of weaving in additional kinds of data to complement student self-report. This year, Spy Hop should incorporate structured observations to measure program quality and more consistent use of professional reviews of student work to measure student skills. Also, Spy Hop should continue to use and improve the response rate to the alumni survey, which provides a long-term perspective on Spy Hop’s impact.

The Open Mic Program, which serves over 600 youth annually, has not been a focus of the evaluation in the past, and should be evaluated in the near future. Recently, Spy Hop initiated a youth-led evaluation of the Open Mic Program. Youth-led evaluation is an innovative way of providing youth meaningful opportunities for leadership and skill development while also developing youth-friendly evaluation methods that may uncover new and meaningful findings. However, this initiative has had a slow start and faced timeline and other barriers that are common to youth-led evaluation work. Spy Hop staff should reflect on the initiative to date and determine how to keep it on track for success.

Finally, Spy Hop should celebrate its program successes and continue to work to make its program accessible to all students, regardless of background. There is an opportunity to use focus groups or other evaluation methods to gain youth advice about how to best serve students with limited computer access, help them advance into additional Spy Hop offerings, and recruit similar students into Spy Hop programs.



# SPY HOP PRODUCTIONS

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