SUPERCAMP ITALIA 2018

Aaron Corte O'Brien
University of Michigan School of Social Work

Agency

Supercamp is a 10 day camp for kids aged 12 to 18. It is a service of Quantum Learning, which is an organization that uses cutting edge neuroscience to restructure approaches to education. Supercamp uses a holistic approach to improve a participant’s family relationships, grades, self-esteem and confidence.

Skills Developed

- I increased my confidence in working with this population. Initially I didn’t think I wanted to work with adolescents. My ability to establish rapport and the transformation I saw these kids go through changed my mind completely.
- I increased my group facilitation skills. Because we debriefed constantly as a group I was able to improve my group facilitation and in the end, the group was largely running itself.
- I increased my knowledge of how to engage kids. Fundamental to camp is kinesthetic learning, which allows the individual to develop better memory processing through physiological experience.

Outcomes

My experience with the camp has directly had an impact on my current academics. I am working on projects in two different classes that are somewhat modeled off my experience in this camp. I am using group activities I experienced in the camp and the science behind their effectiveness to inform these projects.

Career Connections

I plan to use my experience with Supercamp to inform the development of the camps I will create and run. I also will use what I have learned about group dynamics in my clinical work with groups.

Advice

- Think outside the box. It’s a big world out there. I just started reaching out to people I knew in Italy and found this camp supervisor.
- Stay open minded. I wasn’t sure that I wanted to work with this demographic, but now I’m planning on doing lots of work with adolescents in my career.
- Travel after your placement. I think because social work in the US is so much different than in most of the rest of the world, it’s important for social workers to experience other cultures. Just travel, and observe how people fix problems in other places.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the Office of Global Activities for this once in a lifetime opportunity. I’d also like to thank SuperCamp Supervisor Lisa Tucci for the opportunity and her continued support.