WE CHOOSE TO BE HERE

Spy Hop Evaluation Report

2016-17
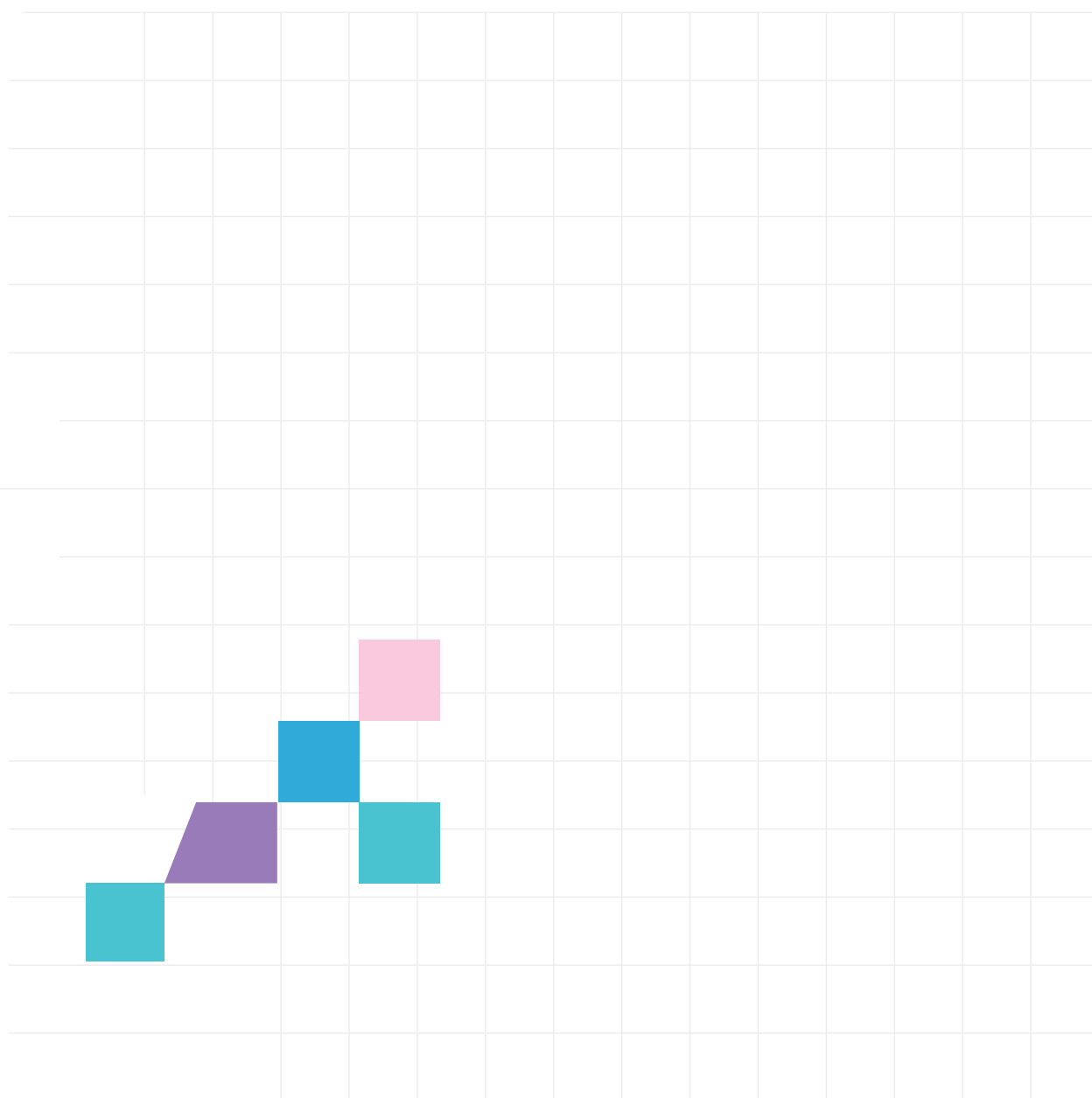
Written by Mindy Faber and Virginia Killian Lund
Edited by Dennis Pierce

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On behalf of Spy Hop's staff and Board of Directors, I am proud to present our 2016-2017 Evaluation Report by the Convergence Design Lab at Columbia College in Chicago. I invite you to explore what they have discovered about our approach — the Spy Hop Way — that leads to program quality and fidelity and the positive outcomes we see in the young people we serve.

We began working with a team of researchers led by Mindy Faber from the Convergence Design Lab of Columbia College Chicago in 2016 to better position and assess our programs relative to the principles of Connected Learning and Youth Development. Since then, we have realigned our logic model and program goals with evidence-based frameworks, including MHA Labs' Skill Building Blocks, the International Society for Technology in Education's 2016 Future Ready Standards, and the Utah Core Media Art Standards. We have adjusted our curriculum to meet these standards, and we have developed tools for direct assessment of related youth learning and outcomes.

As Mindy and her team have been getting to know our staff and mentors, and the students we serve, they have pushed us to question our assumptions and to think deeper and more broadly about the impact of the work produced by our students, including how connecting our students to authentic audiences is encouraging a greater investment in and quality of their work. They have helped us develop authentic performance assessments. And they have helped us develop a more robust community of practice among our mentors to ensure high-quality program delivery. It is inspiring to me to learn that Spy Hop is helping its students develop the skills and dispositions they need for future success in our innovation economy, and I am encouraged that their work is helping to build a more informative and inclusive cultural landscape that is valued by their communities. I hope you, too, find the following pages as exciting as I do.

— Kasandra VerBrugghen, Executive Director
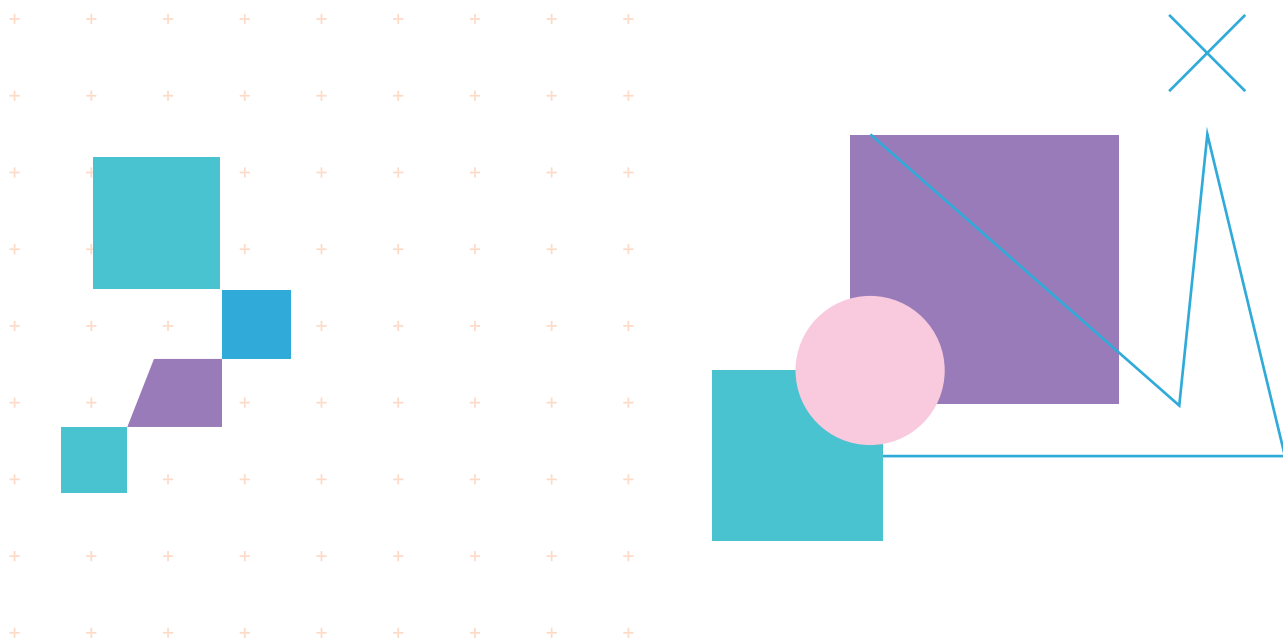
ABOUT SPY HOP

Spy Hop Productions is a nonprofit organization based in Salt Lake City whose mission is to mentor young people in the digital media arts to help them find their voice, tell their stories, and be empowered to effect positive change in their lives, their communities, and the world. Spy Hop is the only organization of its kind in Utah and serves as a model for youth development programs across the nation.

Founded in 1999 as an alternative after-school tutoring program, Spy Hop served twelve students during its first year of operation. The organization has since grown exponentially and now serves over 9,000 students a year from more than 100 area schools, making it one of the largest and most diverse youth media organizations in the United States. This growth and success are the results of Spy Hop's ability to develop and deliver an engaging portfolio that includes after-school and community programs in film, audio, music, and digital design, while providing a space and culture that encourage artistic and emotional expression.

Spy Hop works to increase young people's capacity to communicate effectively through media arts, media literacy, creative production, and digital design. Youth participants in Spy Hop programs learn to become change agents and creative innovators who can transform themselves and their communities.
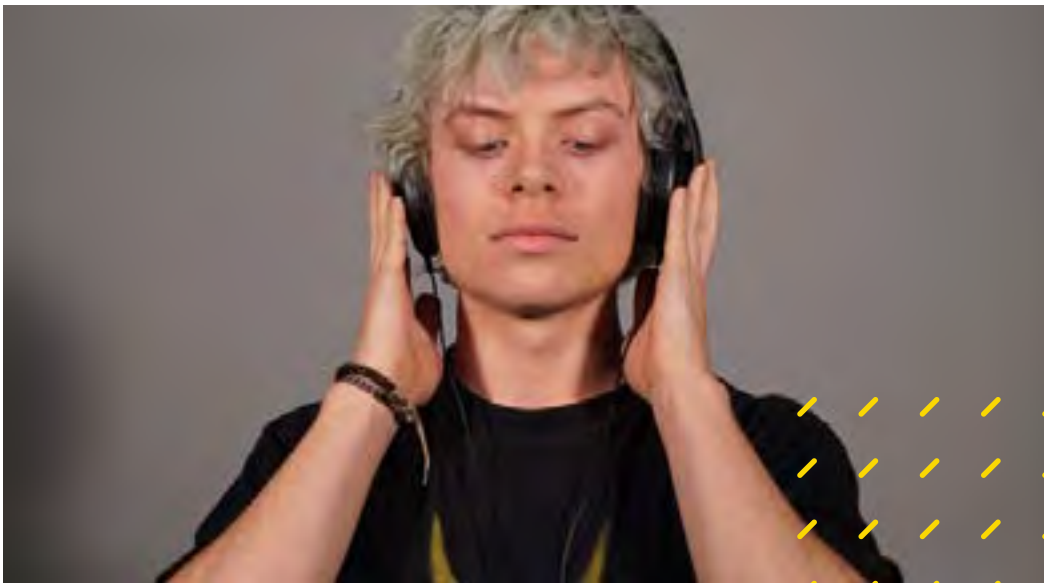
ABOUT CONVERGENCE DESIGN LAB

Convergence Design Lab (CDL) is an applied research hub and design incubator operating from Columbia College Chicago's School of Media Arts. A leading expert in the "connected learning" movement, which suggests that youth learn best when they are pursuing their interests and passions among a community of their peers, CDL provides tools and resources to help schools and youth-based community organizations design, deliver, and measure the effectiveness of participatory learning and media arts programs.

Convergence Design Lab works to shift the media and learning landscape toward equity, so that youth from diverse backgrounds can find their voice and participate fully in civic, cultural, and economic life. CDL explores how digital technologies and media are transforming society and uses this knowledge to design participatory learning experiences that build equity and empower communities. CDL's network includes local and national partnerships with foundations, associations, education providers, museums, research centers, and organizations that work to advance youth voices, community development, digital journalism, design thinking, maker culture, STEM/STEAM learning, media and information literacy, art and culture, technology innovation, and civic engagement.

Mindy Faber is the Director of Convergence Design Lab and a leading authority on connected learning and youth media, with a 30-year history as both a digital media artist and educator. Find her on Twitter: @ConvergenceDLab.

Virginia Killian Lund is a Ph.D. candidate in Literacy, Language, and Culture in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Illinois at Chicago. She researches adolescent literacies. She's on Twitter: @virginiaklund.
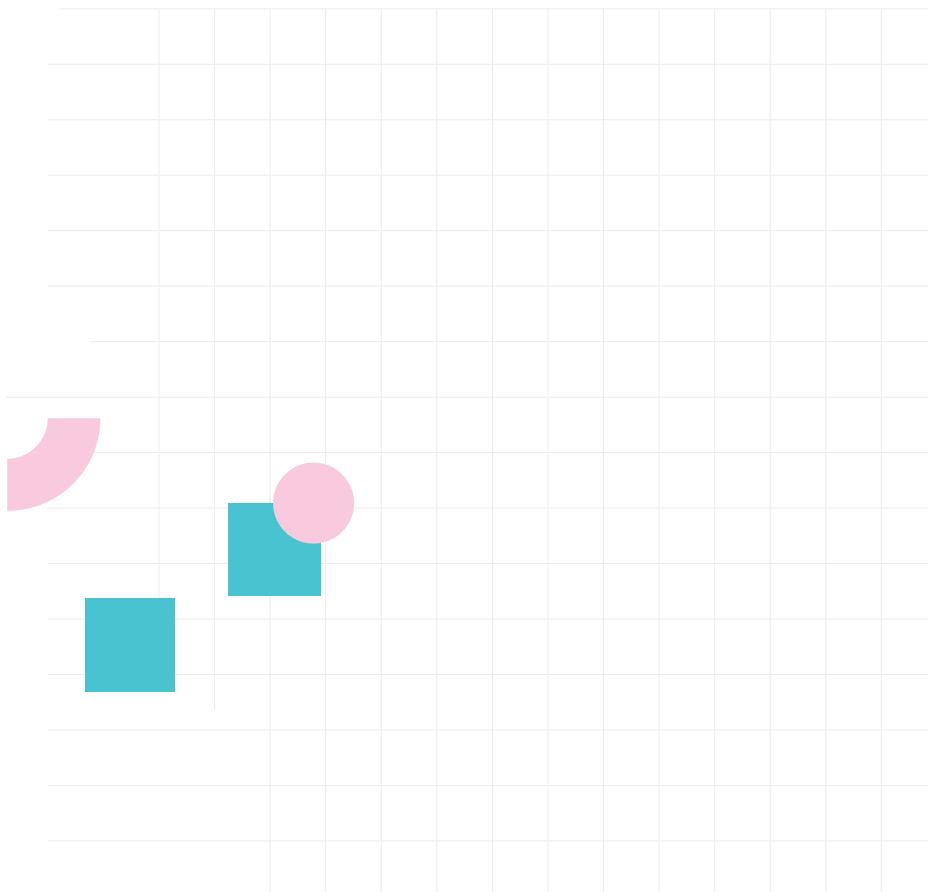
ABOUT THIS EVALUATION

In October 2016, Spy Hop engaged the services of Convergence Design Lab at Columbia College Chicago to lead an external research evaluation of Spy Hop programs.

METHODS
As Convergence Design Lab embarked on this evaluation, we sought to understand how Spy Hop programming impacts youth and their local and global communities, taking into consideration best practices in youth development (Barron et al., 2014; Larson, 2000; Lerner et al., 2005; Utah standards) and frameworks for learning in media and technology.

Consistent with qualitative methods, our data collection involved multiple sources in order to achieve triangulation (Creswell, 2008; Yin, 2013). These multiple sources of data allowed us to establish chains of evidence that support our findings, and they established the observed outcomes and impacts as predictable and consistent rather than outlying incidents.

Our data sources for this evaluation included...

From mentors:
- Focus group interviews with mentors
- Individual interviews with mentors
- Mentor survey

From youth:
- Focus group interviews with youth
- Surveys of youth on program experience (n=143)
- Individual interviews with youth
- Youth media production artifacts
- Authentic performance tasks assessments

From others:
- Critiques of youth portfolios by professional media artists
- Audience surveys following public screening of youth media productions
- Survey of Spy Hop alumni (n=41)

ANALYSIS
We initially analyzed the data with some simple questions in mind: What is Spy Hop accomplishing in the lives of youth? How is Spy Hop affecting that change?

Four readers familiar with youth development and media arts work read across the data and developed thematic codes. After the thematic coding, we returned to Spy Hop's program goals and looked for intersections with our themes. Prior to making assertions in this evaluation, we ensured that they were triangulated across multiple data sets. This inductive analysis is consistent with grounded theory practice (Charmaz & Belgrave, 2007).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Youth who take part in Spy Hop's core programs in video, audio, and music production and design benefit from access to professional-grade facilities and technology. With the support of mentors who are professionals in their chosen discipline, Spy Hop youth collaborate with their peers to produce high-quality media works for authentic audiences. In the process, they learn critical skills that prepare them for college and careers. But just as importantly, they develop meaningful relationships with each other and with caring adults — and they learn how to become engaged and empowered citizens in their communities. They discover that they have a voice in shaping public attitudes and opinions.

Spy Hop's programs have a tremendous impact on the youth who take part in them, but also the community as a whole. In our study of Spy Hop's core programs during 2016-17, Convergence Design Lab observed that youth participants became more adept at thinking creatively and expressing themselves through media arts. They gained future-ready skills such as communication, collaboration, problem solving, and planning for success. And they developed meaningful, cross-cultural connections. What's more, as Spy Hop participants amplified their voices through digital media creation, audiences gained new perspectives they didn't have before. The entire community benefited from the civic engagement of Spy Hop youth.

These outcomes can be traced back to Spy Hop's exemplary approach to youth development, called the Spy Hop Way — as we will detail in the pages that follow.

THE ECOLOGY OF SPY HOP

"...The hard work, the perseverance, the interpersonal communications, the willingness to accept feedback. Feeling prepared. All these things are very much transferable skills that prepare you... It's not always just about making media; those skills are needed for success in life no matter what." —Colby, Spy Hop Alumnus and Mentor

In this evaluation report, we share some of the proximal outcomes we observed as a result of young people's engagement in Spy Hop programs. In the following sections, we will describe the four main outcomes we observed. We will share some descriptive data that illustrate these outcomes. We will also discuss the connection between the resources Spy Hop provides across all of its programming and the outcomes we observed.

But to understand these findings, readers first must understand more about Spy Hop and its exemplary youth development model, as the results we observed are inextricably linked to the organization's approach.

THE SPY HOP WAY
In our observations, we came to understand the significant impacts Spy Hop has on youth and communities to be the result of a complex ecology of resources, pedagogical practices, values, and attitudes. We call this complex ecology "The Spy Hop Way."

The Spy Hop Way supports youth development. Spy Hop provides high-quality programming sustained by a program model that supports youth in creating excellent, risk-taking work and keeps them coming back for more. This program model fosters a sense of community. It encourages and supports talented, experienced mentors in delivering effective opportunities for students to learn.

Spy Hop's program model connects youth with state-of-the-art equipment and technologies in a safe, collaborative space. Working under the guidance of highly qualified media mentors, they produce professional-quality work for authentic audiences. Instruction culminates in authentic performance assessments that expose youth to the kinds of challenges they will encounter in actual professional settings. Dedicated partners, organizations, and volunteers support youth in the completion of projects and give them a platform to share their work. In the process, youth participants learn important skills that go well beyond media creation, such as communication, collaboration, goal setting, problem solving, and critical thinking. Underlying all of these activities, and infusing them with a deeper significance, are values such as empowerment, innovation, diversity, and a sense of community.

High-quality media, engaged youth voices, youth-powered spaces, professional mentors, community involvement, and enduring values: this is *The Spy Hop Way*.
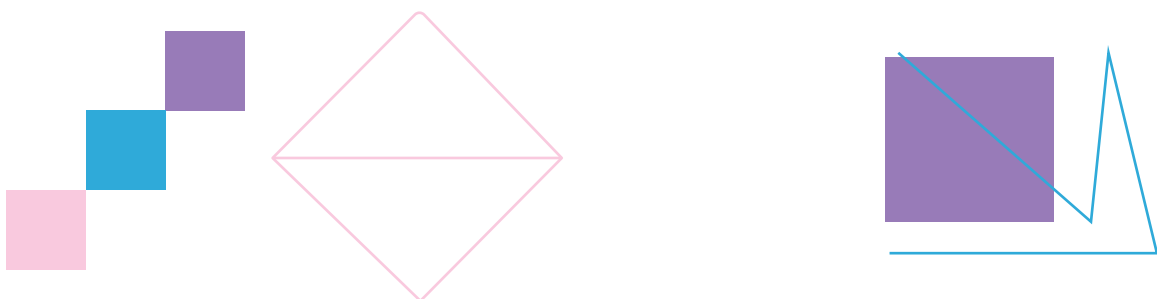
PROGRAM INPUTS
The Spy Hop model consists of four key elements.

1. State-of-the-art equipment and facilities.
Youth participants in Spy Hop programs use the same cutting-edge equipment and processes that media arts professionals use. For example, Spy Hop audio programs use both Ableton Live and Pro Tools software, the most common software programs for the recording industry. Design programs use Adobe Creative Cloud and Unity, and film programs use Adobe Premiere Pro and After Effects.

Using industry-standard technologies ensures that students will have the best chance of gaining employment or internships upon completion of Spy Hop programs. "We make it very clear to the students that the gear belongs to them," says Program Director Matt Mateus. "We talk about this as an opportunity to show students that we trust them and that we will treat them as adults. One common phrase that we use at Spy Hop is: 'Get the cameras in their hands in the first five minutes.'"

The physical space is also important and contributes to Spy Hop's ecology. Spy Hop refers to its facility as a "studio" and makes every effort to reflect a professional media arts studio in the way that it fosters collaboration and creativity, Mateus says. Each individual lab is an open space with large tables and open areas for collaboration and conversation. The recording lab is a traditional studio, so students feel they are learning in an environment that functions solely as a recording studio.

"One of the deliberate things that we think about when we are thinking of our learning spaces," says Adam Sherlock, Director of Community Partnerships and Learning Design, "is that they feel like they are for the student — that they do not feel like school, [but] are spaces that students feel comfortable being creative in."

2. Talented media mentors.
Spy Hop mentors are professional digital artists and youth learning specialists who model how to make transformative media. They average 8-11 years of industry experience, have worked professionally in the industry of their discipline, and have participated in professional trainings at Spy Hop to learn more about youth development and media arts education.

Spy Hop mentors use developmentally appropriate, research-based best practices in educating youth in an out-of-school context. These practices are meant to facilitate independent, interest-driven learning. They include a focus on relationship building and fostering personal connections; providing support in the moment as needed, while giving youth the space to figure things out for themselves; and cultivating students' voice and passion.

What does it take to be an effective Spy Hop mentor? In their own words, mentors say they must be able to "foster a supportive and engaging [environment] where students can express and challenge themselves," and they must have "a true understanding of how the work [they are] doing influences teens wanting to work in these industries."

3. An effective community of practice with a proven approach.
Spy Hop's positive community of practice is centered on authentic and professional media production. It includes a space where learners are treated as fully capable members, have opportunities for leadership, and feel supported and respected by mentors and other professionals. Learning experiences focus on youth-led interests, and they result in high-quality media works developed for authentic audiences. In the course of these experiences, youth have repeated opportunities to try out new roles, skills, and tools in a safe and supportive environment.

4. Committed partners, board members, volunteers, and supporters.
Spy Hop enlists the support of dozens of businesses, community organizations, and civic groups in a variety of capacities. For instance, more than two dozen artists and industry professionals serve as professional reviewers who give critical feedback to Spy Hop youth at the conclusion of their Apprenticeship workshops. This feedback is shared on the spot and in written form. Businesses and organizations also serve as clients for youth-produced works such as videos and graphics. Giving youth participants an authentic audience for their work helps them learn valuable skills such as how to interact with clients and listen to their needs, as well as how to produce work for a specific audience and an intended purpose.

UNDERLYING VALUES
Also critical to Spy Hop's ecology are the values upon which the organization is based. These are...

Transformation: Spy Hop is changing the way young people see themselves. "We believe in them, and we instill confidence and ownership in their ideas and work," Spy Hop says. "When they talk, we listen, and we encourage them to talk and listen to each other — which creates a connectivity and a community that wasn't there before."

Diversity: Spy Hop respects that everyone has their own beliefs and culture, and through that respect, the organization gives students the confidence to accept others. "We bring young people together who don't otherwise have the opportunity to connect, and we value the forward movement that happens when there is diversity in thought, culture, and voice," Spy Hop says.

Empowerment: When students gain digital media knowledge, they are empowered to move from being a passive consumer of media to an active and engaged producer of content. And when their individual and collective ideas are encouraged and embraced, they are empowered to become active and engaged citizens.

Innovation: Spy Hop embraces the progressive nature of innovation by continuously adapting to changing cultural and technological landscapes. By evolving its facilities, programming, and administration, Spy Hop creates the conditions for ongoing intellectual curiosity and supports the creative use of emerging media and technologies.

Community: "We believe that commitment to our own small community has the ability to create dramatic social change in the larger communities all around us," Spy Hop says. Spy Hop nurtures a safe, welcoming space in which creativity, innovation, and risk-taking can take place. This commitment fosters the expansion of community beyond Spy Hop's walls, "building lasting social capital and improving the lives around us."

KEY OUTCOMES

In our observations, Convergence Design Lab noted four key proximal outcomes of Spy Hop's program model. As a result of Spy Hop's consistent, high-quality programming, we saw these outcomes repeated across the span of program offerings, though we certainly noted varying degrees of intensity based upon the depth of young people's involvement with programming. The key outcomes we noted were:

- Spy Hop cultivates creativity and artistic expression through media arts.
- Youth gain future-ready skills needed to pursue productive college and career pathways.
- Youth develop meaningful relationships and cross-cultural connections across diverse communities.
- Spy Hop amplifies youth stories and voices so audiences gain new knowledge and more informed perspectives.

These outcomes are resulting in an innovative and creative workforce, a vibrant media arts landscape, and a more resilient and inclusive civil society. Young people are being prepared to thrive in the information economy; young artists and their creative work are becoming valued within the community; and communities are becoming empowered through youth civic engagement.

In the following sections, we will elaborate on these outcomes in more detail.
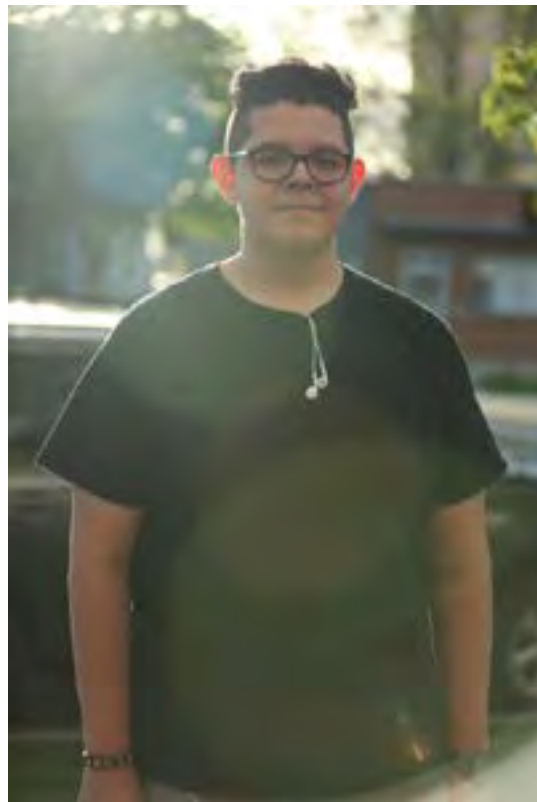
HIP-HOP MUSIC PRODUCTION AS COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

By Jabari Evans

Many researchers have noted hip-hop music's ability to challenge social norms, racial injustice, economic disparity, and political problems in urban America (Love, 2015; Hill, 2009; Kitwana, 2008; George, 1999; Baker, 1993). If the goal of a music program is to empower urban students to analyze complex literary texts, hip-hop can be used as a bridge linking the seemingly vast span between the street life and future professional success (Morrell & Andrade, 2002). Resonate, the hip-hop production class within Spy Hop, encourages youth to create multimedia stories as a means of collaborative learning. By exploring the interplay between language and sound arts, participants of the program are allowed to examine issues happening to themselves, within their families, and their in communities.

Rather than treating them as passive learners of writing techniques and music technology, Resonate pushes students to be their own teachers through self-reflection, critical dialogue among peers, and an equitable negotiation of learning. Essential to this process is the ability for students to learn that music production is a collaborative activity. Myke Johnson, Spy Hop alum and mentor for the Resonate program, explains:

"You got this person [who's] really good at making beats, and then maybe this person wrote the hook for the song, and then maybe this guy is the main feature on it, but he only wrote his verses, but he didn't write the chorus, even though he's performing everything. And for [the students] to realize that … all of this happens, and it's not necessarily something to be ashamed of in hip-hop. [The program] gets them to realize that it's truly a team production effort that it takes to create an entire project."

Though small portions of urban youth move beyond consumption of digital media to become creators, Resonate goes further, giving youth access to top-quality production equipment and affinity spaces for learning (Clark, 2017) — allowing participants to create a tight-knit maker community. Through the learning of hip-hop practices, Resonate participants use hip-hop lyrics to present a work ethic that supports self-efficacy, pride, and optimism of their imagined future endeavors. As Johnson elaborates:

"That's what I really wanted for Resonate. I wanted it to be creating [a collaborative project] from start to finish, and making all the beats. They have to write all the lyrics and record everything. But [this is also] getting them to realize that [hip-hop practices] are like everything you do in school and can come back to you in some way, shape, or form. This is the most lyrically intensive genre of music that you guys are choosing to do. No other genre requires you to write as much as hip-hop does. So, look at that and realize that you guys, if you put together an album, you've put together maybe like a 20-page paper at that point. And [that means] you have [the capability] to do that all the time [when you get] in college."

Through Resonate, the self-named Daylight Hooligans created a final project entitled *The Seven Day Theory*. The album takes an allegory or fable approach to its songwriting and gives a hypothetical view of the average look at Monday to Sunday through the eyes of an urban youth in Salt Lake City. Each song represents the feeling of each day of the week as a different emotion and displays a depth of lyricism and soulful production that is both melodic and layered. In the group's song entitled "Thursday," the youth collectively rap:

Positive thoughts what's keeps me going
What keeps me growing
Can't give up till I succeed
Focus on the things in life that I need (yeah)
So I don't leave life decisions to a coin toss (nah)

In instances like the one above, students use their lyrics to express their desire to transcend the status quo of those who have grown up in their environment. Moreover, many students in this program express a theme of actively seeking to avoid peers who may be negative influences in their lives. This theme was most poignantly displayed in the group's song "Monday." In the song excerpt below, Resonate participant Gnimdo (19 years old) raps about his aspirations for rap stardom, as well as how he wants to use his rap career to pay his way through college, despite what naysayers might say:

They tryna cease my roar but I
won't stop. Not till I'm heating my shore and
ensure my art beating on rap's door.
Damn this really is my time.
Yams been a recurring sign. So it's
mine. I won't fail. I'll dine on your entrails. Your
lines are too stale. Better bail y'all beta males.
At the least Imma be known and own the local
scene. A beast on the beat should be thrown in Hogle.
Dreams of dropping some tracks to earn some
greens to pay through my degrees.
Two cities on my back, that's what I'm carrying.
Saying this now. In a year and a
half giving a project too high-brow it's the
path to the black manifesto. Gnimdo,
just imagine all of this can really happen.

These lyrics exemplify how Resonate affords its members the opportunity to critically express everyday views on their lived experiences as youth who grow up in urban environments. A song like "Thursday" reveals a striking sophistication in young people's awareness of the social meanings that are attached to their ethnicity. Overall, *The Seven Day Theory* suggests that the class held substantive meaning in the lives of participants, and that the experience of being in the Spy Hop program helped them to better themselves as new media citizens and make sense of their future goals, as well as their position in society. Through the process of making their own professional-sounding, original songs, the youth found self-empowerment and confidence in their critical voices.

SPY HOP'S LOGIC MODEL

Spy Hop Logic Model						
Inputs	**Activities & Strategies**	**Outputs**	**Outcomes**			**Impact**
State-of-the-art technologies and media art facilities	**SCAFFOLDED YOUTH MEDIA ARTS PROGRAMS** Mentor-based, project-based, and inquiry-based, youth-driven learning experiences in film, audio, music, and design	901 youth served in core programs 766 students served in community programs 481 students served in state's custody 9,677 students reached by in-school programs 4,217 in-class hours provided in core programs 50+ community orgs and schools served	*Proximal*	*Intermediate*		**AN INNOVATIVE AND CREATIVE WORKFORCE** Young people are prepared to thrive in the innovation economy Diverse voices and experiences are represented in creative industries
Highly qualified staff and media art mentors			Youth increase capacity to communicate effectively through media arts, technology, and design Youth increase college & career "future-ready" skills Youth build meaningful community, interpersonal , and cross-cultural connections	Participants pursue college pathways and/or career roles in media, communication, design, and innovation Participants draw on self-efficacy, confidence, and motivation to lead productive lives Participants participate in civic life as informed, media-aware, and engaged citizens		
Community of Practice (*Spy Hop Way* signature pedagogies and mentorship model)	**AUDIENCE AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT** Juvenile Justice programming Radio and podcast series National film festivals Community events and screenings Website and social media	800+ youth media works created 10,000+ audience members reached	Audiences gain new knowledge and awareness through youth voices and media projects	Diverse youth voices are listened to, valued, and included in school, community, and civic dialogue		**A VIBRANT MEDIA & ARTS LANDSCAPE** Young artists and their creative work are valued and supported in their communities Youth are informed, ethical, and engaged media information consumers and producers **A RESILIENT AND INCLUSIVE CIVIL SOCIETY** Communities are empowered and transformed through youth civic engagement
Committed partners, board, volunteers and supporters						

CULTIVATING CREATIVITY & EXPRESSION

Key Outcome No. 1: Spy Hop cultivates creativity and artistic expression through media arts.

At Spy Hop, young people are increasing their capacity to communicate effectively through media arts, media literacy, creative production, and design skills. This finding is best evidenced by the volume and quality of the work produced in a variety of media arts disciplines, the national recognition many of these works receive, and the number of audience members reached. Mentors at Spy Hop are key to this success, as they meet youth where they are and push them to learn more, do more, and be more — harnessing Spy Hop's state-of-the art equipment and rich network of supports.

PRODUCTION
During 2016-17, works created by Spy Hop youth were presented in festivals across the country, achieved notable awards, and were broadly shared with authentic audiences of peers, community members, and professionals. In 2016-17, Spy Hop youth created nearly 800 original media projects that reached more than 10,000 audience members directly. These works — produced in a variety of genres and media arts disciplines — were shared through platforms that included community film screenings, live events, podcasts, radio programs, recordings, festivals, and online channels such as Vimeo and Soundcloud.

REACH
Spy Hop youth are creating high-quality work that is seen, heard, and used by authentic audiences. Here is a small sampling of the ways in which this work reached authentic audiences in 2016-17:

- *Sending Messages*, a creative arts program that engages incarcerated youth and gives them creative license to explore their life, culture, identity, and what led to their incarceration, produced six podcasts composed of 63 individual pieces with an impressive 6,687 audience downloads.

- *801 Sessions*, a music apprenticeship program in which students plan, book, promote, record, and film monthly all-ages music events, produced 40 projects presented at 12 live events, reaching an audience of 1,056 people.

- *Loud and Clear*, Utah's only youth-produced radio program, produced 50 radio shows composed of 65 individual pieces, with an average weekly listenership of 1,500 people.

In our ongoing observations of Spy Hop, we see that the presentation of work to authentic audiences elevates the quality of young people's work by intensifying their investment in the work. Spy Hop youth are encouraged to follow their passions and create work that matters to a real-life audience, whether they are filling a need for a business, communicating a story about a community member, setting up a live show for young performers and audiences, recording a band's first demo, or premiering a film to an audience of dozens that deeply explores a civic issue. Connecting students with authentic audiences is a research-supported way to increase youth investment in their work and to communicate support for young people's voices (Rodier, 2000; Peyton et al., 1990).

NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED SUCCESS

Spy Hop youth are producing work that has achieved national recognition. Here are just a few examples from 2016-17:

- Seven Spy Hop films were accepted into 12 competitive film festivals in eight states across the country, reaching more than 1,000 audience members and garnering numerous awards.

- *One Defining Dot* received the Creativity Award at "The America I Am" Short Film Competition in New York City and was featured at the PLURAL+ Youth Video Festival, the ViewFinders Youth Film Competition in Halifax, Canada, the All American High School Film Festival, the Newport Beach Film Festival, and the Seattle Transmedia & Independent Film Festival.
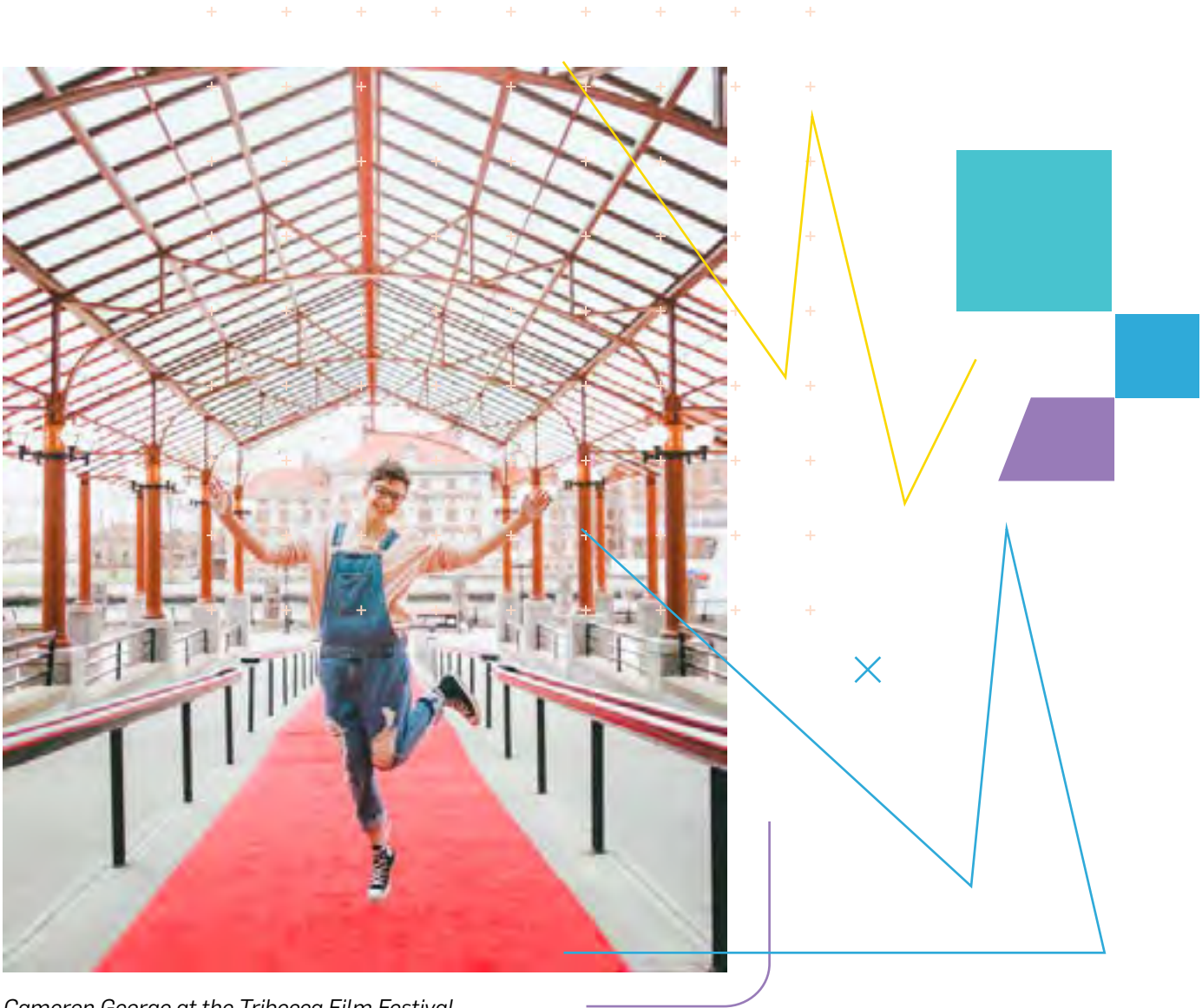
Cameron George at the Tribecca Film Festival
Photographer: Jerm Cohen Project 1324

SIGNATURE PEDAGOGY: The Spy Hop "Push"

"[My mentor] always saw in me what I was capable of before I saw it, before I knew it, and always pushed me to work harder, to create a better story. ... I kind of keep that with me in thinking about how I interact with my students."
—A Spy Hop mentor and alum, talking about her experience as a student

In our observations and interviews with Spy Hop mentors, we saw what we refer to as "signature pedagogies." One of those is what we came to call the Spy Hop "Push." Spy Hop mentors push their students to think critically and globally, to improve their practice, and to work through problems independently. This isn't always easy for the learners. For many students, being asked to expect more of themselves, going through the vulnerable process of sharing work and hearing criticism, and finding solutions the hard way instead of getting easy answers is a new experience. We saw, however, that the community of support and respect created at Spy Hop made it possible for all learners to be pushed by mentors — and eventually to begin pushing themselves.

Shannalee is a mentor who began as a student at Spy Hop. She recalled getting "the push" from her documentary film teacher: "Matt Bradley was my first documentary filmmaker mentor. ... I remember making my first documentary, and I was like, 'Yeah, I nailed it. I'm done! I finished! This is so good!' I was super proud of my work, and I raised my hand to have him come watch it. He watched it, and he was like, 'Good, keep going.' I remember being like, 'What?'" Shannalee said she had to sit with her work and figure out what to do next. "I think that he knew that I could do better and that I could figure it out, and he wanted to challenge me. I've always said that a lot of the mentors at Spy Hop knew better about what I was a capable of than I knew." Shannalee has adopted this practice of challenging students to do better in her own mentorship practice.

"I know what you're capable of, and I know that you don't know it yet. I'm going to help you get there."

Shannalee described a student working on a documentary who became really frustrated. She told us: "I just sat down with her and I said, 'There's a reason why I won't hold your hand through this. ... You're used to having people come in and rescue you through something that's hard. You're used to having another peer or a teacher ... sit down with you and take you step by step, but I know you can do it without having that kind of help. So I will not sit down and hold your hand through this, because I know you can do this.'

"And it was another one of those 'light bulb' moments where she was like, 'Oh my God, you're totally right. That is what I do. I always expect, when it gets hard, I want someone to hold my hand through this. ... That's what I go to.' And I was like, 'Right — and I'm not going to let you do it. I'm not going to do that with you, because I know you can do this, I know you can push yourself, and I want you to do that.'

"And she totally did, and she killed it. At the end of it, she was like, 'You have completely changed the way that I think about projects, and now I know what I'm capable of. This is like my dream come true of having a timeline that looks this complicated, and I know I did this. I

did this on my own, without anybody holding my hand.' And I was like, 'There you go! I know you were mad at me, and I know you were kind of frustrated with me, but it's because I knew you could get to this place.' So, it was a really cool moment."

Students echo the experience described by Shannalee: Getting pushed to do more is difficult, but they come out the other side with a sense of pride in what they've done, as well as a newly developed independence within their media arts disciplines. Here is a sampling of what youth say about receiving the Spy Hop "Push" in their own words:

- *"[My mentor] let me do a lot of things on my own. I had a hard time with this at first, but I was grateful afterwards because I learned a lot about managing stressful situations and solving problems."*

- *"[Mentors will] explain how to do something and what you need to do in order to be successful with what you're doing, but then they just kind of let you do your own thing, and if you need help, I feel comfortable enough asking for it. … Unlike teachers at school, the teachers here are not scary to approach. They're not going to make you feel like an idiot for not knowing."*

- *"[This program] forced me to be extremely independent and solve problems in documentary filmmaking — not my favorite type of filmmaking. However, that did make me figure out problems and gain more skills and have a different view in filmmaking, leading me to gain more experience, have an awesome project, and learning a lot more independent filmmaking [skills]. [It made] me realize the struggles and challenges that filmmakers face and must manage without the safety net of Spy Hop. [It made] me a better and more work-ready filmmaker."*
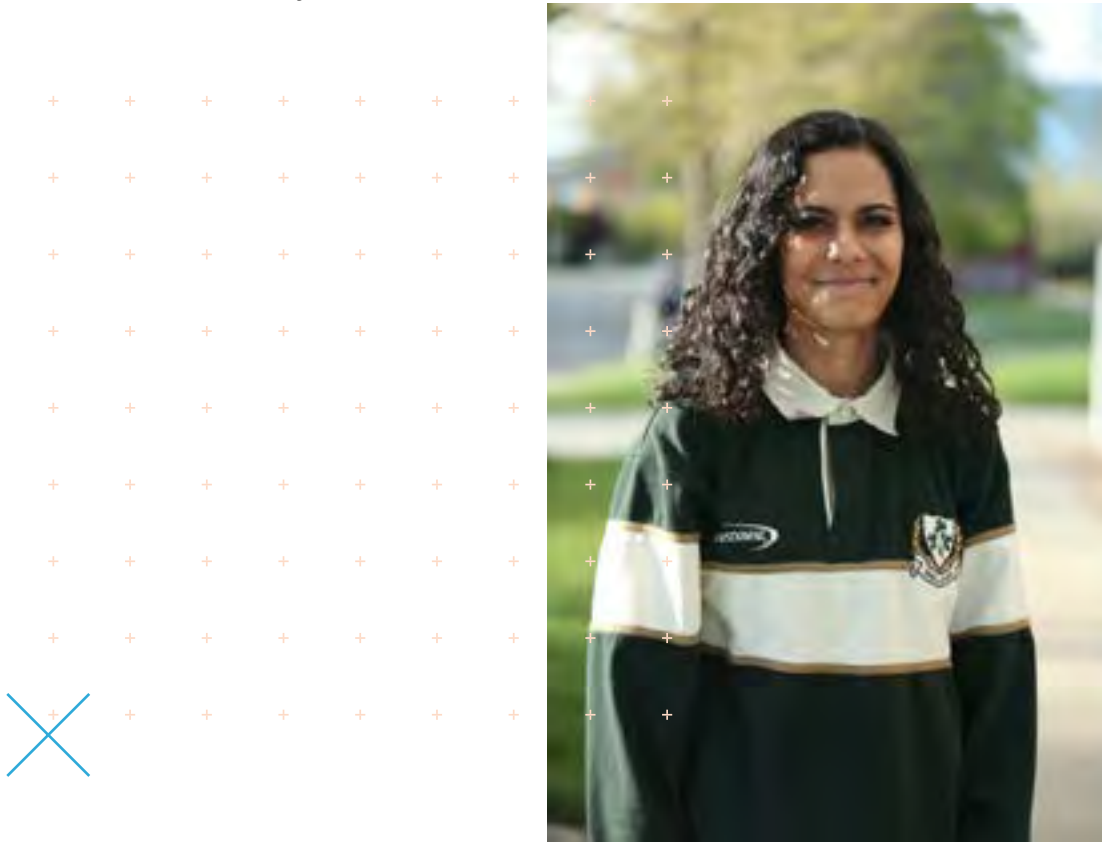
PREPARING FUTURE-READY YOUTH

Key Outcome No. 2: Youth gain future-ready skills needed to pursue productive college and career pathways.

What are the most useful, real-world skills that young people need to improve the workforce and grow vibrant communities? Education researchers, along with experts at many national organizations, agree that future-ready youth are those who can collaborate in teams, innovate and solve problems through human-centered design, communicate in multimedia forms, and critically analyze information (Cope & Kalantzis, 2016; Alvermann, 2002; MHA Labs, 2018; ISTE, 2016). These future-ready abilities are uniquely well cultivated through the process of project-based media production and design at Spy Hop.

There is little question that today's youth exist in an unprecedented reality: The resources available for them to learn, connect, and share are seemingly endless, if only they are supported in developing the skills they will need to navigate these opportunities successfully. We compared and consulted several sources that catalogue the competencies that will support youth in being college and career ready, including the Utah Media Arts Standards, ISTE National Student Standards (2016), Convergence Academies 3Cs of Participatory Learning, and MHA Labs' 21st Century Skill Building Blocks (http://mhalabs.org/). These are often referred to as 21st century skills. However, given that we are 18 years past the dawn of the new millenium, we are now seeing a shift by educational leaders such as the International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) to replace the term 21st century skills with future-ready skills. Spy Hop and Convergence Design Lab agree that the term future-ready skills aptly describes the kind of social-emotional and workforce readiness skills and mindsets that young people need to be prepared for college and careers in the information and innovation economy.

Across our analysis of many data sources — including interviews with youth and mentors, authentic performance assessments, process and content analysis of youth media productions, professional portfolio evaluations, and focus groups with youth participants — we saw consistent and repeated evidence that young people have ample opportunities to practice and refine their future-ready skills through participation in Spy Hop programming. In the media production practices they learn at Spy Hop, young people collaborate with others, plan for the successful completion of their projects, solve problems over time and in the moment, and communicate with mentors, peers, teammates, and audiences using both words and the languages of the media arts they are studying.

The MHA Labs Skill Building Blocks are an evidence-based framework that aligns to the types of future-ready skills that Spy Hop mentors explicitly identified as the most critical for youth to possess in order to create high-quality media projects, whether for personal, community, or client communication. The MHA Labs Framework identifies six core building block targets comprising a total of 35 cognitive, social, and emotional skills essential for college and career success. These are:
- Personal Mindset
- Planning for Success
- Social Awareness
- Verbal Communication
- Collaboration
- Problem Solving
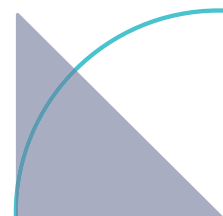
In our observations as evaluators, we have documented Spy Hop youth developing measurable skills in each of these categories, particularly through our close examination of the apprenticeship program conducted in spring 2017.

PERSONAL MINDSETS AND PLANNING FOR SUCCESS
The proof of young people's ability to plan for success and develop personal mindsets of perseverance and self-efficacy can be seen in the many successfully completed, high-quality media arts projects produced as a result of Spy Hop's programming. In 2016-17, Spy Hop youth produced a remarkable 778 media projects, including albums, podcasts, games, graphic design projects, documentary videos, narrative films, live performances, and original music recordings. Through the act of creating media in sustained, long-range projects, youth hone their ability to maintain focus and plan for success. Here's a sampling of what young people had to say about the skills they developed through the act of completing a project:

"For me, whenever I accomplish something, I feel like I have that skill down. [My] mentor, Jeremy, he helps me persevere through things and understand what I need to be doing. When I am finally able to do that and reach that goal, I feel confident in myself — and I feel like I can do it again." —Spy Hop participant

"It's like when you accomplish the little tiny tasks and [you're] like, 'Yeah, good job.' Then you're like, 'Oh, I can do this little thing.' [That] makes doing the bigger things a little easier, because you have all these little ones that you've already accomplished. I think it's about ... celebrating the tiny little accomplishments." —Spy Hop participant

PROBLEM SOLVING THROUGH MEDIA ARTS
Youth at Spy Hop become innovative problem solvers through media arts in multiple senses. Through the process of creating media in collaboration with others and for a variety of stakeholders, youth at Spy Hop learn to set goals and navigate the unexpected in order to meet those goals. Additionally, they use their media arts work to develop solutions to real-world problems. In completing their projects, they are supporting nonprofits in their community, speaking out about issues that matter, and making positive change in the world.

Here are some of the ways that Spy Hop youth used media arts to solve problems in 2016-17:

- Sending messages and lobbying for policy changes.
- Documentaries about undocumented youth, Native American cultural identity, substance abuse, mental health, juvenile justice, gender identity, LGBTQ+ issues, environmental issues, and social media.
- Services to nonprofits for branding or issue-based campaigns.

HOW DOES SPY HOP SUPPORT FUTURE-READY SKILLS?
Here's how we see Spy Hop's structures and practices supporting youth in developing future-ready skills and mindsets needed for productive college and career pathways:
> **Access to state-of-the-art equipment/media art facilities**
> As they encounter the state-of-the-art tools and materials used by professional media artists, youth at Spy Hop learn authentic professional practices. Students learn the foundational practices and vocabulary of media arts. They also learn to

adapt to new tools and technologies, using those tools to solve problems — and learning to solve problems posed by the tools. This is a skill that is essential in a field where technology evolves rapidly.

Highly qualified staff and mentors
Mentors who understand the reality of careers in media arts support youth in planning for success as they prepare to create complex media productions. They model and support the development of collaborative practices. Through their encouragement, youth develop the self-efficacy mindset needed for success.

Community of practice
Because their media arts productions have authentic audiences, youth are motivated to plan and execute successful products. The Spy Hop community of practice supports problem-solving skills by providing a resourceful community of like-minded peers to think through problems, offer suggestions, and empathize with one another's struggles.

Committed partners, board, volunteers, and supporters
Community partners, board members, volunteers, and supporters communicate the value and import of young people's work by being an audience for the work, providing a space beyond the walls of Spy Hop for young people to communicate their ideas.
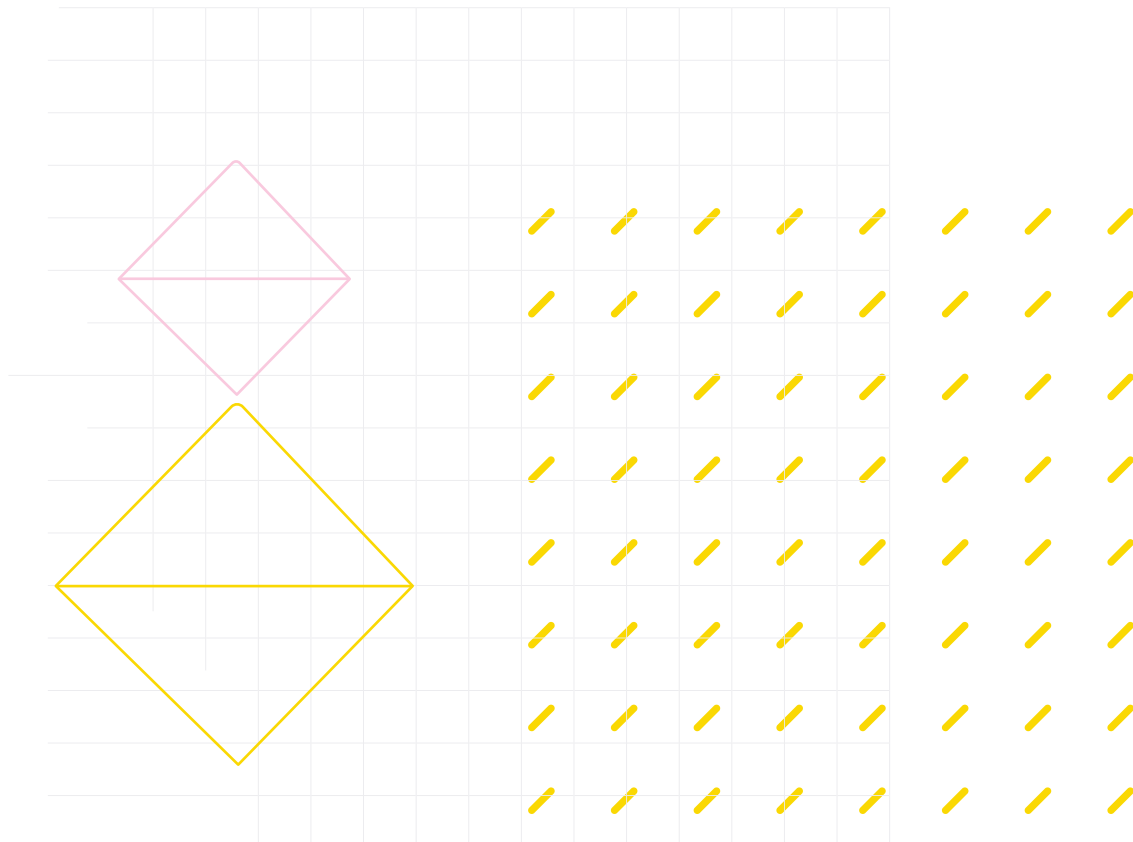
SIGNATURE PEDAGOGY: Authentic Performance Assessments

One thing that struck us in our analysis was the complex way in which these future-ready skills interacted within individuals, influencing how they considered their approach to challenges. To illustrate that, we share below a snapshot analysis of a Spy Hop student's authentic performance assessment. In these authentic performance assessments, students were asked to think through and describe their approach to a scenario designed by professionals in their chosen media arts field to represent the kinds of challenges faced within that discipline. In this instance, the prompt was as follows:
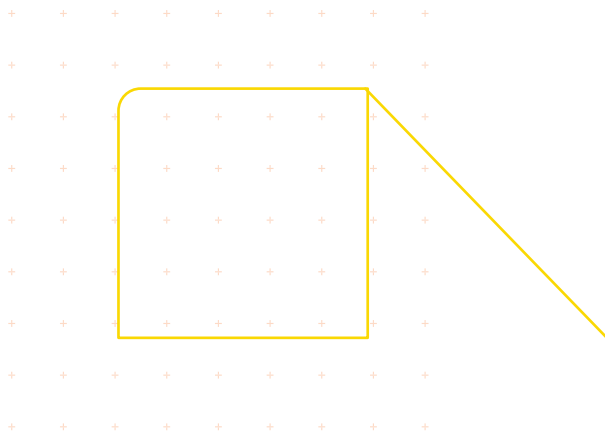
> *"Q: A nonprofit environmental group wants to hire you to make a short video as part of their climate change social media campaign. But first, they have asked you to explain your production process based on a three-month timeline. What are the specific action steps that you will take to create a video for the client? Sketch out a realistic step-by-step plan in the box below."*

In posing this problem to students, Spy Hop mentors expected to see how well students considered their design in relation to their client and audience; how well students anticipated problems and planned for success; and how well students understood the steps of creating a video for a client. One film apprenticeship youth participant responded this way:

> ***"I first understand exactly what kind they want to be produced by the end, which includes narrative style, length, characters, locations, etc. Then I calculate what will cover what they need me to do, as well as the hours I expect to work and what that will cost. Then I contact cinematographer, gaffer, sound guy, editor, actors, etc. and fill them in on what, when, where, and how much they'll be paid. If I have three months, I'd want production to take place in the first week of the second month, and that would likely take place over the course of that week. Then I agree to have a first cut with feedback by the end of the second month. I'll give them three cuts in total for feedback, and final cut will be ready by the third week of the third month.*"
> —Spy Hop participant*

In this response, we see that the student is thinking holistically about the entirety of the project and working backwards to design a timeline that meets the three-month period. The student mentions specific elements that would affect the tone, scope, and practical logistics of his project. As youth describe their process, we can gain insight into their capacity to plan for success, one of the core skill building blocks outlined in the MHA Labs Framework.

MHA Skill Building Block Standard	How Students Meet This Standard
Sets and prioritizes goals that reflect a self-awareness of one's capabilities, interests, emotions, and/or needs.	The learner prioritizes the client's needs and goals, including the genre, style, and aesthetic considerations. Then, he or she considers personal factors, such as the estimated number of hours of labor involved.
Breaks goals into actionable steps.	The learner outlines a sequence of steps that mirrors the production process (pre-production, production, post-production).
Accurately estimates level of effort and establishes realistic timelines.	The learner works backwards from the end goal to lay out a realistic timeline.
Applies existing or newly acquired knowledge, skills, and/or strategies that one determines to be useful for achieving goals.	The learner displays a knowledge of the filmmaking process and builds in ample time for post-production, which novice filmmakers often overlook.
Monitors progress and own performance, adjusting approach as necessary.	The learner identifies the importance of integrating client feedback and iteration into the entire process in order to achieve success.

This example is not an anomaly. A total of eight students participated in this Film Apprenticeship program. Each of them answered in their own words, but all participants met or exceeded the "future-ready" MHA standard for Planning for Success.

Notably, all of the respondents' answers emphasized the need to work with the client by understanding his or her needs and goals as a key initial step. Many noted that the client should be communicated with throughout the entire process. This shows that youth are applying "human-centered design" in the film production process, and that — in concert with planning for success — students are considering how they collaborate and communicate with others (two other future-ready standards).

IDEO, an international design and consulting firm, refers to human-centered design as a "creative approach to problem solving. It's a process that starts with the people you're designing for and ends with new solutions that are tailor-made to suit their needs. Human-centered design is all about building a deep empathy with the people you're designing for."

In this way, we can see how the values of Spy Hop come into play through the production process. Whether the projects they create are works of personal expression or for an external client, ethical practices, empathy, and relationship building are evident in how youth approach their work.
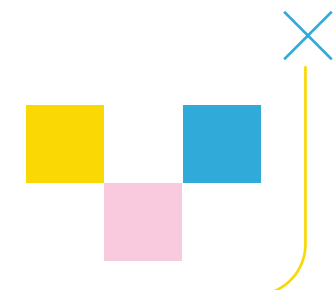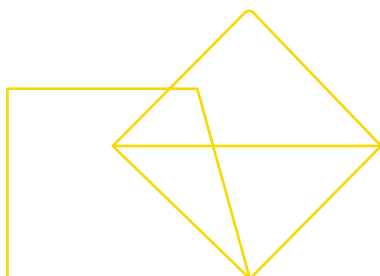
FOSTERING MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS

Key Outcome No. 3: Youth develop meaningful relationships and cross-cultural connections across diverse communities.

Participating in Spy Hop programs gives students opportunities to establish and enhance inter-personal, community, and cross-cultural connections through the process of media arts production. We see evidence of these connections across interviews, focus groups, surveys, portfolio evaluations, and content analysis of media arts productions created by youth.

MENTORS AND PEERS

Spy Hop participants develop trusting and respectful relationships with both mentors and peers. In a survey taken by 143 students who participated in Spy Hop programs in 2016-17, responses reflected a feeling of trust and belonging at Spy Hop. Some responses from the survey are reported in the table below.

The instructor listened to what I had to say.	99% said "almost always or often"
This class had a welcoming atmosphere.	98% said "almost always or often"
In this class, I could go to the instructor for support or help with a problem.	97% said "almost always or often"
I fit in with students in this class.	89% said "almost always or often"
I feel connected to the people in this class.	88% said "almost always or often"
My opinion influenced what we did in this class.	82% said "almost always or often"
This class exposed me to mentors or peers who enjoy technology.	96% agreed
This class helped me to appreciate other people's ideas.	96% agreed

Youth at Spy Hop find value in meeting and collaborating with like-minded peers, and they come to see those peers as trusted friends and partners. Research suggests that positive connections with peers and mentors, along with the development of a sense of caring for and about others, correlates with positive youth development — resulting in positive contributions to community and society (Lerner, 2007).

In open-ended survey responses and interviews, youth said of Spy Hop:

> ***"Everyone is given a chance. No one judges. You can be you, and you feel welcome. Everyone is so nice and respectful, and it makes it good to come here, where you can be you and do what you do, express yourself to others."***

"We're all very comfortable with each other. We're friends, and we're like a team. We help each other out with our problems."

Youth describe their mentors as supportive, respectful, respected, and trustworthy. One media arts apprentice wrote, "I got to work with someone who has had lots of experience in the field I want to go into. He offered lots of good advice." In addition, youth value their mentors' professional experience. When asked about her mentor, one young person said in an interview, "... He makes whatever you're doing fun and exciting, and he has experience. He's been in bands, he's played across Europe, he's very experienced, and you kind of get to connect with your instructor ... because you just love what you're doing. You're both excited about what you get to do. He's excited about what he gets to teach to us, and it's great."

Multiple students cited actual experience in the world of media arts as a quality they value highly in their mentors. In apprenticeship program exit surveys, 83% of students (n=25) ranked the mentorship they received as extremely valuable, and the remaining 17% (n=5) ranked it as somewhat valuable.

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Youth at Spy Hop connect with individuals and organizations in the Salt Lake City community, and through their media arts production practices, they impact the community in meaningful ways. In many Spy Hop programs, youth create authentic work for clients. They produce films, design games, and create logos and graphics for local businesses and nonprofit organizations. In the course of this work, they develop valuable relationships with adults in the community.

In addition to the work they create for community partners, Spy Hop youth connect with general audiences through the public works they produce and facilitate. Through the 801 Sessions program, for instance, youth learn the practices of producing, promoting, and recording live music shows. In 2016-17, 801 Sessions produced 12 live shows, giving young people in the Salt Lake City community a place to enjoy and celebrate local music created by other young people. Students also have the opportunity to connect with a professional community through their relationships with mentors who are professionals in their field, as well as through field trips to local media artists' offices and studios and through opportunities such as professional portfolio reviews.

For example, students in the apprenticeship program receive professional industry reviews of their work; in these reviews, students were celebrated for their progress toward mastery in their media arts specialities. While a range of skill levels were noted within the programs, industry professionals reviewing portfolios often noted the apprentices' strong ability to explain their work and their skills in making appropriate use of tools of the trade. In addition, 22 artists and creative industry professionals served as reviewers, guest speakers, and assessors for youth participants in Spy Hop's core programs. These allies include software developers, audio engineers, game designers, filmmakers, spoken word poets, documentary photographers, professors, and industry professionals.

The impact of these professional and community connections is huge:

- 91% of students who were surveyed stated that their experience at Spy Hop helped them become hopeful about their future.
- 88% said their experience clarified what they want to do with their lives.
- 87% said their experience made them think about media in a new way.
- 80% said that participating in Spy Hop programs made them more interested in making sure others are treated fairly.

Spy Hop youth leverage the power of media to tell stories within the context of a global society. They produce films, music, and other media that participate in large-scale social conversations.

HOW DOES SPY HOP HELP DEVELOP MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS?

Here is how we see Spy Hop's program design supporting youth in developing and maintaining healthy and meaningful relationships and cross-cultural connections across diverse communities:

**Youth feel safe, trusted, and trusting within the community of practice.**
Youth at Spy Hop are supported by and welcomed into a community that gives them a sense of belonging. At Spy Hop, youth see models of positive interpersonal relationships. They are supported in collaborating with peers and in communicating with clients and audiences in productive ways. Spy Hop is creating a learning environment that is safe, engaging, and youth-powered.

Youth develop valuable relationships with highly qualified staff and mentors.
In addition to the modeling and instruction they provide, Spy Hop mentors immerse youth in the media arts disciplines by sharing their own work and processes and by connecting students to other professionals in the community through field trips.

Youth value these authentic connections that mentors provide.
Committed partners, board members, volunteers, and supporters play a key role. Studies show that youth with positive relationships to community institutions have increased positive outcomes (Okpych & Courtney, 2017; Kahne & Bailey, 1999; Furstenberg & Hughes, 1995). Spy Hop's model facilitates those relationships, and its community of supporters play a critical role in the successful development of these connections.
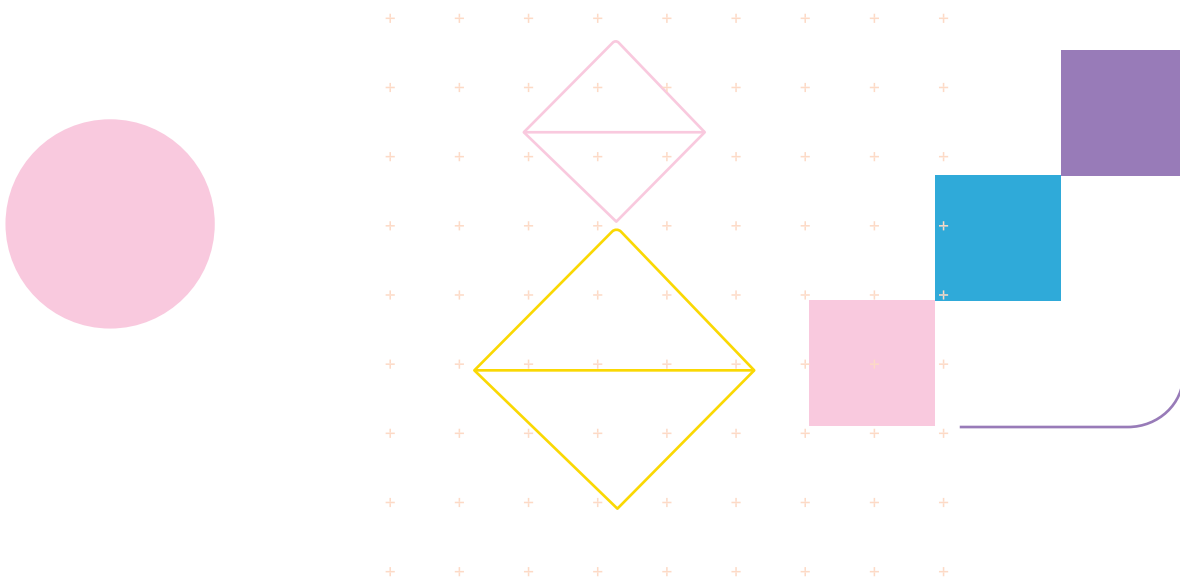
SIGNATURE PEDAGOGY: Passion Meets Rigor

The day starts. Lion ain't sleeping no more like they /
blow darts. They tryna cease my roar but I /
won't stop. Not till I'm heating my shore and /
ensure my art beating on rap's door. /
Damn this really is my time. /

— From Monday by T.K. (Gnimdo Tako)

Students come to Myke, a Spy Hop mentor and alumnus, with a passion for music. Many are aspiring lyricists, wanting to craft their own original hip-hop tracks. Myke demands their best, and he draws connections to the writing they are doing with their lyrics to the writing they are asked to do in school.

In graphic design, mentor Chris sees his students get excited about what they are creating. But their passion for what they create must sync with clients' needs. "They'd work so hard," he says. "They'd get to a point when they just love it, and they held on to it so tight — and then the client or myself would come by and be like, 'This does not work for this reason or that reason.' [They would be] thinking that we're crazy for saying that, because they spent all this time and they thought they finally came to the perfect solution, and we walk up in just a second and basically tell them it's not gonna work. I think every designer goes through that every single day of their life, but it's something you have to learn to get past as a designer."

Maintaining young people's passion for their work through the rigorous demands of a client-driven process is tough, but it's part of what Spy Hop does so well. Chris works to connect students' passion for their own work with the need to make something that meets their audience's expectations, encouraging students to expect the most of themselves. He says: "Hopefully they realize … this is your project for yourself."
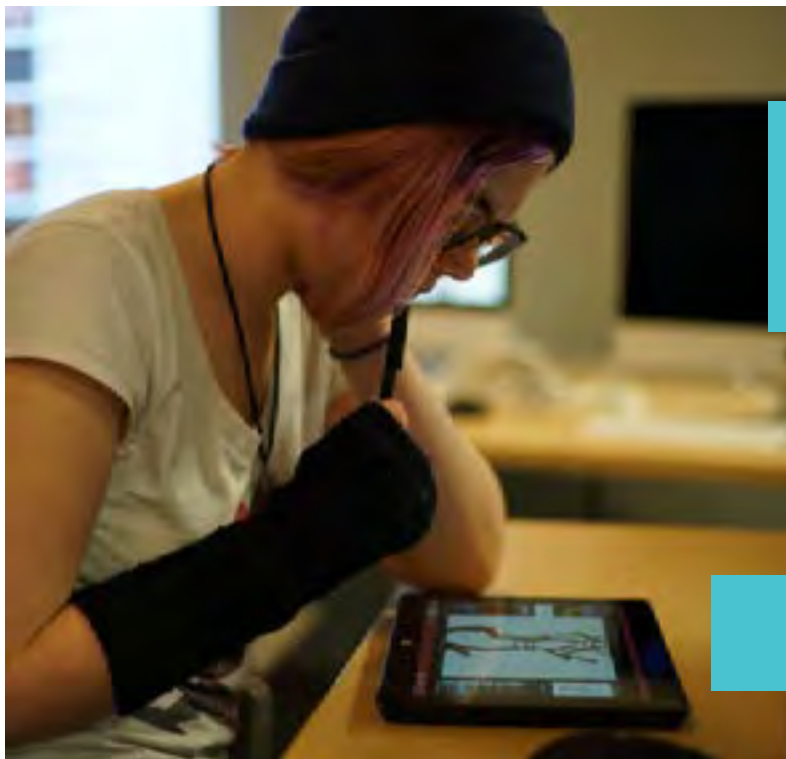
ENGAGING AND INFORMING AUDIENCES

Key Outcome No. 4: Spy Hop amplifies youth stories and voices so audiences gain new knowledge and perspectives.

> ***"Spy Hop filmmakers not only learn; they teach."*** *—Bonnie Shaw, Ph.D., Utah Youth in Care Creative Arts Coordinator*

Spy Hop's youth media artists create their works for authentic audiences and share them in a number of well-attended public venues. By implementing a broad range of audience and community engagement strategies, youth give the media works they create optimal visibility and audience impact. These engagement strategies include an active distribution program consisting of social media promotion, radio play, podcasts, local and national film festivals, live shows and events, targeted screenings, and a consistent web presence. Additionally, youth are given many opportunities to speak about their work and engage in direct dialogue with their audiences.

As a result, Spy Hop has developed a local and national reputation for generating high-quality, compelling, and award-winning youth media that reach audiences in the thousands. The years 2016-17 were no exception: Youth created 778 media works and distributed these works through a variety of channels and venues. What's more, 31 films by Spy Hop youth were accepted into local and national film festivals, where they were experienced by some 10,000 audience members.

Spy Hop's community engagement efforts enable intergenerational audiences to gain new knowledge, perspectives, and awareness, not only about the issues and experiences of youth but about the capacity of youth and organizations like Spy Hop to make a real difference in the greater community.

In our analysis of audience surveys across Spy Hop's film programs, we saw consistent patterns that show how the media works created by Spy Hop youth impact audiences on three overarching levels. Specifically, audiences develop:

- Greater appreciation of youth voices and heightened awareness of the talents, abilities, and passions of young people who make media.
- Increased awareness of the correlation between academic and developmental learning and the creativity and production process.
- New knowledge and perspectives on issues and stories that affect youth and their communities.

APPRECIATION FOR YOUTH TALENT
An analysis of feedback surveys shows that the vast majority of audience members were struck by the professionalism and talent displayed by Spy Hop youth.

In surveys following a screening of youth film projects, one audience member wrote, "Interviews were compelling, and use of b-roll really enhanced the message in the films. Amazing editing." Another stated, "I was so impressed at how well-developed and articulate these films and students were." Still another noted, "They've got the same amount of drive and passion and willingness to create something worthwhile as professionals in the industry." Audiences are affected not

only by individual stand-out works but by the collective impact of viewing one compelling media work after another by so many young creators: "This collection of filmmakers' ability to engage, introduce, and educate their audience in such a short period of time with polished work was impressive."

Audiences also earnestly attest to ways that youth films challenge their own preconceived notions about what youth are capable of.

"Amazing kids, amazing work — there is hope for the future!" stated an adult audience member. When asked to describe something new they learned after a screening of Pitchnic films, one audience member wrote: "How limited I've been in my own mindset when thinking about student work. **These kids are caring, creative, and capable of making the most amazing content — and their work really reflects that**." Another wrote, "They have diverse interests and explore themes more deeply than I would have thought." Still another said, "I think a lot of people underestimate these kids. ... Just because they don't do things or view things the same way we would, that doesn't mean they don't understand things."

AWARENESS OF GROWTH
Audiences also come away from Spy Hop screenings with a new appreciation for the passion and perseverance that youth bring to the media-making process, and a new awareness of how this process propels them to grow in life-changing ways.

At screenings of *Reel Stories* and *PitchNic* films, youth are given an opportunity to articulate what it takes to be successful and create a high-quality and professional film. Audiences report that they gained a new awareness of how youth develop skills of collaboration, self-reliance, creative problem-solving, and time management through the production process. They note the significance of creative production in motivating young people who are juggling the pressures of navigating school, home life, friends, and extracurricular activities. As one audience member put it, "[I learned] how resilient the filmmakers were. With everything going on this year, they still managed to produce great films."

Audiences note that the commitment, passion, work, and emotional effort involved in the production process lead to personal transformation, self-efficacy, and identity development. "Each film had [its] difficulties, which changed the films and the filmmakers," noted one viewer. "They can accomplish a lot in 13 months, and they learned great life lessons through the process," said another.

NEW KNOWLEDGE AND PERSPECTIVES
Many audience members also reported a new appreciation for how Spy Hop inspires youth not only to devote the time and effort necessary to create professional-quality media art, but also to make work about important social justice and community issues.

Nearly all audience members who were surveyed strongly agreed that the subject matter students chose for their films was compelling, that the stories were well told and the films were well made, and that youth clearly demonstrated a deep understanding of their subject matter. "There is hope for the youth growing up today — we're not just producing another group of self-entitled millennials!" one person stated.

Most significantly, audiences recognize the equity and value of youth voices within the larger media landscape. Stated one audience member about the documentary film Native: "It gave me a new perspective on life at a reservation. I like the positive approach the students took." Still another said: "I loved Native. It shows me the sophistication of our youth, the understanding of culture and appreciation of values." Spy Hop youth voices and stories are transforming communities and changing minds.

Spy Hop Reel Stories Survey

	Agree	Disagree	Neutral	Total Respondents
The people, issues or topics explored by these films were compelling	100.00% 75	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	75
The youth filmmakers understood their topics or subjects well	92.41% 73	1.27% 1	6.33% 5	79
I gained new perspectives from viewing the films.	89.87% 71	0.00% 0	10.13% 8	79
The stories were well told and the films were well made.	100.00% 79	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	79
It is important for people in the community to hear youth voices and perspectives through films like these.	97.47% 77	0.00% 0	2.53% 2	79
After viewing these films, I am more likely to speak out or take action based on one of the topics explored.	69.62% 55	3.80% 3	26.58% 21	79

HOW DOES SPY HOP ACHIEVE THIS AUDIENCE IMPACT?
Spy Hop achieves this audience impact by leading rigorous and intensive training programs using state-of-the-art resources and facilities, and through a challenging creative process led by professional media artists.

Spy Hop mentors reinforce the expectation to youth that their works are meant to be seen and valued by audiences. Mentors also consistently express their belief and confidence in youth voices as they encourage students to put forth their best work. Mentor encouragement, trust, and support help bolster the deeply held and internalized desire that most youth have to create high-quality works that speak directly to audiences.
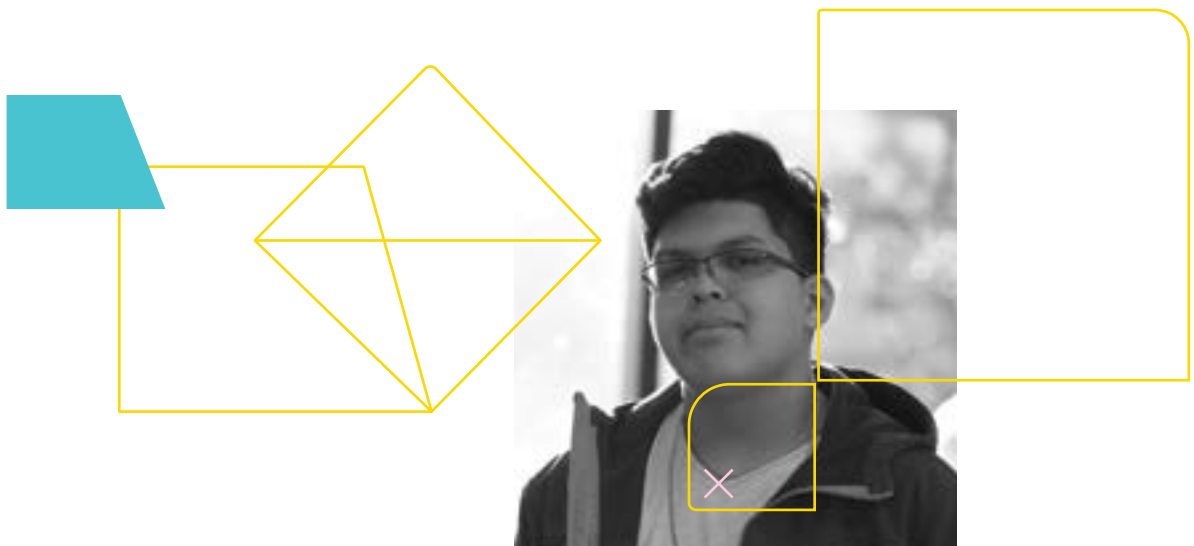
REEL STORIES: OPENING UP NEW WORLDS

"I am a supporter of Spy Hop because I believe that creativity and the arts save young lives. As a Spy Hop fan, I attend the official screening of Reel Stories each summer. The first time I attended, I anticipated I would learn how Spy Hop had opened the world of filmmaking and storycrafting to young aspiring filmmakers. I was not wrong. These young filmmakers had achieved excellence in quickly mastering their craft.

"What I did not expect was that these young artists would teach me about new worlds that they had been brave enough to explore, new worlds that I thought I understood. For example, I thought I knew what it meant to be a 'drag queen.' After all, I have seen every episode of Law & Order. I was wrong. In viewing a six-minute film entitled Mock Identity, I learned that 'drag' is a performance and social commentary on the arbitrary and prescribed nature of all gender roles, that 'drag' has little to do with the gender identity, and that 'drag' is artistry. Six minutes of well-crafted film — and a 'reel' world was opened up to me.

"So again, let me emphasize that these young Spy Hop filmmakers not only learn; they teach. They teach all of us who are lucky enough to view their films what it means to bravely explore and explain hidden, underreported worlds. Bravo to Spy Hop and its courageous young story-crafting filmmakers — how much joy, understanding, and empathy they create in the world!"

— *Bonnie Shaw, Ph.D., Utah Youth in Care Creative Arts Coordinator*

CONCLUSION

"I think Spy Hop was a real confidence booster for me. … [It] boosted my confidence to be here and not be talked down to and actually show that, hey, I know this. I can do this. I can show you how to do it, too." —A Spy Hop youth participant

The Spy Hop Way teaches youth creativity and self-expression. Spy Hop participants increase their capacity to communicate effectively through media arts. They develop future-ready skills that will serve them well in college and/or their chosen career. And they build meaningful, cross-cultural connections with their peers and with adults in their community. The self-efficacy and confidence that youth learn in Spy Hop programs help them to become active and informed participants in their community, and the works they create help inform audiences and lead to new perspectives. Spy Hop's impact thus extends well beyond the youth it serves — contributing to an innovative workforce, a vibrant media arts landscape, and a more inclusive civil society.

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APPENDIX A: SPY HOP PROGRAMS

CORE PROGRAMS
Core Programs take place in Spy Hop's downtown Salt Lake City studio and include classes in Film, Audio, Music, and Design.

Film: Using professional software and equipment, students in Spy Hop's four film classes learn to make films about real life or fictional worlds while developing professional and technical skills.

> *Reel Stories:* An intensive documentary film class that gives students the chance to write, direct, and edit their own five-minute documentary film that speaks to who they are.

> *Media Labs:* Three-week long introductory workshops where students learn how to write, shoot, light, and edit film while collaborating with other youth.

> *Film Apprenticeship:* Students get paid to work on projects for nonprofit organizations. They develop technical skills and gain real-world work experience in film production.

> *Watch This!:* Spy Hop's civic-minded, grassroots, youth-produced documentary TV show airs on the Utah Education Network (UEN), online, and on television stations across the nation.

> *PitchNic:* Spy Hop's award-winning, 13-month advanced film class is the next step in creative and technical film pursuits, resulting in four 20-minute films and a red carpet premiere.

Audio: From mixing sound for a film, to hosting a podcast or radio show, or even producing a local band, the audio program is all about sound.

> *Media Labs:* Three-week long introductory workshops where students gain hands-on experience in music production and recording; using Ableton Live and Pro Tools music production software, students learn the basics of recording in a studio.

> *Audio Apprenticeship:* Students get paid to work on projects for nonprofit organizations. They develop technical skills and gain real-world work experience in audio production.

> *Loud & Clear Youth Radio*: Utah's only weekly youth-produced radio show airs every Saturday night at 9 p.m. on 90.9 FM KRCL. The Loud & Clear team learns how to work the boards at the station, write and produce radio shows, and conduct interviews.

Music: For both music lovers and music makers, Spy Hop's music classes take students' skills and passion to the next level.

Open Mic: Every Friday from 3-7 p.m., Spy Hop opens its recording studio to local Salt Lake City youth to collaborate and record their original music for free.

Resonate: Hip-Hop Production: Spy Hop's alternative rap and hip-hop production program pushes back against the negative stereotypes of the genre.

801 Sessions: In Spy Hop's Music Apprenticeship, 801 Sessions, students plan, book, promote, record, and film monthly all-ages music events, called 801 Sessions Live!

Musicology: In this ten-month program, students learn to write, record, perform live, and produce original music in a band with other teens.

Design: In Spy Hop's design program, students learn about graphic and game design using the latest technology, including Unity 3D and Cinema 4D.

Design Apprenticeship: Students get paid to work on projects for nonprofit organizations. They develop technical skills and gain real-world work experience in graphic or game design.

Media Labs: Three-week long introductory workshops where students gain basic skills in programming and digital design.

Power Up!: Over the course of ten months, ten students create fully functional and professional games that are published on gaming platforms.

Summer Camps: Weeklong full-day and half-day camps offered to youth ages 9-12 in a multitude of engaging digital mediums throughout the summer. Camps often include partnerships with other local youth organizations as a strategy to introduce students to other educational opportunities in the community.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Spy Hop's Community Programs provide high-quality, on-site media arts programs to young people who have limited access to technology, artistic outlets, and caring adult role models, and/or who are at risk of reaching their full potential.

Sending Messages: A creative arts program that engages incarcerated youth and gives them creative license to explore their life, stories, culture, identity, and what led them to incarceration. For 2016-17, Spy Hop engaged youth located at Decker Lake Youth Center, Wasatch Youth Center, Salt Lake Observation & Assessment, Farmington Bay Youth Center, and Southwest Utah Youth Center.

Junior High Programs: School-based classes that increase access to digital technology and tools while fostering 21st-century skills and encouraging youth to become leaders within their communities. For 2016-17, Spy Hop engaged youth from Kearns Junior High School, Brockbank Junior High School, and Kennedy Junior High School.

Media Labs for High-Risk Youth: Engages underserved youth through introductory classes to digital media arts workshops in film, design, music, and audio design. For 2016-17, Spy Hop engaged youth from the Salt Lake Boys & Girls Group Home, Adoption Exchange, Primary Children's Hospital, and Eva Carlston Academy.

Spy Hop @ Horizonte: Integrated learning experiences that combine digital media skills with core academic subjects at Horizonte High School, an alternative high school that serves students from across the Salt Lake City School District who are at risk of or have a history of low success in traditional school settings.

STATEWIDE IN-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Spy Hop's Statewide In-School Programs are designed to inspire students and teachers throughout Utah through unduplicated and impactful digital arts curriculum.

Statewide In-School Programs: Programs were developed in collaboration with the Utah State Office of Education and designed to be delivered in three modalities: Media Arts Assembly (concepts of media arts in film, audio, and design), Media Shorts (storytelling through creative use of image and sound), and Media Arts Intensives (tailored to specific language arts curriculum themes). For 2016-17 Spy Hop engaged students and teachers in schools located in Alpine, Beaver, Box Elder, Cache, Canyons, Davis, Grand, Granite, Iron, Jordan, Murray, Nebo, North Summit, Ogden, Park City, Provo, Salt Lake, San Juan, Sanpete, Sevier, Tooele, Uintah, Wasatch, and Weber School Districts. Additionally, Spy Hop served charter and private schools, as well as special groups such as the Division of Youth Services, the American Indian Education – Title VII, the Granite Technical Institute, and Educators of Youth in Custody.

DIGITAL PATHWAYS

The Digital Pathways Program provides a total of 200 young people with high-quality, out-of-school-time programming that uses a project-based vocational training curriculum to instill core competencies vital to STEM-related career success. Programming takes place in Spy Hop's open learning facility, which includes a digital lab equipped with the latest Apple computers and software, a recording studio, and production gear. The program consists of three classes that provide students with a clear path to career building through a progression of introductory through advanced classes: Media Lab, Multimedia Apprenticeship, and PowerUp!

NEXT STEP PROGRAM

Students participate in career and college readiness counseling and internship placement. Each student matures from these programs with a considerable understanding of emerging technologies in video production, audio engineering, or digital design. During the program, students and parents work directly with the Next Step Coordinator and their instructor to identify possible careers, the degrees and certificates that will lead them to their desired career, and the colleges and institutions that offer those degrees. The program's intended outcome is to support youth and provide a clear path to higher education and, ultimately, a career.

The MHA Building Blocks

MHA Labs' 21st century skills system focuses on a common set of easy-to-understand 21st century skill targets called **The Building Blocks.** To address cultural and contextual differences among our users, MHA Labs researchers isolated the core human success factors deemed most critical for college, career and life success.

To achieve this goal, the MHA team built a 4000 item competency database from existing research and engaged over 100 subject matter experts, youth and parents to isolate 6 building block skill domains and 35 core skills. To reduce complexity, the 35 skill descriptions are written to serve as both learning objectives and assessment items.

Personal Mindset

» Needs minimal supervision to complete tasks.

» Attempts to complete tasks independently before asking for help.

» Follows rules/directions as required by the task/situation.

» Maintains focus on tasks despite internal (e.g., emotional) and/or external distractions.

» Avoids actions that have produced undesirable consequences or results in the past.

» Strives to overcome barriers/set-backs, seeking assistance when needed.

» Adapts approach in response to new conditions or others' actions.

Planning for Success

» Sets and prioritizes goals that reflect a self-awareness of one's capabilities, interests, emotions, and/or needs.

» Breaks goals into actionable steps.

» Accurately estimates level of effort and establishes realistic timelines.

» Manages time to complete tasks on schedule.

» Applies existing/newly acquired knowledge, skills, and/or strategies that one determines to be useful for achieving goals.

» Monitors progress and own performance, adjusting approach as necessary.

» Demonstrates a belief that one's own actions are associated with goal attainment.

Social Awareness

» Recognizes the consequences of one's actions.

» Balances own needs with the needs of others.

» Takes into consideration others' situations/feelings.

» Develops and implements strategies for navigating in different contexts (i.e., manages different patterns of behavior, rules, and norms).

Verbal Communication

» Organizes information that serves the purpose of the message, context, and audience.

» Uses and adjusts communication strategies as needed based on the purpose of the message, context, and audience.

» Signals listening according to the rules/norms of the context and audience.

» Seeks input to gauge others' understanding of the message.

» Asks questions to deepen and/or clarify one's understanding when listening to others.

Collaboration

» Completes tasks as they have been assigned or agreed upon by the group.

» Helps team members complete tasks, as needed.

» Encourages the ideas, opinions, and contributions of others, leveraging individual strengths.

» Provides feedback in a manner that is sensitive to others' situation/feelings.

» Clarifies areas of disagreement/conflict that need to be addressed to achieve a common goal.

» Seeks to obtain resolution of disagreements/conflicts to achieve a common goal.

Problem Solving

» Defines problems by considering all potential parts and related causes.

» Gathers and organizes relevant information about a problem from multiple sources.

» Generates potential solutions to a problem, seeking and leveraging diverse perspectives.

» Identifies alternative ideas/processes that are more effective than the ones previously used/suggested.

» Evaluates the advantages and disadvantages associated with each potential solution identified for a problem.

» Selects and implements best solution based on evaluation of advantages and disadvantages of each potential solution.

MHA Labs

ISTE STANDARDS
FOR STUDENTS

1. Empowered Learner

Students leverage technology to take an active role in choosing, achieving and demonstrating competency in their learning goals, informed by the learning sciences. Students:

a. articulate and set personal learning goals, develop strategies leveraging technology to achieve them and reflect on the learning process itself to improve learning outcomes.
b. build networks and customize their learning environments in ways that support the learning process.
c. use technology to seek feedback that informs and improves their practice and to demonstrate their learning in a variety of ways.
d. understand the fundamental concepts of technology operations, demonstrate the ability to choose, use and troubleshoot current technologies and are able to transfer their knowledge to explore emerging technologies.

2. Digital Citizen

Students recognize the rights, responsibilities and opportunities of living, learning and working in an interconnected digital world, and they act and model in ways that are safe, legal and ethical. Students:

a. cultivate and manage their digital identity and reputation and are aware of the permanence of their actions in the digital world.
b. engage in positive, safe, legal and ethical behavior when using technology, including social interactions online or when using networked devices.
c. demonstrate an understanding of and respect for the rights and obligations of using and sharing intellectual property.
d. manage their personal data to maintain digital privacy and security and are aware of data-collection technology used to track their navigation online.

3. Knowledge Constructor

Students critically curate a variety of resources using digital tools to construct knowledge, produce creative artifacts and make meaningful learning experiences for themselves and others. Students:

a. plan and employ effective research strategies to locate information and other resources for their intellectual or creative pursuits.
b. evaluate the accuracy, perspective, credibility and relevance of information, media, data or other resources.
c. curate information from digital resources using a variety of tools and methods to create collections of artifacts that demonstrate meaningful connections or conclusions.
d. build knowledge by actively exploring real-world issues and problems, developing ideas and theories and pursuing answers and solutions.

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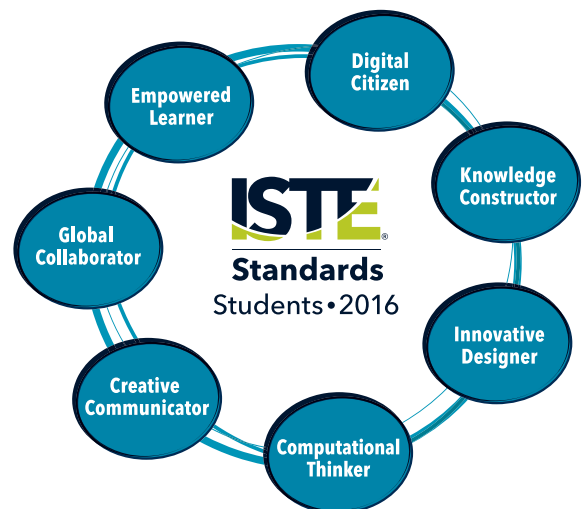
4. Innovative Designer

Students use a variety of technologies within a design process to identify and solve problems by creating new, useful or imaginative solutions. Students:

a. know and use a deliberate design process for generating ideas, testing theories, creating innovative artifacts or solving authentic problems.
b. select and use digital tools to plan and manage a design process that considers design constraints and calculated risks.
c. develop, test and refine prototypes as part of a cyclical design process.
d. exhibit a tolerance for ambiguity, perseverance and the capacity to work with open-ended problems.

5. Computational Thinker

Students develop and employ strategies for understanding and solving problems in ways that leverage the power of technological methods to develop and test solutions. Students:

a. formulate problem definitions suited for technology-assisted methods such as data analysis, abstract models and algorithmic thinking in exploring and finding solutions.
b. collect data or identify relevant data sets, use digital tools to analyze them, and represent data in various ways to facilitate problem-solving and decision-making.
c. break problems into component parts, extract key information, and develop descriptive models to understand complex systems or facilitate problem-solving.
d. understand how automation works and use algorithmic thinking to develop a sequence of steps to create and test automated solutions.

6. Creative Communicator

Students communicate clearly and express themselves creatively for a variety of purposes using the platforms, tools, styles, formats and digital media appropriate to their goals. Students:

a. choose the appropriate platforms and tools for meeting the desired objectives of their creation or communication.
b. create original works or responsibly repurpose or remix digital resources into new creations.
c. communicate complex ideas clearly and effectively by creating or using a variety of digital objects such as visualizations, models or simulations.
d. publish or present content that customizes the message and medium for their intended audiences.

7. Global Collaborator

Students use digital tools to broaden their perspectives and enrich their learning by collaborating with others and working effectively in teams locally and globally. Students:

a. use digital tools to connect with learners from a variety of backgrounds and cultures, engaging with them in ways that broaden mutual understanding and learning.
b. use collaborative technologies to work with others, including peers, experts or community members, to examine issues and problems from multiple viewpoints.
c. contribute constructively to project teams, assuming various roles and responsibilities to work effectively toward a common goal.
d. explore local and global issues and use collaborative technologies to work with others to investigate solutions.

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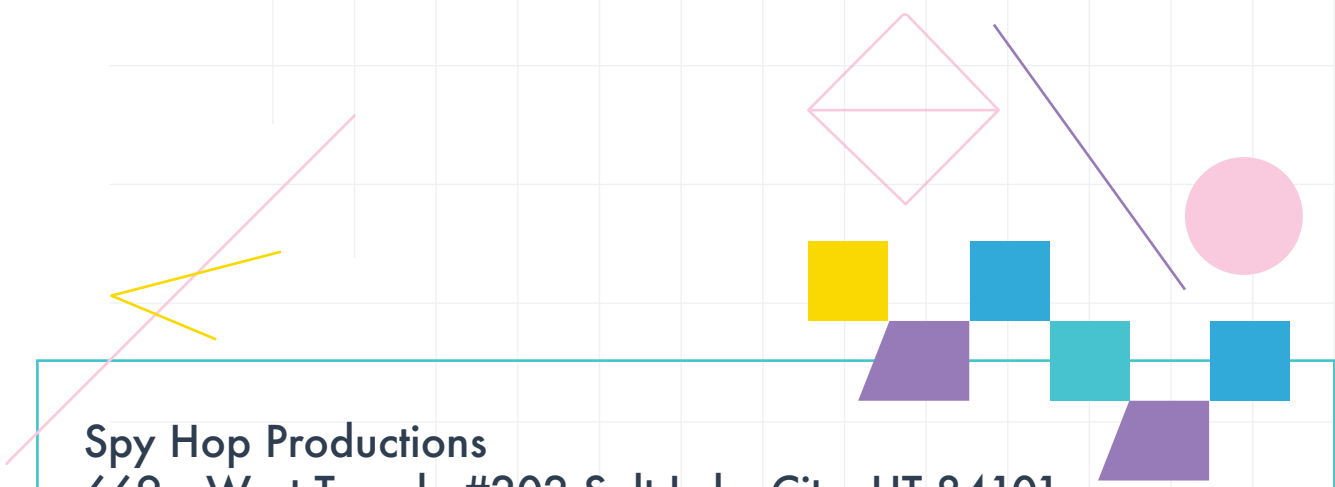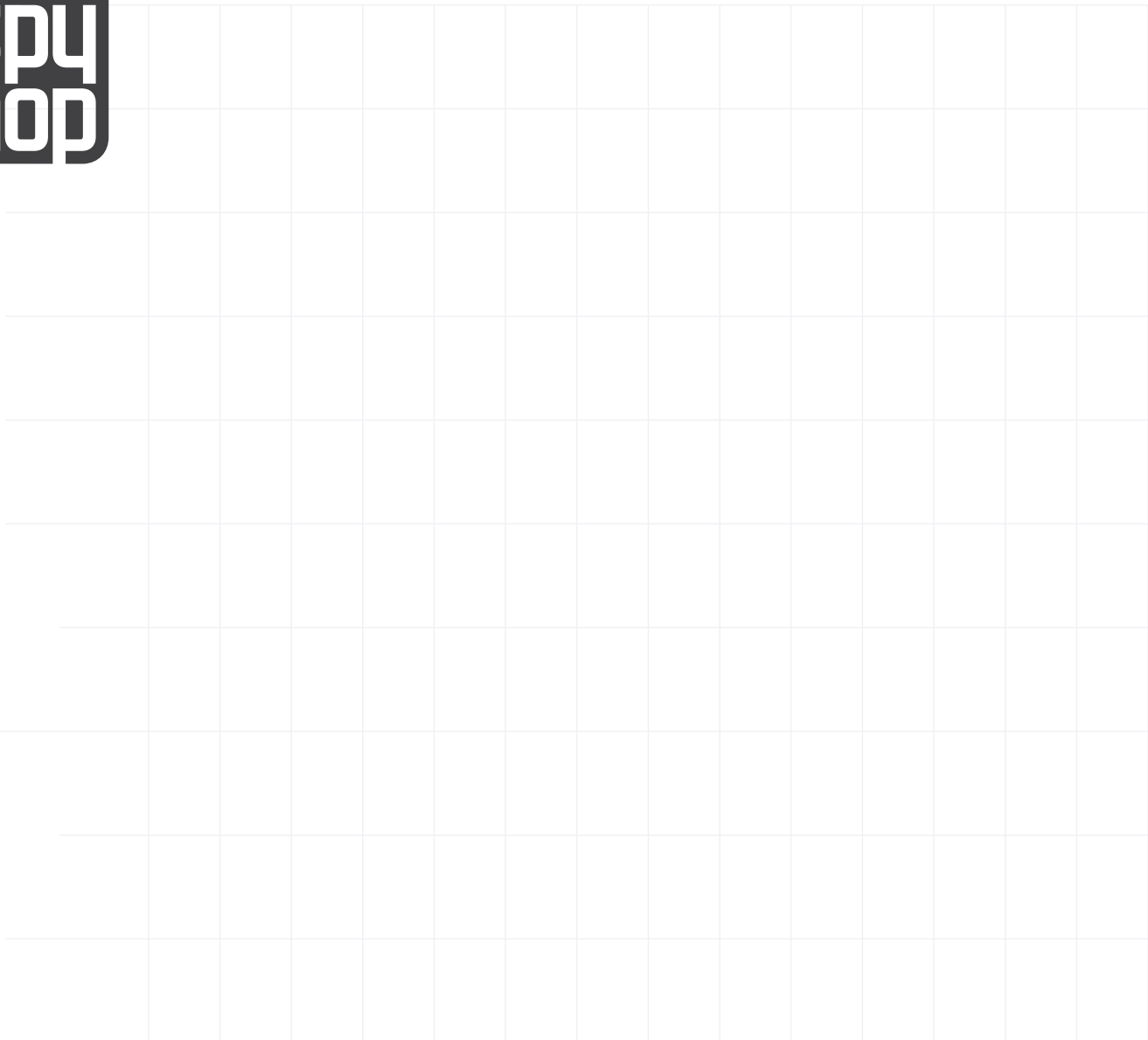
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