

## Camp Invention® 2017-2018 Evaluation Summary

This preliminary study was conducted by Dr. John H. Falk, Professor at Oregon State University and Executive Director for the Institute for Learning Innovation. It was designed to investigate these foundations of entrepreneurship to offer insights into how to most effectively and consistently shape the future of entrepreneurship education, particularly within the out-of-school time (OST), free-choice learning arena.

In addition, this study was designed, in part, to explore events occurring outside the temporal boundaries of the one-week Camp Invention experience, in particular factors present prior to or subsequent to youth attendance at Camp. The research explored whether these non-Camp related factors might have important influence on both short and long-term educational outcomes. The intent of this research is to use the results to improve the Camp Invention experience, contribute to the program's long-term impact, and to share findings to contribute to best practices in OST programs.

The researchers analyzed changes in measures of creativity, STEM interest, and problem solving of 196 current participants (rising 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders attending Camp Invention during the summer of 2017) and 352 previous participants (youth who attended Camp Invention as rising 6<sup>th</sup> graders in 2013-2016).

***As predicted, there was evidence that participation in one week of Camp Invention resulted in statistically significant short-term and long-term improvements in all three outcome measures: creativity, STEM interest, and problem-solving skills. Over the long-term, from 1 to 4 years post-Camp Invention, there was even stronger evidence of statistically significant growth in the areas of creativity, STEM interest, and problem-solving skills.***

The social capital that previous Camp Invention experiences engendered appeared to be particularly important for enhancing creativity and problem solving as evidenced by the fact that youth with multiple Camp Invention experiences showed significantly higher gains in these areas than did youth with no previous or only limited Camp Invention experience. There was also strong evidence that differences in pre-Camp variables like non-Camp out-of-school learning experiences, parental support, camper motivations for attending Camp Invention and number of prior/subsequent experiences attending Camp Invention were related to positive outcomes. In other words, the data reinforced the notion that a variety of external factors contribute to the degree of success children experience in Camp Invention.

### **Elements of the Camp Invention program can be applied to other OST programs:**

- Giving youth more choice/control over personalizing their experience to better accommodate different personalities and learning styles.
- Provide on-going experience and support for entrepreneurial and STEM activities for children.

In conclusion, this research builds on the work of previous independent evaluations which collectively demonstrate the positive impacts of the Camp Invention experience on participants' STEM interest, problem solving, and creativity skills. This study created additional insights into how Camp Invention can create even greater impact by attending to the critical role that parental support, on-going experiences both within and outside of Camp Invention, attention to differing learning styles and personalities, and youth motivations for attending Camp are to the success of the Camp Invention experience.