

### **Paper #3: Into the Woods: Fear, Masculinity, and Video Games Hit the Trail<sup>1</sup>**

**Abstract:** This paper addresses paradoxes and controversies that arose in the investigation of the introduction of a place-based Augmented Reality (AR) video game into the culture of a traditional boys camp. The introduction of a certain type of technology challenged the cultural models held by some campers in the camp community, especially in areas regarding tradition, environmentalism, and models of masculinity. Foremost, as a video game at a "primitive" deep woods camp for boys that has no electricity and telephone, it bucks a culture that is sometimes disdainful of certain manifestations of technology (e.g. LED flashlights and high-tech garments are good, but iPods are bad). Secondarily, in encouraging players to go off main trails in order to avoid enemy scouts, the game narrative contradicts a basic tenet of environmental Leave-No-Trace guidelines -- to stay on trails. Finally, while some boys attributed the addition of GPS and games to opening up the possibility of "more hard-core" trip, some felt the high-tech navigational aids (vs. map and compass on a typical trip) emasculated them. For a few, framing the hiking trip through a "silly" game narrative trivialized their experience.

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## 1. Introduction

Classroom and the cultures that guide them differ from school to school and setting to setting. For outdoor educators, the classroom varies – sometimes every few steps, offering new opportunities to blend in different types and ways of learning. Just as classroom teaching is more art than science, where teachers vary their craft to take into account individuals, events, and surroundings to buttress or dispute cultural norms that oversee the classrooms, so too are outdoor educators challenged in creating learning environments to introduce new content and structures that elicit important cultural questions in their students. As important as it is to examine and address the intended content and structures, it is equally vital to consider the unintended questions they raise.

### ***Paper's Goal***

This paper arises out of a larger study that examines the affects of using Place-based technologies in an adventure learning setting. The larger study's focus is on how the introduction of a video game utilizing a Global Positioning System unit with a handheld computer restructured and reframed a traditional camping trip into one with an unfolding narrative that motivated and further enabled off-trail movement (Martin, 2008a). In this paper, the author considers some of the cultural models of masculinity and ritual of camp held by some of the participants who felt the introduction of this type of technology conflicted with these models. The discord was voiced by only a few of the subjects – some of which also praised other parts of the study – but I feel it is important to more thoroughly examine and discuss some of the issues around cultural models that they raise, more so than was done in other papers from this study.

### ***Defining Augmented Reality Games***

Played by groups of 11-16 year old boys over a 4-day hiking trip at a Maine woods camp, a location-aware AR handheld video game triggers and displays place-specific just-in-time information leading campers through a game narrative "to save the camp" while directing them to explore areas on and off established trails. General findings from 2005-2008 indicate the game narrative motivated deeper participation, and navigational assistance from the game's Global Positioning System (GPS) eased players' fears, reassuring them as they ventured beyond their comfort zone.

Other research on AR games shows that students' familiarity with their own places lets them begin group inquiry as experts, building on Crowley & Jacobs (2002) *islands of expertise*. Through collaborative investigation, mapping, and reporting for their peers, their inquiry becomes a powerful and transformative pedagogical process that reshapes how they look at places they live in and move through. This has already led students participate in shaping their neighborhoods by, for example, testifying before their city council on effects of urban renewal (Squire et al, 2007), creating personal games exploring cultural heritage (Martin et al 2008), and writing editorials on road salts' effects on city lakes (Gu, 2007).

## 2. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is based primarily on the tenets of Cultural-Historical-Activity-Theory (CHAT), which maintains that Discourse and

Practice reveal values. CHAT builds on work in educational theory and psychology research done throughout the twentieth century relating thinking, activity or experience, and community (Dewey, 1910; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Leont'ev, 1978; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1998). CHAT suggests an ultimately circular process of influence and posits that what we believe and value is revealed in our activity -- what we do; and conversely what we do is influenced by the beliefs of the community of which we are a part.

Within CHAT, Lave & Wenger (1991) look at Communities of Practice and assert that identity construction is closely tied to the activities a person is engaged in as bounded by the cultures of the groups that person is in. In other words, our existence is grounded in communities. What we like and dislike, our opinions and deepest heartfelt values, are based to a large extent on the activities and practices of those who came before us and those who currently live and interact with us.

"All viable cultures make provisions for conserving and passing on their 'works,'" Jerome Bruner (1996) reminds us (p. 24). Using the idea of culturalism, Bruner (1996) describes the informal interchange between institutions and individuals in the transmission and modification of culture (p. 14). With over 80 years of history and multiple artifacts of cultural transmission, FML makes a rich case study in which to explore the transmission of experience and cultural models.

Whereas much traditional sociohistorical literature only considers our growing into a cultural identity based on "major structural features of society," Holland et al (1998) link "the development of identities and agency specific to practices and activities situated in socially-constructed 'worlds'" (p. 7). Within these socially-constructed worlds, who we become is informed and influenced by cultural models, which are "images or storylines or descriptions of simplified worlds in which prototypical events unfold" (Gee, 1999, p. 59). More specifically, as they apply to my research, cultural models can be seen as "presupposed, taken-for-granted models of the world that are widely shared ... by the members of a society and that play an enormous role in their understanding of the world and their behavior in it" (Holland & Quinn, 1987, p. 4).

### **3. Methodology**

#### ***Recreating The Mystery Trip***

As much of the "Happy Hunting Grounds of the Flying Moosers" became developed, the camp trucked campers farther away to less developed areas to hike and canoe, but in 2004 a large section (~5000 acres) of woods and mountains near camp, slated to be developed, was purchased by a conservation group financed significantly by FML alumni.

In 2005, the camp attempted to recreate a popular game narrative called the *Mystery Trip* that structured 4-day trips in the 1920s and 1930s, where campers were asked to help local authorities track down nefarious criminals (forgers, kidnappers, and thieves) who were hiding out in the woods surrounding the camp. *Wild Moose* (Martin, 2005), and *Mitchville* (Martin, 2006) were both Augmented Reality (AR) games that used Global Positioning System (GPS) equipment and a handheld computer to mimic a communication device, which relayed up-to-the-minute information to the trip to help them in their task (Martin, 2008).

### **Research Sample**

From 2005-2008 small (3-5) groups of 11-15 year old boys, with signed parental permission, engaged in four-day hiking trips structured with an ARG. The natural bounding of the Maine summer camp, the time frame, and the gender, age and general socioeconomic status of the campers (upper-middle class) warranted a case study approach (Stake 1995), and also determined some limits to the study. For example, before giving permission some parents needed assurance that it would hinder, but rather supplement, their son's camp experience. This set limits to the intrusiveness of my evaluation methods -- 'school-type' surveys and tests are not part of the regular camp experience, but trip articles (journals) and video interviews are a part of their regular camp experience.

### **Analysis Method**

The recursive cycles of Augmented Reality games as it has thus far occurred, and as it is designed to continue -- where playing the game leads to major and minor design of the game -- matches nicely to experiential Deweyian tenets of Design-Based Research (Barab & Squire 2004; Brown 1992) and Design Theory (Burnette 1999). I will use Discourse Analysis (Gee 1999) in examining what participants are learning through their engagement in the experience.

To avoid the shortcomings of any single method of study, at least three different forms of representation or modalities are considered when making arguments (Brown 1992; Kress & van Leeuwen 2001) -- video interviews, trip journals, reports and skits, and research notes. Observations of the 'talk' around camp reveals undercurrents of interest, disinterest, and affect on identity through such things as: how campers talk about the experience to others; who and how many want to be on the trip; whether they are giving up popular trips to do so; and the performative representation of their experience in skits (Butler 1990). All of these sources feed into a fuller understanding of their experience and engagement.

## **4. Findings**

A multimodal (Kress & van Leeuwen 2001) examination of the Discourse and practices of past and current directors, as revealed through interview, autobiography, and promotional film footage suggests that the *Flying Moose Lodge* management promoted a model of man, called a *Mooser*, that was an individually tough, somewhat competitive, yet community-oriented woodsman (Martin, 2004). This section reviews some of those traits, discusses how they have evolved, and examines how the Augmented Reality structuring of the hiking trip both complements and conflicts with some of the models held by current campers.

### **FML's Cultural Models**

Flying Moose Lodge (FML) was not a typical camp of the 1920s; although it seemed to get caught in the swell of the larger camp movement that Lear (1981) and Barksdale (1999) write about. FML has billed itself as a "deep woods camp for boys" since 1921, when two Quaker schoolteachers rejected the paramilitary-style summer camp they worked at, and bought a section of it to run according to their philosophies. In

1922 a nine-year-old camper fell in love with the camp and kept returning until he finished his own teacher training and bought the camp in 1940 when the founders retired. The camp has been in his family ever since, largely following the founders' camp philosophies that shaped him. These philosophies include cultural models (Holland, 1987) of how a boy becomes a man -- like many camps FML was -- in the words on the earliest camp documents "where a boy comes into his own" (Price, 1986).

Controversy arises due to the strong tradition of the camp. Years of trying to expand and run the camp on a teacher's salary led to a great deal of recycling, reusing, and wearing out. Equipment grew old and battered, and campers whose families had no worries with money at home came to camp and experienced life-changing experiences equated with spare conditions. They looked to the directors and counselors as role models and observed the director straightening and reusing rusted nails (hold better than shiny ones), eschewing new aluminum canoes for tried and true wood-canvas ones (slide over rocky rapids better), and adopting military-surplus battleship gray paint (cheaper). They did not always understand the reasons (in parentheses), but instead determined *less is more*, and *fancy new gadgets only soften the man*. Like the hero in Paulsen's (1987) *Hatchet*, perhaps they felt that the toughest of young men only need the simplest technologies to survive. What the campers don't seem to recognize is that from the beginning, whenever possible, the camp and its staff used the best technologies for the task that they could afford. For example, they used 16mm film to create promotional media, and bought a portable printing press for the camper-produced newspaper. The pragmatic nature of the camp's middle class management -- making do with what was available -- might be misinterpreted by the higher socioeconomic class of campers as a model that rejects new technologies for more 'high-minded' reasons.

### Community

Because campers live with each other 24 hours a day for 3-1/2 to 7 weeks at a time, FML becomes a community where campers learn from each other. This can be seen in the simple activity of watching others joust in a canoe, engaging with others in the production of a newspaper, or in the general discourse of the clothes (or visors) campers wear. It is this type of community that John Dewey, quoted in Gouinlock (1994), referred to when he wrote, "our intelligence is bound up, so far as its materials are concerned, with the community life of which we are a part. In camping situations at FML, the materials of life are pared down to the essentials. Boys go on expeditions in small groups and rely on themselves and their group members to gain skills and survive. Their intelligence about being a camper -- how to build and cook over fires, paddle a canoe, set up a tent, chop firewood, etc. -- which at camp is most of their identity and most of the skills at work, comes from that community.

Beyond mere intelligence though, Wenger (1999) emphasizes that we create meaning by actively participating in the customs of social communities, and by constructing identities in relation to those communities. Essentially, campers leave behind their homes and home identities in order to immerse themselves in the culture of FML. There, over the course of several weeks of fun and challenge, they develop not only skills, but also identities and values, which they construct and modify in relation to fellow campers and counselors. Campers undertake wilderness trips that test them physically, mentally, and emotionally. It is the socio-cultural aspect of this -- what is revealed to others -- which is important because it pervades and influences the

community, and one's identity construction within it.

#### Tradition

While the interaction of current community members is significant in constructing an identity, the historical context of the community sets many of the parameters for discourse and practice and thus also greatly influences identity construction. In the case of FML, many current campers are classmates, friends, sons, nephews, and grandsons of boys and men who were previously campers at FML and constructed identities as *Flying Moosers*. On the opening day of camp in June of 2003, I met an FML alumnus on the steps of the camp's woodshop. He was with his grandson, who was starting his first session of camp, and with his son, the boy's father, who had attended camp in the early 1970s. They were walking through camp reminiscing about the tents they had stayed in, and pointing out 'secrets' of camp to the boy. They were socializing him to his soon-to-be-developed identity as a Flying Mooser. Fathers do this with their sons each year at camp, but it is rare to see three generations at a time. However, what was significant about this exchange was that the grandfather was adding a nuanced context to the camp that went beyond his own experience with it. The grandfather was excitedly recounting stories that *his* father had told him about camp from the earliest days, in 1922.

The directors recognized that most of the campers were sons of prior campers who shared with their sons personal adventure stories from camp. The idea of *tradition* began to play a large role in recruiting, and structuring summer after summer. The current owner, in following his father's lead, tries very hard to balance between development and tradition. The basic camp program is the same as it was in 1922 -- boys still go out on trips on Tuesday and come back to camp on Friday. This is extended down to the menu: pancakes for Sunday breakfast, hand-cranked homemade ice cream for Sunday lunch, and French toast for breakfast Tuesdays. On the other hand, he's upgraded the food quality, no longer buys Army surplus stuff, pays his staff better, hires 21+ year olds instead of 17-8 year olds as counselors, etc. The current philosophy seems to be one of *maintaining* the historic philosophies and traditions of the camp rather than creating new ones to meet current trends in camps. There is still no electricity, no telephone. FML is even stubbornly resisting the trend to include mobile phones or satellite phones on trips, as many other trip camps do. Again, the primary reason has much to do with cost.

As a result, many current campers have been primed, so to speak, to construct an identity relative to the expectations of family members and friends who are already part of that community, and the camp management does its part in maintaining those expectations. Just as the identity of Harrie Price III progressed from a student to a camper, and eventually to the director, returning Moosers further develop their Flying Moose identity by taking on leadership roles in the FML community. Campers in their second session at camp get paired with first session campers and 'show them the ropes;' those who have learned how to successfully bake a pie in a Dutch Oven are eager to share their wood-fire baking secrets.

Campers and counselors enter with preconceptions that direct their construction of identities and agency, but it is the experience at camp that fills in and fine-tunes details.

#### Skills

Many images and examples from the camp's early days could, if updated with the latest fashions and haircuts, be current (Price, 1987, p.4). The song "Flying Moosers,

Strong and Husky" ("here we stand, all tanned and dusky/ here we sing our chorus lusty / by our campfire!") still tells boys that as *Mooser's* they are a tough and cohesive fraternity, respectful of nature, and skilled in campcraft. Despite the popularity of camping stoves and freeze-dried meals, campers still make meals by mixing canned goods in buckets and cooking them over open fires. It is simple cooking, but a far-enough cry from McDonalds or microwaves that it develops the same feelings of self-sufficiency and competency to "camp and live forever ... around this great wild country." Campers still learn how to properly handle an ax, and still build rickety furniture with horribly abused tools. They continue to write articles for a weekly newspaper, and of course many first learn to paddle a canoe or row a boat in the same lake that their father, uncles, or grandfather did. Nonetheless, while some things changed, the model of the skilled *Mooser* remains.

### Toughness

Although the camp was started by Quaker school teachers with their own sets of values, even in the early years we can see the influence of cultural models of masculinity such as the need to harden up soft boys (Hantover, 1978; Lear, 1981; Messner, 1990). Price's (1986) wonderment of why his parents sent him to camp reveals this: "perhaps they felt that I needed a toughening-up experience, more discipline, or a continued exposure to organized sports" (p. 5). As Price (1986) writes, there is an intense competitive need in many boys that seems to emerge within group situations like camp (p. 129). Although any sports now engaged in at camp are far from "organized," parents still exclaim thanks that such a place exists because otherwise their boys would sit on the couch and play video games all summer. Campers themselves confirm it in interviews. The competitive aspects of camp are revealed in various ways. In the summer of 2003, one of the counselors popularized the phrase "Suck it up!" and it became employed by campers and counselors alike whenever anyone expressed whining, tiredness, or other hesitancy in fulfilling their camp duties. The "suck it up" command is not so much a suggestion as an unspecified threat that demands socialization into and emulation of the peer group's culture. Yet in many ways this competitiveness has shifted from traditional organized sports into a competition with oneself, with a metric provided by peers. FML still has canoe races, but much more of the focus is on an individual's camping skills and stamina -- the testing of one's own fibre (Hahn, K, 1960).

### ***AR's Challenge to FML's Cultural Models***

Essentially, *what makes a Mooser* is quite similar to the cultural models of masculinity that Holt & Thompson (2004) refer to: "rugged individualism, an adventurous spirit, risk-taking, displays of physical prowess, and most of all, a high degree of personal autonomy" (p.426). Introducing a 'video game' – even one that promotes the cultural models of a *Mooser* that the camp management wants to propagate – raised concern for some campers. As with their parents, most were willing to embrace the idea, because they were comfortable with video games at home. A few parents were concerned that the game would "take away" from their sons' camp experience, but were satisfied, and even excited about it, when they understood that the game merely framed trips with a narrative. Most of the campers who played felt the game narrative was too simplistic – that it was bad *as a video game*—but they appreciated how it framed the trip.

Some felt the GPS capabilities took the place of map and compass skills (although counselors and campers all agree that the map and compass was used much more on the AR trip than on typical trips). One very vocal camper derided the game as taking away his agency by directing his every move.

Beyond the campers' reactions, other questions are raised. By encouraging off-trail movement, is the game disregarding tenets of *minimal impact*, as outlined in the Leave No Trace® ethics? How does the reframing of the trip through the game narrative affect the performance of other representations of masculinity?

These questions are addressed below.

Growing to Manhood: Games are for Kids?

Part of the controversy of the AR game was simply that it was a game, and a very low-level one at that. Some of the campers felt that while it was a unique and interesting departure from their usual trips, the narrative itself was too simple. The AR game was created by 11-13 year olds, it was played by 11-16 year olds. At this age, a few years makes a big difference. All the players were asked to be beta-testers of the game and when pressed, some were critical of the game.

The game plot isn't great; it's a little bit boring.... Well, it's pretty obvious that the plot was made up for this. Could be a little bit deeper, maybe. I think younger children might enjoy it more.

Both earlier and later in this interview, this camper indicated that he enjoyed the game overall, but here he suggests that the plot narrative was too childish for him. Additionally, his counselor reported that he had really enjoyed, and joked about the plot. This struggle of being too old (and too cool) to enjoy childish games was seen in other interviews as well:

In my opinion, since I'm 15, the game seemed a bit silly, but I guess it might be fun if you were 11 or so because it makes it seem more adventurous because you're actually doing something. They can put it in their mind like it's actually happening.

This camper's struggle to be more adult-like is further hinted at later in his interview:

I don't know, it seems childish. I could have fun with it, but I think older kids would make jokes about it, like how silly it was, but younger kids would have more fun with it.

His concern is tempered by social pressure -- what other boys think -- if he let himself have fun with it, or really get into the game-play, perhaps the other older boys would joke about how silly he was acting.

Technology Softens

When scrutinized, past camp narratives suggest that campers and staff had always used what they felt were the best technologies to ease hardship on trips, as evidenced even in the simple upgrades from heavy canvas tents to lighter and drier nylon ones, or from incandescent flashlights to the longer-lasting L.E.D. ones. Perhaps because the camp markets itself as a traditional camp without electricity, Internet-access, or phones, the idea that it rejects all new technologies has become conflated as its mission. Since 1921, some identifiers in the cultural models of masculinity, or '*what a Mooser is*' that

were perhaps intended to continue (e.g. 'roughing it') have instead transformed into a type of Luddism that sees certain symbols of technology as threatening rather than enhancing the American model of masculinity by taking away the need for other skills. Says one 12-year-old:

Camper 8: Having a compass and a map does add a challenge too. It gives you a lot more skill. A GPS could solve the problem right now but what if you were caught in a situation in which you didn't have a GPS you couldn't use a compass?

Like other campers, this one respects an ability to survive and prosper in the woods without reliance on technologies (such as GPS or electronic devices), but doesn't seem to recognize the extent that the map and compass are themselves, in fact, tremendous technological advances.

Although all the boys interviewed play video games and fully participate in an electronic-centric world outside camp, many see some technologies as not belonging at camp. Another camper quips, "It doesn't belong here -- I come here to get away from technology!" When asked about this, many failed to discern between types of technology, or to recognize the recent technologies (Gore-Tex® rain gear, Holo-fill sleeping bag insulation, Polyester fleece, etc.) that they were already using.

Holding to Price's *magic formula*, many of the camp's traditions have not changed over the years. Perhaps because of this, many of the cultural models of a camper (communitarianism, ruggedness, improvisation) have also not changed significantly since the camp was founded in 1921. However, the introduction of handheld computer and GPS technology into a traditional woods camp with no electricity or telephone, that also still hand-built cedar-canvas canoes each summer caused some campers to question the cultural models of what a Mooser was. Most felt that the camp was "low-tech" as these two camper assertions indicate:

"You *can* use a small amount of technology. I learned before that FML was a low-tech camp, and it's changing. [*Is it bad?*] No, because it's not plug-in, and it uses batteries. It's not high tech."

"You can actually use technology camping. It shows that we're getting a little bit more modern. Maybe a little bit more expensive. It makes you think that these trips are supposed to be for fun rather than like 'Yeah we're gonna hike!'"

These statements also reveal that campers are carefully observing not only what is allowed and not allowed, but what is *good* and *bad*, and what is and isn't changing -- "a small amount of technology" is okay and "a little bit" of modernity makes it fun, as it's supposed to be. However, while these two quotes are representative of most of the interviews, there are some dissenting voices that spoke loudly.

#### GPS Removes Agency

One of the most surprising findings was revealed quite loudly in the response of a senior camper who played a shortened one-day version of the AR game. He spoke out against the anti-social nature of the technology:

Camper 18: I don't like the GPS trip personally because the reason I come to FML, and the reason I like FML a lot is because you don't have to worry about technology... You don't have to deal with all that junk you have to interact with 24/7 when you're not at FML. And so I like to come here and get a break from all that false, you know -- I just don't want to have to deal

with any of that electricity or -- I just come here to get back to the elements... So when I'm on the GPS trip I feel like I'm just being controlled by 'a machine' if you will, and so that's why I don't like the GPS trip... But FML is a great place and I like it because it's free of technology and it's got the old traditions -- like N\_\_\_ said during Sunday Service, or like he tried to articulate, I think -- this generation is like the most boring generation. All we think about or all we do is video games -- not a lot of anything I value. Just playing on the computer, text messaging, but they never really have any adventures... That's why I come to Flying Moose -- to get adventures, and FML definitely offers that and more, like there's so many things here that you'll never find anywhere else. That's why it's so great here.

His interview lasted almost an hour and revealed much about his values, and how he felt that the GPS, PDA and AR games was not only bad, but was traitorous to the values he felt the camp promoted. Primarily, he felt that directions by the game narrative (machine) were worse than directions by a trip leader (human), and that simply having the GPS was an unacceptable crutch that emasculated, and deskilled the group as a whole.

#### PDA Promotes Anti-Social Behavior

Further, this camper complained that the PDA interfered with the camaraderie that he expected on the trip because his companions "were playing Bubble-Breaker" instead of interacting with him. This last point is most interesting, as his trip leader indicated that there was no Bubble-Breaker played on the trip, but it bears consideration because it indicates that even the idea of media technology (i.e. any interaction by his trip-mate with the video screen) bothers him. Other forms of social isolation, such as reading a book around the campfire, which is common on trips, do not trigger this response.

#### AR Game Promotes High Impact Behavior

Perhaps the most important element, and one that was included not by the researcher, but by the campers who designed the game, is the addition of enemy scouts on the trails, sent out by the rival camp to find and capture the trip group, which overtly reinforced the Leave No Trace (2008) camping etiquette while paradoxically suggesting that if they stayed on the trails, they'd be caught.

Standard Leave-No-Trace ethics directs hikers to stay on the trail. This protects the land by shielding it from people, but the AR game encourages players to go off trail "to avoid enemy scouts." Here the question is *which is better in the long run*: staying on the trails at all times, or moving off the trails to gain a greater understanding of the land that leads to a deeper respect and protective attitude for it? In approving the campers' design of the game, this question was considered, and the researcher decided that the area of this particular game, being recently devastated by logging, was worth hiking through for the learning opportunities it would allow, especially considering the relatively small size of the groups. After all, trails are some of the most environmentally scarring technologies in the woods -- paths cut through trees, with all growth on them stomped or cut down. In heavily used areas, like parks, a different decision would have been made.

All groups reported going off trail, while the trip leaders maintained that, apart from that, they continued to practice LNT.

Counselor 1: had that not been a part of it we almost certainly would have just gone up the regular trail. It was cool because we went up the stream, and had to navigate from point A to point B, and we bumped into the trail near the top, and said "Oh! We shouldn't take it!"

Camper 7: You think that you don't want to go on the trails because the other camp would be there waiting for you...

Going off trails in the Maine wilderness is not for the faint of heart. The 16-square mile area in this AR game has virtual borders only. Roads eventually border a much larger area, but it is not impossible to get thoroughly lost within those confines. Typically, campers don't really worry about getting lost, because they hike on established trails that always lead from point to point. Having a GPS unit to refer to for navigation both reassured the campers and offloaded some of their mental effort that would have been spent on navigating. This allowed them to focus more on the land itself, and less on not getting lost. With the game tracking the group's movement on and off trail the fear of getting lost was removed, but off-trail hiking introduced a different sort of difficulty.

### ***AR's Promotion of FML's Cultural Models***

While some voices felt the *idea* of the AR game went against the values of the camp, there is a great deal of evidence that the *substance* of its effects on the campers' experiences not only fit into *Mooser* values, but actually enhanced them by modifying and restructuring the campers' experiences on trips.

More "Hard Core"

Interviews indicated that hiking on a trail -- the typical practice of Flying Moose trips -- does not encourage a focus on the land. Just as having a GPS offloads much of the effort of navigation, having a trail to hike on offloads both navigation attention and movement attention. To understand this, consider the difference between walking over a smooth sidewalk and walking over a plowed field -- in a field one has to carefully choose where to place feet, whereas on a smooth sidewalk one pays little attention to foot placement and can even shuffle along without tripping. Trails are often the path of least resistance between points for campers, but because they are groomed, and laid out for easy travel, they are also in some ways the least representative samples of the overall terrain. One counselor describes it as similar to "driving on an Interstate highway; you don't see anything on either side of you, you see a bunch of trees and a path."

On the other hand, bushwhacking off the trail can be a slow process that forces an interaction with the landscape that trail hiking often cannot match.

Camper 8: it was little more, I guess you could say, hard-core. You didn't really know which way you were going to go, and you have to bushwhack, which is different ... for instance, when an area of land that we had to bushwhack through was clear cut, it was full of tall grasses and sticks and stuff buried in it that you couldn't see and you couldn't see your feet or where you're walking.

Counselor 1: There's a lot of logging that went on around here and that actually the new growth is the toughest stuff -- all the underbrush, and the thorns. New growth pine forest -- those trees that have been there for just 5 -10 years are pretty brutal to go through actually. So thick, and the sharp pine needles, and it's so dense.

Because it was hard, campers did not always enjoy it. Counselors and campers reported that there was often general unrest and complaining during the bushwhacking, but all said individually that although it was hard, it was worth it. Many felt it provided a more authentic experience through a part of the land they might not have otherwise seen.

Camper 1: There was some hard bushwhacking, which I thought was kind of fun actually ... you're the first person who's ever traveled along these paths.

Camper 7: I learned that trees aren't actually that spread out; they're a lot closer together [logged and replanted years ago]; and there're a lot more animals out and stuff. We saw a porcupine climbing a tree on Great Pond Mountain.

Camper 9: There are a lot of blueberries up on Great Pond Mountain. It'd be good for another game. We learned that bushwhacking is actually really cool, because when you're playing the game the GPS you know (you can go) straight through, and not follow the path necessarily (WM1).

On a trail, there is a general set of expectations: that it leads where one expect it to; that it's recognizable and somewhat passable; that others have gone this way and survived. After a few trail-hiking experiences campers start knowing what to expect, and it begins to become routine.

The GPS, on the other hand, makes way-finding less risky, and therefore less "hard-core" but by moving off trail the trip becomes much more difficult at the level of each step.

Camper 4: "I thought it was more challenging; like you get to areas where it's hard to get through so you have to push the trees aside and help everyone get through. I thought it was a lot more challenging and fun. ... it was challenging helping other people get through. Because you get into one area and you realize 'oh, this is not the areas we're supposed to be going to!' and you have to tell everyone to go back, and then you realize that you can't go anywhere else, so you have to go through that way.

Camper 6: "It was a lot harder because we were bushwhacking, and it was a lot deeper, and we had bigger bags, but it was fun. I liked bushwhacking, a couple of kids didn't, but I personally enjoyed going through the woods and not following the trails. It was different going to different points even when they were not that far away. It made it harder, going to a point and then instead of just going back to your camp, it was going to that point and then going to a different point."

The game narrative motivated campers to move beyond the ease and safety of trail-hiking, but the difficulty of actually hiking off-trail, coupled with the uncertainty of what one might find there, challenged the campers, and pushed them to move slightly beyond their comfort level. In some ways this dovetails with the cultural models of masculinity that they're trying to perform.

On the other hand, the constant GPS-monitoring of their location, counselor supervision, and reliance on their own skills and training seemed to magnify the compensation for their effort. This fits well with the culture of the camps' intended experience of trips, perhaps most succinctly paraphrased by alumni Dan Childs (2002): "as a kid, you think you're hopelessly lost and about to face death! In reality, you're just a few feet off trail, but you get back and have this amazing story to share about how you survived!" This struggle seemed to have been worth it, enhancing, or at least confirming that the campers were as tough and as nature loving as the Flying Moosers that they sang about.

Camper 3: We have courage. We take things. Like I kept saying to myself: "Power through!" when we were going through big thorny bushes, to just power through it. "Keep going!" ... Other camps might take pity -- a bit more pity. Instead of saying we gotta get there and just suck it up, they might stop and I don't know

Interviewer: So we put you through a lot here?

Camper 3: yeah

Interviewer: Is that ok?

Camper 3: yeah, I think it's fun.

The AR game activity reframed group dynamics as well. The game narrative that the campers came up with portrayed them as the last hope for the camp, and this gave them a greater purpose and greater reason to work together as part of a group on a *group quest*. Compare this with a regular trip:

Camper 1: In [a regular trip] we pretty much hiked the trails because our counselor told us too.

Counselor 2: [the AR game] did give you a reason other than "counselor says you have to go here" to get from point to point.

The game reframed their perspective of the group by portraying a situation where they were hiking for a noble cause -- to save the camp. Even if they had not already fully developed a sense of belonging in the community of camp before the trip, being part of a rag-tag team to save the camp helped develop it.

Camper 1: we kind of felt like we need to hike this because, you know, camp's in trouble, [rival campers] are taking over, "Oh My God!" you know, it's kind of fun that way.

Camper 5: During the last day we looked at it as a sort of battlefield.

Because the augmented reality game motivated quite a bit of off-trail movement, the campers grew to be comfortable moving off-trail, and began to look to the land for navigational clues, compared to their experiences on regular trip following trails.

Counselor 2: I remember especially the last day, coming from Mitchville sort of looking for Mead Mountain, then coming back to Craig Pond, that was really neat because at that point, we'd bushwhacked that whole thing, walked along ATV trails and bushwhacked, and found our own way, and they were completely comfortable with it. "I think I see some blue!" and we walk over there and it wouldn't be the pond, it would be somebody's truck, but there's that willingness to say "here's a path that we know will eventually curve around and somehow get to the lake -- let's **not** walk on that. Let's go this way and try it out" -- and even if it's not the right thing, it's still fun and they still had that get-up-and-go.

It is that "get-up-and-go" that suggests that there was an attitude change. They were often tired, but they started to routinize off-trail movement -- and unlike on-trail movement, it has an inherent, built-in requirement of: greater interaction with the land; greater communication with others in the group; and greater understanding of what one's own body can and cannot do. These behaviors also follow Holt & Thompson (2004) models of masculinity that emphasize a spirit of adventure.

## 5. Discussion

This paper suggests that the intended and promoted cultural models of an organization's leaders do not always match the models as interpreted by its participants, but they seem to influence them in ways that are unintended as well. In this case study, the introduction of certain technologies affected different kids in different ways. Some felt that there was room in the models to include environmentally focused mobile video games, while others felt that video games of any sort had no place at camp.

Despite the perception of some campers that the introduction of these GPS-based

video games was culturally wrong, the use of them seemed to increase their interaction and appreciation for the land, allow them opportunities to collaborate more with each other, experience the land in richer ways than previous, learn new skills and revisit old ones (like map-reading), and create more hard-core narratives of their experiences. Even among the most vocal dissidents it encouraged and challenged reflection about what their cultural models were and why they value them.

#### Further Questions

Beyond the specific culture of this camp and research, the idea of a video game-based camp curriculum broaches larger contentious questions. For example, do the ecological costs of the extra traffic off trail in the local mountains outweigh the pollution and gas costs to van the trip to a state park? Is this type of woods-based informal education safe enough in the nation's current culture of fear where parents are reluctant to be disconnected from their children, even beyond the tether of the mobile phone, for 2-7 weeks? If this sort of place-based AR game makes for good learning, then where is the equity for families who cannot afford to send their kids to camps where it occurs?

#### Value for Readers

All good educators, whatever their venue, face issues and problems that are both general and specific. They are challenged to keep their teaching fresh, compelling, and up-to-date, while simultaneously within a realm of understanding and comfort that fits the cultural models of the learners' and the larger community.

For the researcher and directors of the camp, the introduction of the AR game, and subsequent study of its affects offers insights into the minds and values of the campers – what they appreciate and why. This information can be used to reflect upon and modify, or underpin, other aspects of the camp curriculum. Change is often difficult to implement, but necessary. Introducing new methods of learning (including the 'side effects' of them) and balancing them with established ones that are valued by the community is an undertaking often fraught with problems.

For social studies researchers and practitioners, looking at a similar problem in a different venue, may offer some insight into issues inside the venues that one operates in. In other words, reactions from campers to the introduction of controversial curriculum that clashes with some members' cultural models in a setting very unlike a typical social studies classroom may sound familiar, and provide a paradigm-shifting perspective.

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