Positive Youth Development with Alternatives to Media: Poster One

In today’s technology saturated world, youth are constantly bombarded by messages from the media. They are now able to access this media through mobile phones, personal laptops, and television. This increased level of exposure is worrisome based on what some researchers believe about media’s effects on youth. Specifically, the cultivation theory of media claims that “media shapes adolescent’ interests, motives, and beliefs about the world” (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorelli, 1994 as cited in Steinberg, 2011).

Despite this increased exposure to media, research also points to the benefits of healthy alternatives to media exposure. Intriguing research surrounding integrating popular themes in media such as hip-hop into activities can be effective in promoting positive youth development. One example of this is how hip-hop dance classes have led participants to experience dramatic improvements in self-esteem, relationships, and physical health (Beaulac, Kristjansson, & Calhoun, 2011). Other expansions of this concept could be made to support open mic nights, poetry slams, or other open forums for healthy expression.

Important points:

● The average adolescent spends more than 6 hours each day using one or more types of media (Steinberg, 2011)
• Sexual themes are ubiquitous on television, with more than 70% of all shows popular among teenagers containing sexual content (Kunkel, Eyal, Finnerty, Biely, & Donnerstein, 2005 as cited in Steinberg, 2011)

• More than 60% of TV programming contains violence (Strasburger & Donnerstein, 1999 as cited in Steinberg, 2011)

• Adolescents involved in structured activities such as hip-hop dancing have shown to benefits in physical well-being, psychological well-being, relationships, behavior, and school performance (Beaulac, Kristjansson, & Calhoun, 2011).

• Adolescents have demonstrated that they use hip-hop music as a pedagogy and interpretive framework through which they learn about the world around them (Pulido, 2009).
References

