Experience Journey Map: A New Experience Design Tool for Structuring Youth Activities

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Abstract

We introduce a new experience design tool, an experience journey map, to assist youth professionals in planning engagement, immersion, and absorption activities. Experience journey maps are based on customer journey maps, which are widely used in business service design. This new approach highlights strategies for engendering deep structured experiences during the activity. An experience journey map is a matrix of columns and rows. Columns represent the sequence of activity stages. Rows are experience-structuring strategies derived from the theory of structured experience. These strategies include service performance strategies, deep structured experience strategies, and engagement, immersion, and absorption strategies. We present a case study showing how the experience journey map can be used to plan impactful youth activities.

Key words: experience journey maps, structured experiences, experience design, engagement, immersion, absorption

Introduction

Structuring experiences is a critical task for youth development professionals. A well-structured experience, such as an engaging club meeting, an immersive spectator sporting event, or an absorbing concert, may provide youth with delight and perceived value of time spent and generate positive word-of-mouth for the experiences (Ellis, Jiang, et al., 2019; Taggart et al., 2019). In the long run, an array of developmental outcomes may follow from participation in intentionally designed positive experiences, including reduced problem behaviors, heightened psychosocial competencies, increased social competence and emotional adjustment, and overall, thriving (e.g., Arnold, 2018; Mahoney et al., 2005; Witt & Caldwell, 2018). On the other hand, unsuccessful experiences may bore, alienate, or disengage youth, preventing them from enjoying and gaining intended benefits from those activities (Ellis et al., 2018). It is crucial, therefore, for youth professionals to provide quality structured experiences to sustain youth participation and promote positive benefits.

Structuring youth experiences can be challenging. Several tools have been developed to help youth professionals plan experiences: logic models (Caldwell et al., 2018; Weiss, 1972), visualization (Rossman & Duerden, 2019), storyboards (e.g., Escalas, 2004), and narrative storyboards (Ellis et al., 2018). Logic models are often used to design intentional programs, that is, programs designed to produce specific, predetermined benefits (Duerden & Gillard, 2011). A logic model identifies desired program benefits (outcomes), the needed resources (input), requisite actions to achieve desired results (activities), and appropriate "yielding" of the activities (outputs; e.g., number of involved youth participants or number of sessions of structured experiences). Through visualization (Rossman & Duerden, 2019), mental images of the story lines and simple silhouettes of key characters and props can be created to emphasize experience design elements. Narrative storyboards extend visualization by capturing the mental images in tangible drawings on paper or computers. In a narrative storyboard, an experience can be scripted like a story following the developing sequence of an event (i.e., the "morphology" of stories): exposition, increasing tension, climax, declining action, and denouement (Freytag, 1898; Propp, 1968). The story lines, characters, actions, and tangible props should all be described in the storyboard to illustrate how the experience is intended to unfold for participants.

Many experience designers in business have addressed the challenge of delighting customers by using customer journey maps (Stickdorn et al., 2018). Customer journey maps assist providers in visualizing value (Kalbach, 2016). They can be thought of as an extension of visualization and

storyboards. They are developed to guide service design. A customer journey map represents the entire process of customers' interactions during a business transaction, from the initial contact through the completion of the exchange. For example, a hotel manager might can create a customer journey map to outline hotel guests' point-of-service encounter experiences at the parking lot, front desk, elevator, and guest room. The columns would represent each of these sequential phases of the service encounter. The rows would show different features of the encounter, such as the emotional state desired by the provider (e.g., attention, interest, intention), service quality actions by the provider, and descriptions of the settings.

The applicability of visualization, narrative storyboards, and customer journey maps in structuring youth experiences is limited. Logic models are widely used, but they ordinarily do not provide sufficient details to result in positive subjective experiences such as engagement, immersion, and absorption (Ellis, Freeman, Jamal, & Jiang, 2019). The customer journey map has not been used in youth settings. In this paper, we adapt the customer journey map into an "experience journey map" to demonstrate an experience design tool for structuring youth experiences.

Theory of Structured Experience Concepts and Strategies

The experience journey map we propose draws heavily on the theory of structured experience (TSE). The theory was developed to enrich participant–provider interactions during intentional or structured experiences (see Ellis, Freeman, Jamal, & Jiang, 2019). The tenets of TSE were informed by the rich history of research on the social psychology of leisure (Ellis, Jiang, Freeman, Lacanienta, & Jamal, 2020). Understanding the essential attributes of experiences is foundational for designing impactful experiences; TSE provides strategies to design and deliver participant–provider interactions yielding positive experiences for participants (see Table 1). According to TSE propositions, implementing these strategies produces the immediate subjective states of engagement, immersion, and absorption. At high levels, these subjective states produce an extremely positive state of focused attention, affect, and motivation referred to as deep structured experiences.

Table 1. Theory of Structured Experience Concepts and Strategies

Service performance (RATER) – *Actions taken by providers reflecting reliability, assurance, pleasing tangible qualities, empathy, and responsiveness*	
Reliability	Deliver services correctly "the first time," without need for corrections.
Assurance	Exude confidence, show participants all the elements needed for a quality experience are in place.
Tangibles	Make the physical environment orderly, clean, attractive, and free of distractions (sights, sounds, odors).
Empathy	Show sincere interest in the needs, wants, and interests of individual participants.
Responsiveness	Plan for no delays in starting activities; no long queues of people waiting to participate.
Deep structured experience (DSE) – *A heightened state of interest, attention, motivation, and involvement, possible in all forms of structured experience*	
Theme	Add props and cues suggesting a different time, place, and/or set of circumstances.
Personalization	Promote participants' beliefs that providers care deeply about their needs and interests.
Multi-sensory	Add sensory elements that are inherent to the activity and consistent with the theme.
Memorabilia	Provide an unexpected, thematically relevant tangible item to facilitate later recall of the structured experience
Engagement/Type-E activities – *The subjective experience one has when following a story or an unfolding narrative, such as reading a book, watching a movie, being a spectator at a sporting event, watching a play, or having a conversation.*	
Coherent theme	Add a distinct story line to a theme.
Self-affirmation	Link the story to personal interests. Affirm positive beliefs participants have about themselves.
Provocation	Invite participants to think about ideas that conflict with their own. Present manageable, challenging risks.
Immersion/Type-I activities – *The subjective experience one has when involved in a performance, such as playing a sport or game, singing, acting, or producing art or craft*	
Self-affirmation	Choose or link the activity to personal interests. Affirm participants' feelings of competence, autonomy, control.
Provocation	Choose or link the activity to personal interests. Invite participants to think about ideas that conflict with their own.
Level-up	"Scaffold" the difficulty of activities and tasks. Make them commensurate with skill levels.
Absorption/Type-A activities – *The subjective experience one has when involved in activities that appeal strongly to one or more of the senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, tasting. Examples are enjoying delicious foods, admiring a landscape, and sunbathing*	
Present focus	Encourage participants to focus attention on the present. Plans and worries must be left "at the door."
No distractions	Eliminate distractions that might seize participants' attention during the experience.
Communicative separation	Minimize participants' communication to promote focus on the sensory experience at hand.

How can TSE help guide the work of youth development professionals as they create activities for their participants? To begin to answer this question, we need to understand subjective states occurring during three types of activities: engagement during Type-E activities, immersion during Type-I activities, and absorption during Type-A activities. Descriptions of these follow.

Engagement/Type-E Activities: "Story Experiences"

People have engagement/Type-E experiences when they focus their attention on following a story or an unfolding narrative. Specifically, engagement is a momentary condition of heightened emotion, attention, and motivation developed by attending to the following elements of the experience: (a) coherent theme, (b) affirmation, and (c) provocation. Examples of engagement/Type-E experiences are watching movies and attending theatrical performances, spectator sporting events, lectures, and interpretive talks.

At a 4-H livestock showmanship workshop, a structured engagement experience might consist of a 4-H staff member telling a story about a time when she or he was a teen and used a specific showmanship technique. To structure the experience, a story line could be made evident. The story could begin with an introduction of characters and the circumstances around the showmanship workshop. It could include recounting the excitement the storyteller felt upon discovery of the specific showmanship techniques. Additionally, the story line could describe how the show unfolded, including the storyteller's thoughts and feelings before and during the show. A climax could be included; the storyteller could describe how they felt at the moment the judge came to shake their hand, knowing they had won. Finally, the story would be brought to resolution with comments about how the experience affected the storyteller's performance in subsequent shows. The storyteller should try to affirm the youths' personal beliefs about themselves during the story. The storyteller might also present ideas or actions leading the youth to think more about the story when they leave the site. Measures of engagement vary along a continuum from very high to very low.

Immersion/Type-I Activities: "Performance Activities"

Immersion is an immediate subjective state people have when participating in activities requiring performance of physical action. There are constantly demands for action during the activity, and the participant receives immediate feedback on the effectiveness of their responses to those demands. Examples of immersion/Type-I activities are competitions (e.g., shooting sports, sport competitions, livestock showing, rodeos, chess, lacrosse), noncompetitive activities

(e.g., rock climbing, horseback riding, mountain biking), performing arts (e.g., acting, singing, playing a musical instrument), and creative arts (e.g., painting, sketching, doing leatherwork). During structured immersion experiences, participant attention is focused on the demands of the activity. Effective activity leaders "level-up" participants' experiences by ensuring challenges are commensurate with participant skills. The first session of an introductory program on archery, for example, should involve placement of targets very near participants. The targets would be moved farther out for subsequent sessions. Effective activity leaders also find ways to link the activity to personal interests of participants. The experience thereby becomes personally relevant. Successes the individual experiences during the activity thus become meaningful instances of pleasure and affirmation. Effective leaders may also use provocation, inviting participants to think about beliefs, values, and expectations conflicting with their own.

Effective leaders at a rock-climbing wall level-up the activity by starting with lower-level climbs customized to the ability level of each participant. A less effective leader might simply point to the top of the wall and announce that everyone's goal is to climb to that height. Successful attainment of individualized goals ("scaffolding") allows each participant to develop requisite skills, increase her or his sense of control, and successfully navigate the climbing route. An effective leader might also use provocation, for example, by encouraging youth to picture themselves successfully climbing to a height just above the height they believe they can actually reach (challenge slightly greater than skill). Like engagement, immersion varies along a continuum from very high to very low.

Absorption/Type-A Activities: "Sensory Activities"

Absorption experiences do not require performing an activity or following a story line. They are immediate conscious states people experience when involved in activities appealing strongly to one or more of the senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, touching, and tasting. Demand for action and reaction is not inherent to the experience. A high level of absorption is a transitory condition of heightened attention, motivation, and emotion characterized by (a) focusing on the present, (b) limiting distractions, and (c) minimizing communication with others to focus attention on sensations. Absorption can also occur in activities involving movement, as long as those activities do not require focusing attention on action and reaction. Examples of absorption activities include hiking easy trails, sunbathing at a beach or pool, viewing landscapes, walking for pleasure, visiting a flower garden, cycling at a leisurely pace for pleasure, and listening to instrumental music.

A structured absorption experience at a summer camp might occur the last evening at camp when the staff design an experience to walk to a viewpoint to see the sunset. Upon arrival, campers spread out and sit in silence as they watch the sun set for the final time on their camp experience. Youth are encouraged to be where their feet are (i.e., think of nothing else) as they watch the sun set and to just take in the experience. Like the other two immediate subjective states, absorption varies along a continuum from very high to very low.

Deep Structured Experiences

Previous research (Ellis et al., 2017; Ellis, Jiang, Freeman, Lacanienta, & Ellis, 2020; Ellis et al., 2016; Lacanienta, 2018; Stricklin & Ellis, 2018) confirms that experiencing engagement, immersion, or absorption at a high level can lead to the subjective state known as a deep structured experience (DSE). This state is characterized by heightened interest, attention, motivation, and involvement. DSE is a binary state, meaning one is either in it or not (Ellis, Freeman, Jiang, et al., 2019). It is depicted by the following sentiment:

> I was in a state of effortless concentration so deep that I lost a) my sense of time, b) my thoughts about myself, and c) my thoughts about my problems. I wanted very much to keep doing this activity (Ellis, Freeman, Jamal, & Jiang, 2019, p. 108).

When DSEs are highly prevalent over the duration of an activity session, youth will likely report greater value in having chosen to do the activity. Youth should also feel more positive emotions with the structured experiences. The TSE propositions require attention to (a) theme, (b) personalization, (c) multi-sensory appeal, and (d) providing unexpected takeaway or memorabilia from the experience with personal relevance or value to the participants. DSE techniques can be applied to any of the three activity types.

Service Performance

Recent research has determined that for DSEs to occur at all, the structured experience must be delivered at a level of customer service performance that exceeds a certain threshold (Ellis, Lacanienta, et al., 2019). Customer service performance is complex. Countless opportunities exist for success, failure, and service recovery if failure occurs. Think about the last time you had a bad experience at a restaurant, an amusement park, an instructional lesson, a movie theatre, or a tourist attraction. Perhaps the restrooms were filthy. Equipment could have been broken or failed. Maybe a service provider was rude. Possibly you had to stand in a line far too

long. Service providers must first address these challenges during service encounters before working on additional strategies to enhance experience quality.

Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988) showed that service performance encounters (both successes and failures) can be classified according to five types aligned with the acronym "RATER": reliability of the service provided, assurance of commitment to quality by the provider, tangible features of the environment, empathy shown by providers, and responsiveness to the needs of customers. If participants feel frustrated, disappointed, angry, frightened, disillusioned, disgusted, humiliated, or cheated, they will not experience a high prevalence of DSE. Providers of youth services must also provide strong service performance in order to create the opportunity for engagement, immersion, absorption, or DSE to be experienced.

It is important to note that engagement, immersion, and absorption do not occur in isolation, even though a given activity may be structured to emphasize one of these. An organized mountain bike ride, for example, may combine absorption experiences (activating a variety of senses, such as a view, the smell and scent of wildflowers, and mud on one's legs) with the immersion experiences (a challenging bike ride). Youth on a fishing outing might first enjoy basking in the sun for a few minutes and feeling the breeze on their face (absorption) before participating in the relatively complex task of fishing. Successful fishing involves locating a specific spot to try to catch a fish, casting a line, and waiting patiently for the catch (immersion). Other youth may enjoy conversation during fishing, thereby blending engagement and immersion experiences. Different youth may have different types of experiences during the same activity, and a leader can use strategies to support each of those.

Using an Experience Journey Map to Structure Experiences

Planning a well-structured experience requires creativity, time, and energy. Youth professionals are highly creative, energetic people who care deeply about the quality of experiences for youth they serve. They embrace the opportunity to elevate the quality of experience, and the act of creation often becomes a DSE (an immersion task) in itself. We propose an experience journey map as a tool to plan youth activities. In business service design, journey maps have been used to visualize steps and stages of point-of-service customer encounters and the entire end-to-end customer experiences (Stickdorn et al., 2018). Applying TSE in the experience journey maps allows one to design activities for youth that produce engagement, immersion, and absorption.

An experience journey map is a matrix of columns and rows (see Table 2). A spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel can serve as a template for creating such maps. Columns in this matrix represent the sequence or stages of an activity: pre-arrival, decompression, reception, orientation, involvement, and takeaway. Rows in the matrix summarize actions for the activity and describe activity-structuring strategies based on TSE. These strategies include service performance strategies and DSE strategies, common for all Type-E, Type-I, and Type-A activities, as well as strategies unique to each activity type. Summary actions focus on youth behaviors or plans for what will occur during the activity, while structuring strategies describe what youth professionals need to do to ensure the activity occurs as planned. All the cells in the map need not be filled. Whether you apply certain strategies at a specific stage of the activity depends on your needs and creativity. Readers should note that the experience journey map template is applicable to activities intentionally designed to meet developmental goals as well as hedonic activities intended only for immediate enjoyment (Ellis, Lacanienta, & Freeman, 2018).

We recommend using the first row in the map to describe youth behaviors and activity occurrence. This way you will have the action summary as a time reference when working on the rest of the map. The next five rows describe the service performance strategies, RATER, applicable to each stage of the activity. DSE strategies, including theming, personalization, multi-sensory appeal, and unexpected takeaway or memorabilia from the experience with personal relevance or value, follow RATER. Activity-specific strategies are added in the last rows of the map. For example, the rows in the experience journey map for designing Type-I activities will include three additional rows for delineating immersion-specific strategies: self-affirmation, provocation, and strategies to match participants' skills with challenges (level-up).

Similarly, in the experience journey map for Type-E activities, the last three rows describe engagement strategies: providing coherent theme, self-affirmation, and provocation. Coherent theme means to add a distinct story line to a theme. Affirmation and provocation are two mechanisms to relate participants to the story told in the activity. We can link the story to youths' personal interests and affirm their positive beliefs about themselves. Alternatively, we can invite youth to think about ideas conflicting with their own presently manageable, challenging tasks. In the Type-A activity map, the last three rows are absorption strategies and include present focus, no distractions, and communicative separation. These strategies remove subjective and objective distractions from youth participants and discourage communication among them and with the outside world to promote perceptions of solitude.

Table 2. Experience Journey Map Template

		Arrival	Decompression	Reception	Orientation	Involvement	Takeaway
Target participant experience		← 1. Satisfaction via service quality 2. Engagement, immersion, or absorption via TSE techniques →					
Action summary							
Service performance strategies	Reliability						
	Assurance						
	Tangibles						
	Empathy						
	Responsive						
DSE strategies	Theme						
	Personalization						
	Multi-sensory						
	Memorabilia						
Engagement strategies	Coherent theme						
	Self-affirmation						
	Provocation						
Immersion strategies	Self-affirmation						
	Provocation						
	Level-up						
Absorption strategies	Present focus						
	No distractions						
	Communicative separation						

Case Study: GLOBE—Global Leadership Opportunities Beyond Education

This section describes a case study on how to use the experience journey map to plan engagement and immersion activities for a Texas 4-H program, Global Leadership Opportunities Beyond Education (GLOBE). GLOBE is a national award-winning, 2-year citizenship and leadership program. The objectives of GLOBE are for youth to learn about and respect different cultures, recognize and understand the dynamics of poverty, learn how agricultural systems affect hunger and food security, address social or environmental issues in their community through service learning, demonstrate leadership and citizenship skills, and investigate academic and career opportunities. As a part of the overall GLOBE experience, youth visit an experiential learning facility where they spend a day in seven simulated impoverished communities in Appalachia, Tibet, urban slums, Zambia, Thailand, Guatemala, and a refugee camp. These simulated communities are situated on a 25-acre farm. Each village includes a structure and other outdoor features representing a family's home for that community. Each youth spends a night in one of the seven simulated communities. We provide the following narratives showing how two activities in the villages can be structured. Table 3 shows how experience journey maps can be used to plan these activities.

Engagement Activity: Appalachian Storytelling

An Appalachian storytelling experience begins at the camp barn. After camp staff greet participants, an activity is used to create two smaller groups, and then camp staff lead participants on a tour of the seven global villages. At each village, the group stops, and a youth is selected to read a story of a family who would live in each simulated village. The stories include information about the family structure and the number of persons living there. The participants also learn of the economic conditions of the country, educational levels of family members, social norms expressed in the community, and possible occupations or roles of family members. At the conclusion of the story, cards of different colors are randomly distributed. Youth are instructed to form new groups of four that include one card of each color. Some groups of three or five may have to form, depending on total number of participants. Camp staff facilitate a discussion around four primary topics or questions that are on the cards: poverty, culture, agricultural systems, and service. At the conclusion of the discussion, camp staff ask youth to consider what they would do if they were living in this home or what they would do to help others living in a home such as this. Participants receive a tangible "takeaway" item to remind them of the village. The process continues until all seven villages have been visited.

Immersion Activity: Preparing Dinner Under Challenging Circumstances in Seven Villages

The dinner experience occurs after youth have toured the seven global villages. They reassemble at the camp barn and camp staff use a puzzle activity to create seven groups. An 8.5 x 11 image of the flag for each of the countries or sites is cut up into five or six puzzle pieces. Each youth and adult coordinator receive a puzzle piece and is instructed to find the rest of the puzzle pieces that go with the one she or he has. Each flag is displayed on the walls of the barn as a hint.

Once the seven groups are formed, camp staff asks the group whether they are hungry and whether they have a plan for getting dinner tonight. Camp staff explain that each group will be issued some cooking supplies and food items. Each group, however, will not have all the items or supplies necessary to build a fire and cook a pot of soup; the groups are encouraged to barter with groups in other villages if necessary. The group is told that Guatemala controls the water resource and Appalachia controls all of the firewood. If a group needs water or firewood, the group must work through Guatemala or Appalachia, respectively; the groups are not allowed to get water from the pond or firewood from the farm.

The youth are reminded they are to prepare their own meal of soup for the evening and extinguish any fires they build. Groups are instructed to bring their dirty cooking utensils, trash, leftover food, etc., to the barn before going to bed in their village. A short debriefing will be held at the camp barn to discuss the evening meal and activity. The participants will receive a "congratulatory dessert" surprise. The group will meet again in the morning at 7:00 a.m. for breakfast at the urban slums site.

Table 3 illustrates how TSE strategies, and the journey map might be used to structure the Appalachian story experience (activity Type E) and the cooking experience (activity Type I). Some strategies are genuine while others are contrived to illustrate how TSE principles might be applied. The activities are arranged into a sequence of youth actions. At each phase, TSE strategies are highlighted to show how youth professionals can enhance the quality of the experiences.

Table 3. Experience Journey Map: Engagement and Immersion Activities

		Arrival	Decompression	Reception	Orientation	Involvement	Takeaway
Target participant experience		←	1. Satisfaction via service quality		2. Engagement, immersion, or absorption via TSE techniques	→	
Action summary		Arrive at camp barn and divide into smaller groups	Walk to the village sites	Welcome group at the Appalachian village	Participants invited to sit; distribute question cards	Read story, discuss questions, view village	Youth receive toothbrush
Service performance strategies	Reliability	Set up chairs in orderly fashion. Handouts are ready.	Lead the group to the assigned village.	Props in place; Story book displayed.		Choose story appropriate to grade level.	
	Assurance	Show enthusiasm. Wear camp shirts, introduce yourselves, and provide credentials.	Answer questions. Use stories in answers, as appropriate.	Assure youth they will be safe here.	Share facts of village life with youth. Know FAQ's.	Ensure the story accurately portrays Appalachia.	
	Tangibles	Barn is presented according to its design. No negative cues, distractions.	The trail is well maintained, according to its design, no negative cues, distractions.	Village is presented as designed. No negative cues, no distractions.	Village is presented as designed. No negative cues, no distractions.	Seating area is presented as designed. No negative cues, no distractions.	
	Empathy	Acknowledge any discomfort (e.g., related to temperature, humidity, insects, rain).	Provide walking sticks and water.			Encourage youth to join conversation and share their thoughts.	
	Responsive	Start and end program on time as scheduled without delay.	Be prepared to begin presentation upon arrival of youth to village.			Begin discussion immediately, end when interest diminishes.	

Table 3. (continued)

		Arrival	Decompression	Reception	Orientation	Involvement	Takeaway
DSE strategies	Theme	Hang pictures in the barn from the various villages along with the flag of each country.		Equip the village to represent an impoverished Appalachia homesite.		Discussing questions on the "?" cards. Question cards are themed.	
	Personalization	Use youth names as you converse with them.		Use names as youth gather.	Use youth names.	Compliment the reader, by name. Invite applause.	
	Multi-sensory			Appalachian music			
	Memorabilia						Toothbrush
Engagement strategies	Coherent theme	Share the story, Silas Potter has a severe toothache. What remedy will his mother use to ease his pain? Younger sister Elsa taunts, "dynamite!"	Talk about Silas and Elsa. Imagine reasons they might use the trail and stories they might tell while walking the trail.	Comment: "We've arrived at Silas and Elsa's home! If you see a chicken running around, that might be tonight's dinner. The outhouse is the bathroom."	Point out youth are sitting in the barn where Silas and Elsa often worked. If they close their eyes and listen, they might still hear them talking or working.	Recruit a youth to read the story about life in an impoverished Appalachian community. Theme the discussion "?" cards.	
	Self-affirmation		Question, "If you were Elsa/Silas and were having a very good day, what would you be thinking while walking on this trail?"			Encourage youth to compare their home and lifestyle to the Potters'. Consider pros and cons of each.	
	Provocation	Ask "Who has had a toothache? What remedy did you use?"	Question, "If you were Elsa/Silas and were having a bad day, what would you be thinking while walking on this trail?"		Themed comments (e.g., "to stay warm, Silas and Elsa may need to get some chunks of coal for the fire." "They go to the bathroom in the outhouse.")	Provocative questions on "?" cards to spark discussion, debate, and opportunity to think about personal values.	

The experience journey maps invite innovative thinking about how each of the two GLOBE activities might be structured to ensure the quality of camper experiences. The service performance strategies remind activity leaders to create an orderly environment free from distractions, to ensure that materials and resources are in place, and to minimize queues, which waste time and tend to promote disruptive behaviors. The experience journey map also provides the opportunity to craft a creative theme for the activities and design strategies to ensure the theme is woven into the fabric of the activity in each phase. Finally, the experience journey map illustrates application of distinct strategies essential to impactful engagement (activity Type E) and immersion (activity Type I) experiences. The creation of a coherent and meaningful story line is pivotal to the former, and leveled-up, self-relevant activities are essential to the latter.

Discussion

This article introduces an experience journey map to youth professionals as an experience design tool to effectively plan different types of activities. Experience journey maps are particularly useful in planning youth activities because they focus on structured activities and provide theory-based planning strategies derived from TSE. The successful implementation of high-quality youth activities depends on not only youth professionals' structuring skills but also many other factors, including a positive organizational culture, effective programming, and effective evaluation (Ellis et al., 2018). Future research may further address those organizational and program factors guided by process models (Ellis et al., 2018) and logic models.

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