

SIUE's NBA Math Hoops camp combines learning and basketball

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EDWARDSVILLE - Students from across Madison and St. Clair Counties spent June 19-23 at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville shooting hoops and practicing math and physics skills during the We Got Game: NBA Math Hoops camp.

The camp was offered through the SIUE School of Education, Health and Human Behavior (SEHHB) and the Office of Educational Outreach. During the interactive camp, 14 students, grades 5-8, engaged in learning both on and off the basketball court.

“We were excited to introduce this new camp using the NBA Math Hoops game in an accelerated, summer camp format,” said Amy Wilkinson, program manager with the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources program at SIUE. “We kept the group small, because we wanted to personalize the learning. It’s important to keep these students from experiencing academic loss during the summer. We paired this great game with an activity these kids enjoy to get them excited about learning.”

The NBA Math Hoops game works on addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. Students spent their mornings considering the stats of NBA and WNBA players, and then built their own stats on the court in the afternoons. Crafts, like creating a clay trophy, rounded out the hands-on experience.



“When you offer students something that’s fun, but involves learning, they don’t even realize that they’re practicing their math skills,” said Kayla Carlisle, lead teacher of the camp. Carlisle earned a bachelor’s in elementary education from SIUE in 2017 and is a certified teacher in St. Louis Public Schools.

“They’re shouting and getting so excited about doing multiplication problems,” Carlisle said. “It’s just wonderful to see them engaged and interested in learning through this activity.”

During a standard academic year, teachers have weeks to form a community among their students, added Barbara O’Donnell, PhD, professor in the Department of Teaching and Learning in the SEHHB. Still, in the camp’s short timeframe, participants from a variety of area cities, quickly created friendships.

“These kids are amazing,” O’Donnell said. “They’re competitive, but have also become good friends. This camp is teaching sportsmanship, teamwork and basketball strategies. Teaching is about more than the course content. It’s about considering kids’ interests and offering interactive educational opportunities that will grow their excitement for learning.”

The [SIUE School of Education, Health and Human Behavior](#) prepares students in a wide range of fields including public health, exercise science, nutrition, instructional technology, psychology, speech-language pathology and audiology, educational administration, and teaching. Faculty members engage in leading-edge research, which enhances teaching and enriches the educational experience. The School supports the community through on-campus clinics, outreach to children and families, and a focused commitment to enhancing individual lives across the region.