STUDENT ENGAGEMENT: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

by

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A thesis submitted in conformity with the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education
Graduate Department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education
Ontario Institute for Studies In Education
University of Toronto

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ABSTRACT

This study explores how students engaged with sports and citizenship clubs. Data was generated through semi-structured interviews with students, teachers and the principal, and observations of four extra-curricular clubs. The data revealed that clubs play important roles in students’ educational lives. The study found that students were empowered in all the clubs’ activities and decision-making, and shared and learned from each other’s knowledge and strengths. It also revealed that club leaders had a significant impact on student engagement within the clubs and the entire school. Students engaged in dialogue, shared ideas, and learned from each other.

Unlike other studies in the area of extracurricular activities (ECA), this study illustrates just how the interactions of students in the ECA generate community building within the clubs and the entire school. This research does so by featuring students’ own points of view about the support, challenges, and impact of ECA.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>viii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF DIAGRAMS</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF APPENDICIES</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Research Questions</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Significance of the Study</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the Study</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organizations of the Dissertation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER TWO – LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Brief Overview of Extracurricular Activities Research</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Examination of ECA Effects &amp; Impact of Different Features</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity and the Issue of Participation</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationships</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Development</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of ECA Studies and Recommendations</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Frameworks Used in ECA Studies</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement Definitions</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supportive Elements for Student Engagement</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Student Engagement Is Generated Through Shared Spaces</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Engagement as Multidimensional Constructs</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theoretical Framework</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conceptual Framework .................................................................................................................. 25
Summary ........................................................................................................................................ 26
CHAPTER THREE – METHODOLOGY ............................................................................................... 29
How I Came to Choose Evergreen High School ........................................................................... 30
Context ............................................................................................................................................. 32
Evergreen High School ................................................................................................................. 32
Participation in Extracurricular Activities .................................................................................... 33
Extracurricular Activities in Evergreen High School ..................................................................... 33
Participants ...................................................................................................................................... 34
School Leadership and Extracurricular Activities ....................................................................... 36
Description of Participants in Extracurricular Activities ............................................................... 37
The U/20 Volleyball Club Participants ......................................................................................... 40
The U/14 Volleyball Club Participants ......................................................................................... 41
The Global Amnesty Club Participants ....................................................................................... 41
The Social Justice Club Participants ............................................................................................. 42
Data Collection Methods ............................................................................................................... 43
Interviews and Observations .......................................................................................................... 43
Data Analysis .................................................................................................................................... 46
Credibility and Ethical Considerations .......................................................................................... 49
CHAPTER FOUR - SPORT CLUBS– EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ........................................ 52
The Under Twenty (U/20) Senior Volleyball Club ....................................................................... 52
Motivation ....................................................................................................................................... 53
Leadership ...................................................................................................................................... 55
Relationships ................................................................................................................................... 59
Skills Development ....................................................................................................................... 61
Support .......................................................................................................................................... 61
Barriers to Participation.................................................................62
Impact ..........................................................................................63
Key Findings..................................................................................64

The Under Fourteen (U/14) Junior Volleyball Club..........................70
Motivation.....................................................................................71
Relationships - Knowing Each Other Through Friendship..............72
Leadership....................................................................................72
Skills Development .......................................................................74
Support.......................................................................................75
Barriers to Participation.................................................................76
Impact ..........................................................................................76
Key Findings..................................................................................77

CHAPTER FIVE - CITIZENSHIP CLUBS – EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ....83

The Global Amnesty Club ..............................................................83
Motivation.....................................................................................85
Leadership Experiences for Students.............................................87
Skills Development.......................................................................89
Relationships...............................................................................90
Impact ..........................................................................................92
Barriers and Supports...................................................................93
Key Findings..................................................................................94

The Social Justice Club...................................................................100
The Club’s Members Motivation for being in the Club .....................101
Building Community through Inclusive and Collaborative Relationships ........105
Leadership Development in the Social Justice Club .......................108
Creating a Place Where Students Can Learn About Their Skills and Talents ........113
Supports and Barriers........................................................................................................116
Impact ..................................................................................................................................120
Key Findings .........................................................................................................................121

CHAPTER SIX - DISCUSSION..........................................................................................128
Community Building ...........................................................................................................128
Empowerment and Ownership ..............................................................................................131
Student Engagement: Similarities and Differences in the Clubs ........................................134
Student Engagement: The Clubs Leaders’ Roles .................................................................136

CHAPTER SEVEN – SUMMARY, CONTRIBUTIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS .............144
Summary .................................................................................................................................144
How are students engaged in the clubs? ...............................................................................144
How do students develop relationships? ...............................................................................145
How do students develop skills? ...........................................................................................147
How do students develop leadership? ...................................................................................148
How does engagement in the clubs impact students? .........................................................151
How are students motivated to engage with the clubs? ......................................................152
How is students’ engagement in the clubs supported or hindered? ....................................153

Contributions .........................................................................................................................157
Contribution of the Study to ECA Research .......................................................................157
Contribution of the Study for Educational Policymakers ...................................................159
Contribution of the Study for Students ...............................................................................162
Contribution for School-based Practices ..............................................................................163
Recommendations for Future Research ...............................................................................166
Conclusions .............................................................................................................................167

BIBLIOGRAPHY ....................................................................................................................169
APPENDICES ........................................................................................................................176
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 Names of the Club Leaders and Information on Student Participants..........................39
Table 2 Summary Map of U/20 Volleyball Club Students’ Responses ........................................66
Table 3 Summary Map of U/20 Volleyball Club Coach’s Responses...........................................68
Table 4 Summary Map of U/14 Volleyball Club Students’ Responses..........................................79
Table 5 Summary Map of U/14 Volleyball Club Coach’s Responses ...........................................81
Table 6 Summary Map of Student’s Responses From The Global Amnesty Club ......................96
Table 7 Summary Map of the Global Amnesty Club Leader’s Responses ..................................98
Table 8 Summary Map of Students’ Responses From the Social Justice Club ............................124
Table 9 Summary Map of the Social Justice Club Leaders’ Responses .......................................126
LIST OF DIAGRAMS

Diagram 1 Conceptual Framework of Research Study.................................................................26
LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix A-1 Information and Consent Form for the Principal ..........................................................177
Appendix A-2 Information and Consent Form for Teachers .................................................................179
Appendix A-3 Student and Parental Consent Form .............................................................................182
Appendix: B-1 Interview Questions for the Principal .................................................................184
Appendix B-2 Interview Questions for Teachers .............................................................................185
Appendix B-3.1 Interview One: Questionnaire for Students .............................................................186
Appendix B-3.2 Interview Questions for Students .............................................................................187
Appendix C The Observational Indicators .........................................................................................189
Appendix D Recruitment of the School Principal .............................................................................190
Appendix E: Recruitment of Teachers .............................................................................................192
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

There is growing evidence that participation in extracurricular activities (ECA) can make a difference in the lives of students. Researchers explain that ECA can be very beneficial to the academic, social, physical, and emotional growth of students (e.g., Bloomfield & Barber, 2009; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Mahoney, Cairns & Farmer, 2003). ECA can provide opportunities outside the classroom for students to be involved with other students, which can create a sense of belonging, and strengthen the student-school connection (Rubin, Bommer & Baldwin, 2002; Mahoney & Carirns, 1997). Evidence has emerged suggesting that ECA has an important role in developing student engagement (Mahoney et al., 2003; Shulruf, Tumen & Tolley, 2008; Fullarton, 2002). Each of these studies emphasized the impact of ECA for student engagement in both elementary and secondary schools.

Though it is apparent that ECA matters, as they enhance students’ academic success and integration into school, not enough research has been done to explore how students are engaged in ECA. Interestingly, only a few studies have been conducted on the features that underlie the activities with respect to leadership, relationships, and skills development. This study will attempt to fill a gap in the research. It investigates how students engage in ECA. Despite the considerable value of participation in extracurricular activities for students in ECA studies, it is not common to find the views of students about them. Having little understanding of students’ experiences in ECA, from students themselves, has led to a lack of understanding of what student engagement means to them. This study attempted to rectify this shortcoming through both interviews with, and observations of students and others to learn about students’ behaviours,
thoughts, and emotions in their ECA experience. This approach enriches the study and provides opportunities to explore student engagement in ECA as presented by both students and teachers.

This research explored students’ experiences in the school’s clubs in order to gain insight into how students socialize and interact with other clubs’ members. It investigated student engagement in two sport clubs and two citizenship clubs. In particular, this study explored leadership, skills development, relationships, motivations for the clubs, and the supports and hindrances to student engagement, and the impact of their engagement.

The findings of this study attempt to answer how students engage in ECA. The study objective is to understand engagement from those who participated in the clubs. This study seeks to discover how the club members were involved in social relationships, leadership, and skills development that resulted in student engagement. In doing so, it focuses on students’ accomplishments, building community, inclusive relationships, choices and independence, and participating in decision making.

**The Research Questions**

This study has investigated how – in one high school – students have engaged in sport and citizenship clubs. The major research question is: How are students engaged in the clubs? This research enquired into the following subsidiary questions:

1. How do students develop relationships, skills, and leadership in the clubs?
2. How are students motivated to engage with the clubs?
3. How is students’ engagement in the clubs supported or hindered?
4. How does engagement in the clubs impact students?
Significance of the Study

The study provides useful information about student engagement with three fundamental interrelated features of the clubs: leadership, relationships, and skills development. Insights into students’ experiences in the clubs can offer the research community valuable information for further enquiries in student engagement with the ECA. John Dewy (1938) reminded us that: “In a certain sense every experience should do something to prepare a person for lateral experiences of a deeper and more expansive quality. That is the very meaning of growth, continuity, reconstruction of experience” (p.47). This research shows that the experiences gained by the students from the clubs impacted their engagement within the clubs and the school community.

The study is also significant because interviewing and observing students in the clubs’ activities: “allows for a holistic interpretation of the phenomenon being investigated” (Merriam, 1998, p.111). Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted a major advantage that observation offers to the research is that: “it provides here-and-now experience in depth” (p.273). This is a case study, as explained by Holland and Andre (1987), “it is from such integration of smaller scale studies that a more complete picture of the effects of participation is likely to emerge” (p.451). This approach makes it possible to better understand participants, activities, and participants’ experiences. Holland and Andre (1987) noted that: “The greater the descriptive information available about samples, the greater the potential value of such studies to analytic or quantitative reviews” (p.451).

Limitations of the Study

The sample in this case study is limited to only one high school’s students with a homogeneous socioeconomic (SES) background that consists of mainly upper-middle class families. Therefore, the experiences of ECA for students with diverse socioeconomic backgrounds cannot be
addressed in this study. The findings of this study will be different from a study that looks at the ECA involvement of students with diverse SES backgrounds. With this limitation, it would be difficult to apply the study’s findings to students with different SES family situations.

There are other limitations in this research. One limitation is the role of the researcher in a qualitative study, when he or she “is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis” (Merriam, 1998, p.42). This reflects the subjective nature of the qualitative method. And human perception can be “very selective” (Merriam, 1998, p.95). Another limitation is that data collection is related to the willingness of research participants to co-operate, and honest responses to the interview questions (Merriam, 1998). The result of this research should be considered with these limitations, although as mentioned earlier, there are various sources of data - student and teacher interviews and observations – which attempted to both minimize the limitations and provide in-depth insight into students’ engagement in ECA from different perspectives.

Organization of the Dissertation

Chapter One outlines the introduction, the research questions, discusses the significance of the study, and states the limitations of the study. Chapter Two, a literature review, describes the main concepts of the study: extracurricular activities, student engagement, and theoretical and conceptual frameworks. Chapter Three introduces the methodology. Chapters Four and Five present the data analysis, discuss the findings, and summarize the chapters. Chapter Six provides a discussion of the findings. Chapter Seven presents a summary, contributions, and conclusions that arise from the study.
CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, a brief literature review is presented. It begins with an overview of extracurricular activities, outlining the definition, why it is always considered extra, what it involves, its benefits, the impact of different variables on ECA participation, limitation of ECA studies, and exploration of students’ experiences in ECA through different perspectives. It is followed by a section on student engagement, which includes an overview on student engagement definitions, supportive elements, and its constructs (e.g., emotional, behavioural, cognitive). At the end, there are theoretical and conceptual frameworks followed by a summary.

A Brief Overview of Extracurricular Activities Research

ECA is defined in dictionaries as educational activities that fall outside the scope of the regular school curriculum (Merriam-Webster, 2010). There are different ECA such as sport, art, citizenship, student government, press, vocational, academic, and service clubs (Mahoney & Cairns, 1997). Some of these activities may even occur outside the school building. ECA all have common elements including: regular meetings, an emphasis on skill development, goal-orientation, positive interaction with peers, as well as the direction, supervision, and the leadership of one or more competent adults (e.g., Fredricks & Eccles, 2005; Darling, 2005; Mahoney, 2000). Mahoney, Eccles and Larson (2004) provided a list of supportive elements that are critical to ECA: physical and psychological safety for appropriate peer interaction, clear rules for an activity, supporting relationships among participants, opportunities for inclusion of all participants, promoting independence and valuing individual opinion, and skills building.
According to Mohler and Bolmeier (1968), the prefix “extra” brings a sense of vagueness to the term “extracurricular” and suggests programs with “extraneous features beyond the scope for which a public school is properly and legally responsible” (p.1). Substitute names like “beyond academic” (Neito & Bode, 2008), and “beyond the curriculum” (Hallberg & Kirk, 1971) attempt to change the traditional notion of ECA that consider it as “extra”, by showing the true value and the meaning of non-academic programs in educating students. ECA according to these scholars, are more important than their name implies because they help students to become more fully engaged with the school’s social and intellectual life.

Fredricks and Eccles (2006) state that, historically, ECA has meant “less important” than the academic curriculum, which may be why ECA “are some of the first items to be cut during fiscal constraints” (p.712). In their broad review of ECA studies, Holland and Andre (1987) point out that if the purpose of school is perceived exclusively as the “pursuit of academic excellence and transmission of formal knowledge,” then ECA will be regarded as “relaxation and fun” and unimportant in relation to the primary purpose of school which emphasizes academic achievement (p.438). Holland and Andre (1987) argue that schools need to offer more than academic programs, and ECA are important as “one possible mechanism” that can facilitate “experiences that further the total development of individual students” (p.439). In the next section a brief examination of its effects will be provided.

**Examination of ECA Effects and Impact of Different Features on ECA Participation**

ECA are often considered to be ideal contexts to facilitate the physical, behavioural, intellectual, social, and emotional development of youth (Bloomfield & Barber, 2009; Fredrick & Eccles, 2008; Darling, 2005). As Fullarton (2002) says, a “less formal setting than the classroom” may provide opportunities for youngsters to develop “personal and social” skills for developing
positive relationships with peers, teachers and school to become “lifelong learners” (p.11). Research shows that ECA participation is positively related to school bonding and creates relationships with teachers and peers that influence student academic accomplishments (Dotterer, McHale & Crouter, 2007; Akos, 2006; Marsh, 1992).

According to Mahoney (2000), the “act of participation itself” is more important than the specific activity (p.503). However, a number of other studies have shown that ECA outcomes may vary depending on the type of activity (Bloomfield & Barber, 2009; Fredrick & Eccles, 2005). A cross-sectional study by Fredrick and Eccles (2005) of high school students in middle-class communities found that students who participated in sports reported stronger feelings of belonging than those who participated in arts and academic clubs. Guest and McRee’s (2009) investigation showed that “micro-level factors” such as participants’ successes or failures within activities, the intensity of their involvement, the quality of activity leadership, and interpersonal relationships within activity settings may each contribute to the psychological development of youth (p.60). Furthermore, Feldman and Matjasko (2005) noted that “macro-level” factors including school structure (e.g., school size – there is less participation in larger schools, teachers willing only to have specific numbers of students in activity) and school context (e.g., its emphasis on the academic, its safety, its social makeup, minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) requirement) influence activity participation (p.199).

Some research has focused on barriers to participation. For instance, Cohen, Taylor, Zonta, Vestal, and Schuster (2007) found that in schools offering 13 or fewer ECA programs, the average student participation rate was 14%, and in schools offering 16 or more ECA programs, the participation rate was 31% (p.82). The availability of different ECA are crucial for student participation, the issue of access among a diverse student body is equally vital, particularly for
those who come from low-socioeconomic status (SES) family backgrounds. Studies have focused on the issue of access to ECA; for instance, Mahoney and Cairns (1997), and Brown and Evans (2002) found that ECA availability does not necessarily translate into equal access. These studies found that there are many barriers that negatively affect participation rates in many programs, particularly among ethnic and low-SES family backgrounds students; sometimes there is a need for specialized expertise (e.g., music, sports), a nomination or selection process by school personnel or peers, and the need to have a minimum academic standard. Insufficient financial support is one of the most important reasons that affect the ability of students to participate in ECA. Mitchell and Hoff (2006) discuss how the concept of “pay-to-play” transfers some of the financial load of running ECA onto students (p.231). The findings of these scholars show the importance of all students having access to ECA. However, my research intends to explore what happens to those students who actually do participate in ECA. The resulting findings may suggest ways to overcome potential barriers to accessing ECA.

**Diversity and the Issue of Participation**

Research on participation in ECA has shown that diverse students’ backgrounds (i.e., SES, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation) influence their decisions to choose particular activities, their rates of participation, and whether to participate or not. For instance, Fredrick and Eccles (2008) found that adolescents who chose to participate in ECA tend to be from a higher SES. A survey study of 175 Los Angeles County public high schools by Cohen et al. (2007) found that opportunities for participation in sport-ECA were limited for disadvantaged students who lived in low-income neighborhoods. The survey showed that lack of participation in sports after school for many students may be the result of the following facts: students often were obligated to care for younger siblings, working, or living in neighborhoods where staying after school hours
was not possible because of crime risk or transportation problems (Cohen et al., 2007). They also found that in schools with more parents with college degrees and higher incomes, students had greater sport-ECA participation. Students might have better access to sport equipment, transportation, relevant expenses; as well, better informed parents knew about the importance of sport-ECA for their children (Cohen et al., 2007).

The numerous studies show that the rate of participation is different among students of different backgrounds. In a study, involving 1729 students in grades 7-12 from various ethnic backgrounds, Brown and Evans (2002) found different levels of participation among various ethnic groups; the results revealed that European-American students participated more in ECA than Hispanic-American students. Peguero (2010) looked at participation rates of Latino immigrant students compared to U.S. born Latinos, and found that Latino immigrant students are less likely to participate in ECA. Harrison and Narayan’s (2003) study examined the relationship between family issues and the student’s ability to participate; participation rates for students with a single parent with limited resources, as compared to those students with two parents with more support, were quite different.

Several studies examined the role of gender in ECA participation, and found that the kinds of activities that boys and girls participate in are different (e.g., Gadbois & Bowker, 2007; Chapin, 1998). Research also found that participation rates for female students are higher than those for male students in all areas except sports (Gadbois & Bowker, 2007; Fullarton, 2002). Mahoney and Cairns (1997) reported that “48% of boys and 65% of girls” participated in more than one activity from grade 9 through 12; and for both genders, participation rates were consistently lower for at-risk students (p.244). Mahoney et al. (2003) found that consistent participation in ECA was positively linked to educational status for boys and girls; they also
found that there were few gender differences; girls showed more consistent participation than boys did, and for boys, participation was strongly associated with high educational aspirations compared with girls. The influences of SES and gender on the rate of participation and the kinds of activities have been widely analyzed. Studies showed that participants with diverse backgrounds can lead to different levels of participation and outcomes.

The following studies show that particular social contexts can affect students’ selection of certain activities (Fetner & Kush, 2008; Linville & Huebner, 2005; Clark, 2009). Fetner and Kush’s (2008) study showed that an ECA program called Gay-Straight Alliance provided a safe space and social support for students with diverse sexual orientations. Clark (2009) found that it was primarily parents who made the physical activity choices for girls aged 10 to 13 because their parents believed that it was the right thing. Linville and Huebner (2005) explained that ECA such as church activities gave ethnically diverse high school students a safe place to go during the after-school hours. These studies indicated that participation in ECA may be related to participants’ personal identities, and particular social contexts.

Research has looked at the diversity of the student body in ECA and found differences in ECA participation (Rubin, Wing, Noguera, Fuentes, Liou, Rodriguez & McCready, 2006; Brown & Evans, 2002). A study by Rubin et al. (2006) looked at participation of students in an urban high school with a diverse student body. Survey data from the school showed that ECA in that school were racially segregated. Out of the seventy-three ECA-clubs (i.e., athletic, cultural, art, social), only two were racially mixed; the rest were either predominately students of colour or predominately white students. From the interviews with teachers/faculty advisors of the ECA, Rubin et al. (2006) found that they were “frustrated with finding ways to challenge racial segregation” (p.76). One faculty advisor was able to increase the participation rate of
diverse students in his club through networking with them outside of the clubs, an action that motivated them to participate. Rubin et al. (2006) found that the majority of the ECA faculty advisors either were reluctant or unsure of how to break down the barriers that kept students from participating.

This literature review shows that there have been few scholarly enquiries into how students are engaged in the leadership, relationships, and skills development components of ECA. Much of the research attention has focused on the importance of ECA participation and benefits more than how students engage with ECA. In my next section, I will focus on the different components of ECA, starting with relationships.

**Relationships**

Various studies reported that participation helped students become involved in social relationships with peers and teachers (Mahoney & Stattin, 2000; Mahoney & Cairns, 1997; Marsh, 1992). Zaff, Moore, Papillo and Williams (2003) found that ECA provide students opportunities for mentoring relationships and working with others toward a common goal that could lead to greater civic engagement.

In a review literature article, Rhodes (2004) said that in order to have ECA success with developmental benefits for students, caring relationships are vital in the connection between teachers and students. According to Rhodes (2004), the depth of the teacher-student relationships that are formed can actually impact students’ decisions to continue with ECA. Studies found there are certain qualities in relationships that help create a strong connection among ECA participants (Mahoney, Eccles, & Larson, 2004; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Shosh & Wescoe, 2007; Conrad, 2004). Mahoney et al. (2004) found that supporting relationships characterized by
“warmth, closeness, caring, and mutual respect” where teachers provide guidance and supports to students is critical to ECA (p.119). According to Fredricks and Eccles (2006), athletics is a highly valued skill-related activity in which students can receive positive feedback and feel a sense of mastering skills, and includes the formation of supportive relationships with adults and peers. Researchers found that participation in theatre provided high school students with the ability to build a sense of respect, and trusting relationships (Shosh & Wescoe, 2007; Conrad, 2004).

Skills Development

One of the features of ECA is the promotion of “physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional, and social” skills development (Mahoney et al., 2004, p.119). ECA are places where students can build a range of skills not available in most academic contexts (Fredricks & Eccles, 2006), and such skills “complement” student education (Mahoney et al., 2004, p.123). According to Darling (2005), students participate in ECA because they appreciate the skills they develop.

Some activities, such as sports or music, regularly require long hours of time for practice, sharpening of skills, and coordination with team or band mates, while other ECA are intense and short-lived, and require little time or commitment (Darling, 2005). Heath’s (2001) study showed that dance provides students with “multiple intangible skills” such as patience, observation, problem identification, strategy-building, and the ability to explain through means other than the verbal (p.15). Hooley (2007) found that debates promoted the advancement of critical thinking skills that are improved through conversation. Zaff et al. (2003) found that ECA provide opportunities for students to participate in activities with peers and may result in improved social skills such as learning to work with others and resolving conflicts; they may also gain a positive sense of self-efficacy from the practical skills learned in an activity, such as leadership,
academic, or athletic. For instance, a study in the U.S. by Howie, Lukacs, Pastor, Reuben and Mendola (2010) investigated whether ECA increase social skills and decrease problem behaviours. They found that ECA increased respect for teachers and neighbours, the ability to get along well with peers, conflict resolution, and being able to empathize with other people. Howie et al. (2010) also discovered that students who did not participate in any activity were less likely to have these social skills.

Lipscomb (2005) indicated a significant positive relationship between sports and development of self-confidence and teamwork skills. Shulruf, Tumen and Tolley’s (2008) research on team sports showed that students build interpersonal skills and develop relationships with others that positively impact student achievement and literacy scores. Theatre provided students with social skills such as cooperation and teamwork (Shosh & Wescoe, 2007), and group building (Conrad, 2004).

Leadership

One of the components of ECA is leadership. Little research has been conducted into ECA and student leadership. In this study leadership is defined as a critical practice based on dialogue and reflection that involves many individuals in the construction of knowledge (Foster, 1989), along with the practice of inclusive leadership (Ryan, 2006). Ryan (2006) explained: “For leadership to be inclusive, everyone needs to have the opportunity to influence what happens in organizations” (p.100).

Some studies consider the quality and effectiveness of ECA leadership by looking at how adult leaders support students in developing skills, providing a safe environment and ensuring that the activities stay on track (Guest & McRee, 2009; Mahoney et al., 2004; Rhodes, 2004).
Mahoney et al. (2004) found that effective adult leaders are skilled individuals that allow students to experience ownership and leadership over the activity. Mahoney et al.’s (2004) recommendation, which talks about the inclusionary development of ECA, also discusses the need to recognize individual differences that will contribute to a more inclusive view of leadership.

Several studies focus on leadership development in ECA where participants together deal with social issues, learn to support each other, become exposed to others’ diverse views (Conrad, 2004), and exercise community-building based on friendship and respect (Vadeboncoeur, 2006; Honig & McDonald, 2005). Leadership is presented in a study by Shosh and Wescoe (2007) where students are collaboratively involved in theatre activities that provide them unique opportunities to lead and support each other and create a sense of team spirit. Further, Mahoney et al. (2004) recommended that research needs to assess why and how some ECA can provide positive features such as leadership, supportive relationships and opportunities for belonging.

**Limitations of ECA Studies and Recommendations**

The common limitation in ECA studies is the lack of information on the quality of students’ involvement in ECA, such as attendance, skill development, relationships (e.g., Fredricks & Eccels, 2008; Darling, 2005). Researchers point to the limitation of the cross-sectional method which is generally used extensively in ECA research; most researchers recommend the use of the longitudinal method (e.g., Bloomfield & Barber, 2009; Gilman, Meyers & Perez, 2004). Another limitation often mentioned by researchers is data collection from participants’ self-reports; the validity of these reports is often questionable (e.g., Linville & Huebner, 2005; Gilman et al., 2004). Research offers recommendations in order to have a more valid study such as the use of alternative data collection from parents, teachers, and peers to better understand the effect of
ECA (Darling, 2005). These recommendations tend to address methodological limitations in ECA. With regard to my study, I take these recommendations, particularly by Darling (2005), into account in my data collections as well as adding teacher participants and observations to students’ interviews for data collection.

Holland and Andre (1987) suggested that ECA research should always employ a specific research paradigm and should focus on participation analysis, rather than simply assuming that participation has positive outcomes. The next section provides a brief overview of theoretical approaches used by researchers to explain students’ involvement in ECA and to explore the contributions that ECA make to the student participants.

**Theoretical Frameworks Used in ECA Studies**

The developmental perspective that underpins ECA research considers extracurricular activities as contexts that support student development (e.g., behavioural, emotional) which result from the interactions of individuals and their social context (Fredricks & Eccles, 2008; Darling, 2005; Mahoney et al., 2003). For instance, Darling (2005) found that ECA participation allowed high school youths to integrate with their social environment, as well as obtain negotiation and cooperation skills.

While research agrees on the developmental importance of ECA, a key question has remained unanswered: what experiences do youths actually have in ECA that result in student engagement? Even though students’ participatory experiences are central to understanding the origin of the engagement, not enough insight has been provided about students’ experiences in ECA. In spite of this research gap, there is evidence to suggest that ECA from the sociocultural
perspective shows that the learning that occurred in ECA in turn results in student engagement (Vadeboncoeur, 2006; Honig & McDonald, 2005; Shosh & Wescoe, 2007).

Social constructivist theory talks about a cooperative learning environment where interactions among teacher and student in the co-construction of knowledge are essential. In a review of 133 studies that focus on ECA for high school students, Vadeboncoeur (2006) found that “learning forms the leading edge of development” through social and discursive practices that encourage dialogue, acknowledge multiple perspectives, explore the roles of the students within the world, and lead to expansion of shared cognition (p. 264). In another review of 108 studies related to after–school programs, Honig and McDonald (2005) found that students learn as co-constructors of knowledge when they are actively involved with others in ECA through a process of collaboration and inquiry. Learning can thus be defined as “a social process – rather than an individual endeavour” and the confidence and skills that come from competence in these activities are transferable to academic engagement or more abstract learning (Honig & McDonald, 2005, p.8). These studies reveal that ECA brings together youths and contributes to their social engagement and expansion of shared cognition that have a positive impact on academic skills and personality. Similarly, Shosh and Wescoe (2007) reported that theatre provided high school students a context for learning. Shosh and Wescoe (2007) claimed it generated “educative experiences” within which students themselves developed a sense of respect and created an environment through dialogue and collaboration (p.42). In addition, theatre provided students with skills in leadership and teamwork that are transferable to academic skills.

Researchers explored how ECA fits within the praxis of critical pedagogy, based on the performing and participatory role of ECA as a way to engage youths in democratic practices
(Slee, 2009; Conrad, 2004). From a critical pedagogy perspective, the study by Slee (2009) examined the impacts of camps as spaces for dialogue in understanding social justice including fairness, caring, and sharing. Slee (2009) found that camp can engage youths in doing research on topics such as social justice. Conrad (2004) claimed that theatre creates a potential space that engages youths through dialogue that collectively examines participants’ experiences toward what the youth at-risk label means. Conrad’s (2004) study shows that the processes of theatre begin with a series of activities for group building, trust building, and skill development, which then move on to an exploration of themes through brainstorming, discussion, then into planning. Similarly, Staggers, Garcia and Nagelhout (2008) conducted research that discovered that team building exercises, as initial activities, can advance skills, and more importantly team building involves collaboration and dialogic relationships.

These theoretical approaches used by researchers enrich our understanding of the impact and importance of ECA because they demonstrate the potential ECA has to improve the engagement of students with school. However, most earlier research does not focus intensively on students’ experiences in ECA and what engagement means to them. In my qualitative study, I attempt to gain an in-depth understanding of students’ experiences in ECA from their own points of view and how these experiences formed their engagement with the clubs. In addition, the study looked at how students are engaged with relationships, leadership, and skills development in ECA.

The next section of literature review begins with an overview of student engagement definitions. It is followed by outlines of supportive elements for student engagement, how it is generated through shared spaces, and its constructs (e.g., emotional, behavioural, cognitive).
Student Engagement Definitions

Scholars offer various ways to define student engagement. For instance, student engagement is defined in terms of students’ interests and enjoyments (Shernoff, Csikszentmihalyi, Shneider & Shernoff, 2003). Student engagement is also frequently used to define students’ willingness to participate in routine school activities, attend class, do school work, and their tendency to stay on task (Chapman, 2003; Klem & Connell, 2004). Student engagement is sometimes equated with student motivation in terms of their goals and values (Ainley, 2004). In the context of students’ academic performance, a main point in defining student engagement is the idea of “active involvement, commitment, and concentrated attention”, which involves “psychological investment in and effort directed toward learning, understanding, or mastering the knowledge, skills, or crafts” (Newmann, Wehlage & Lamborn, 1992, p.11-12). According to Newman et al. (1992), student engagement derives from students’ behaviour and their attempts to learn. These definitions imply that the responsibility to be engaged rests solely with students. The idea of students and teachers working together to create engagement is not part of these definitions.

The literature highlights the complexity of student engagement, which involves more than just the psychological or behavioural characteristics of students. Some scholars advocate that school has as significant role to play in improving student engagement as students do; as Kuh (2009) puts it, “engagement is a two-way street. Both institutions and students have roles to play in creating the conditions for engagement and for taking advantage of engagement opportunities” (p.697). Engagement embraces the importance of relationships students have with peers, teachers, and community members (Portelli, 2005).

A study by Smith, Butler-Kisber, LaRocque, Portelli, Shields, Sparkes and Vibert (1998) describes, in the analysis of the data, student engagement as a concept that is: inclusive, a matter
of philosophy and will, situated on a continuum, multi-faceted, a means of stimulating active learning, linked to friendship, and a means of instilling a sense of promise. This definition by Smith et al. (1998) suggests that engagement is a result of the relationships among school members and community. Smith et al.’s (1998) study extends the notion of engagement beyond the classroom and students’ interests. Their study found that engagement generates a shared sense of belonging and ownership, requires inclusion of students and their active involvement with the context and the activities, includes student choice and independence, develops relationships and fosters connectedness, and reaching further out to embrace the wider community.

Scholars strongly recommend that a study of student engagement needed to address what engagement actually means. Mainstream research on student engagement, according to Portelli (2005), promotes a conception of engagement as just a “neutral or technical process”, and fails to fully present the complexity of the concept because it does not enquire into the “meaning and purpose of engagement” (p.76). McMahon and Portelli (2004) argue that engagement is not simply a set of strategies by teachers to motivate students nor is it equated with students’ behaviours; student engagement is instead generated through the interactions of students and teachers, rather than “something that is either the responsibility of students, or something teachers do to students” (p.70). Some researchers suggest that it is vital to define the meaning and purpose of student engagement rather than just assuming that it has a universal definition and that its meaning and purpose is shared (Portelli, 2005; McMahon & Portelli, 2004; Vibert & Shields, 2003). Portelli (2005) stated that student engagement happens through empowerment and collaboration and leads to a greater sense of belonging and ownership for students. According to McMahon and Portelli (2004), engagement is participatory and dialogic.
These conceptions of engagement will allow me to explore interactions among the students who participate in ECA. This research considers concepts of student engagement that are derived from Smith et al. (1998), McMahon and Portelli (2004), and Portelli (2005). The conception of student engagement in this study is based on the interactions of the ECA club members through dialogue, empowerment, collaboration, community building and co-construction of knowledge. This leads to a greater sense of belonging and ownership among the students. This conception of engagement gives me a wider lens to look at how students are engaged with various clubs.

**Supportive Elements for Student Engagement**

A study by Sharkey, You and Schnoebelen (2008) of a large sample of high school students found that caring teacher-student relationships can promote student engagement. Student engagement occurs through relationships among school members based on understanding, respect, collaboration, and mutual concern (McMahon & Portelli, 2004; Fielding, 2004; Smith et al., 1998). A national study of 110 schools in 26 states in U.S. by Yazzie-Mintz (2006) found that “engagement is about relationships” (p.1). Students are more satisfied and perform better when they have a positive relationship with other students and school members and these students are more engaged academically (Yazzie-Mintz, 2006). In the Final Report by the Community Health Systems Resource Group: The Hospital for Sick Children (2005) reported that the most common reason given by students who did not complete secondary school was due to a lack of relationships and negative interactions with teachers.

Research also indicates that when students realize that their opinions and perspectives are valued, they will become engaged (Bragg, 2007). The idea of being in an inclusive relationship is crucial to student engagement (McMahon & Portelli, 2004). According to Ryan (2006), all
relationships must aim for inclusion; for students to be included, they need to share their points of view on issues and concerns that affect them. Allowing students to offer input will give teachers and administrators’ insights into learning and the conditions of learning from the students’ point of views, as well as creating feelings of membership that promote collaborative relationships (Rudduck, 2007). Researchers acknowledge the importance of student voice for sustaining student and teacher partnerships as the main approach in developing relationships (e.g., Smith et al., 1998; Rudduck, 2007; Fielding, 2004). Advocates of student voice such as Rudduck (2007) and Cook-Sather (2006) believe that this will give students a stronger sense of ownership of their schooling.

How Student Engagement Is Generated Through Shared Spaces

Student engagement is created through the interaction between students and teacher together in a shared space (Rudduck, 2007; Bragg, 2007; Fielding, 2004; McMahon & Portelli, 2004; Smith et al., 1998). Shared spaces are defined as places that empower students along with teachers to be co-constructors of knowledge through dialogue, and problem-posing which brings a strong sense of ownership for the students (McMahon & Portelli, 2004; Fielding, 2004; Bragg, 2007; Smith et al., 1998). For shared spaces to happen, however, there needs to be an important shift in the status of students from one that is “tightly hierarchical to one that is more collaborative…” (Rudduck, 2007, p.587)

Consistent with Rudduck’s (2007) idea of the importance of student empowerment and collaborative relationships that spring from shared spaces, a study of 315 primary-school children by Bragg (2007) found that student engagement occurred through a wide range of activities (e.g., peer tutoring, and students on governing bodies) that promote dialogue about things that concern students, teachers, and the school community. A study by McMahon, Parnes,
Keys and Viola (2008) found that school contextual factors and students’ sense of school belonging impacted their psychological and academic outcomes. Students who are involved more in school activities and social gatherings with teacher support have greater sense of belongingness (McMahon et al., 2008, p.394). According to these researchers, shared spaces can bring students and teachers together as co-constructors of knowledge through dialogue, collaboration, and mutual concern.

**Student Engagement as Multidimensional Constructs**

In their broad review of student engagement literature, Fredricks, Blumenfeld and Paris (2004) found that engagement is manifested in three interrelated constructs: behavioural, emotional, and cognitive. Behavioural engagement is about the participation of students in academic and social activities; emotional engagement is shown by positive and negative reactions to teachers and classmates and influences students’ willingness to do tasks and bond with a school; cognitive engagement is based on the idea of investment and is manifested in a student’s desire to gain knowledge (Fredricks et al., 2004).

In the following studies, behavioural engagement relates to homework completion, attendance, grades, and time spent on tasks (Newmann et al., 1992; Sharkey et al., 2008; Schwartz, Gorman, Nakamoto & McKay, 2006), and student involvement in social and community activities (Yazzie-Mintz, 2006). Cognitive and emotional are less observable and relate to students’ internal feelings and desires. Cognitive engagement relates to student active learning and efforts (Smith et al., 1998; Yazzie-Mintz, 2006), future aspirations, and problem solving (Reschly, Huebner, Appleton & Antaramian, 2008), whereas emotional engagement refers to students’ feeling of connectedness, social acceptance and bonding with school (Yazzie-Mintz, 2006; Sharkey et al., 2008; Smith et al., 1998). A qualitative study by Smyth and Fasoli
(2007) found that students’ perspectives reflect their feelings, attachments, and the meanings that they attribute to themselves and their relationships with their school community.

This study uses Fredricks et al. (2004) multidimensional constructs of engagement - behavioural, emotional, and cognitive - which are associated with the complexity of students’ involvements in ECA and their relationships with other participants. For instances, I look at how students are emotionally engaged in relationships, and how behaviourally students are engaged in skills development. This research looks at the feelings of happiness and interest - the positive sides of students’ emotions - and describes their sense of belonging and attachment with the club and peers, in contrast to negative feelings such as being sad and bored that affect their relationships with peers, the club attendance, and doing the club tasks. Cognitive engagement underlies students’ desires to gain knowledge and skills, and their willingness to be involved in leadership. Students’ desires to problem solve, do independent work, and share knowledge demonstrates their cognitive engagement in the club activities.

In the next section, the theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the research will be presented. The theoretical framework will help me to investigate how participants interact with each other in ECA. The conceptual framework is employed to guide the research and interview questions, and is used in the analysis of data and the research results. This research proposes to reveal how students are engaged in ECA and to uncover what supports or hinders student engagement. This research also looks at the role of individual teachers in ECA and how they interact with students in planning tasks and collaborative relationships.
Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this research is based on the philosophical principles of social constructivism that says human beings’ understanding and knowledge are created in interactions among individuals through dialogue, and is aimed at the reconstruction of knowledge (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Using social constructivism as a theoretical framework, I draw on Vygotsky’s (1962) ideas based on a cooperative learning environment where students become active investigators. A cooperative learning environment allows students to work with each other and also with teachers where interacting becomes an integral part of learning (Powell & Kalina, 2009; Adams, 2006). The discursive nature of social constructivism engages learners and teachers as co-constructors of their knowledge (Powell & Kalina, 2009), and meaningful learning occurs when individuals are actively engaged in activities creating relationships that will directly affect what they learn (Adams, 2006). Teachers are supporters of students; students work in collaboration with teachers to construct shared meanings (Adams, 2006).

I attempt to explore how students become engaged in ECA in today’s diverse schools. In this qualitative research, I look at how students are engaged with components of ECA – relationships, leadership, and skills development. A social constructivist perspective helps me to go beyond the individual student and focus on the interactions among the clubs’ members and to see how students are engaged. This idea is consistent with my focus on student engagement, which is based on the interactions of students and teachers through dialogue, collaboration, empowerment, community building and co-construction of knowledge.

For the purpose of this research, the theoretical framework includes inclusive leadership theory to understand how students are engaged with leadership. Because there are students with diverse backgrounds in the clubs, an inclusive perspective of leadership allows me to understand
and analyze their experiences with leadership (e.g., students’ decisions to participate in leadership, the purpose of such participation, and the opportunities for participation). Inclusive leadership is not about “positions or individuals who perform certain tasks but as a collective process in which everyone is included or fairly represented” (Ryan, 2006, P.17).

The social constructivist theory that focuses on interactions of clubs’ members along with the inclusive leadership theory are the theoretical framework of this study that explores student engagement with the ECA-clubs.

**Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework is a central guide to my research. The aim of the research is to understand how students are engaged in ECA. This involves exploring students’ experiences in ECA, including their relationships, leadership, and skills development. The examination of social interactions among the clubs’ members can help us to better understand the hindrances and supports of student engagement. In my interview with students, the conceptual framework helped me focus on the concepts that answer the research inquiry, such as relationships, leadership and skills development.

Diagram 1 presents the conceptual framework of this research that consists of a set of concepts that underlie the research process and data collection. The main concept is student engagement in ECA; the remaining concepts describe the fundamental components of ECA. The other concepts deal with supports, barriers, and the impacts of student engagement in ECA, and the reasons why students engage in activities.
Summary

The literature review consists of two main topics: extracurricular activities and student engagement. There is a great deal of research pointing to the important value of ECA for students’ physical, behavioural, intellectual, social, and emotional development. Participation of students is strongly recommended in ECA research. Research has found important factors that
can impact participation such as gender, ethnicity, and SES. Other variables that impact student participation in ECA are the quality of activity leadership, interpersonal relationships in activities, school size, and a requirement of a minimum GPA. Research provides recommendations to overcome barriers to make ECA participation possible for students. These approaches emphasize the benefits of participation in ECA that result in student engagement in schools. In contrast, other researchers say that merely focusing on the importance of participation will limit the investigation and understanding of student engagement in ECA.

The other main topic in the literature review is student engagement. The literature review indicates there is not a universal definition of student engagement among scholars. Many scholars recommend that the purpose of engagement needs to be addressed in the study of student engagement. Studies find that student engagement happens through inclusive relationships and a shared space that empower students along with teachers to be co-constructors of knowledge through dialogue and collaboration. The research shows that indicators of student engagement are multidimensional constructs: behavioural, emotional and cognitive.

The literature review has discussed key components of ECA that include leadership, relationships and skills development. The conceptual framework represents the relationships between various concepts that are used for this study. The other concepts are supports, hindrances, impact and motivation that affect student engagement with the clubs related to relationships, leadership and skills development.

This literature review assisted me in constructing the study’s conceptual framework. The literature review in both ECA and student engagement contributed to our understanding the research gap and the need for research in this area. As best said by Merriam (1998), the literature review’s function is “to provide the foundation for contributing to knowledge base” (p.50).
Review of the literature provided knowledge regarding designing and conducting this research. The review helped me to construct research and interview questions, and assisted me in data collection and analysis. It also contributed key points to the construction of the conceptual framework.
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study employed qualitative methods because they are well equipped to explore the experiences of those involved in ECA. Qualitative research can help a researcher “to get at the inner experience of participants, to determine how meaning are formed through and in culture, and to discover rather than test variables” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p.12). Merriam (1998) explains that qualitative research focuses on discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspectives of those being studied, adding richer descriptions about the process, context, and participants than a survey and a numerical would present.

The case study methodology seemed to be the most appropriate approach to achieving the purpose of the study. Case study provides the description of the context (Merriam, 1998). The essential characteristics that are shared among qualitative research include qualitative case studies; as Merriam (1998) explained, “the goal of eliciting understanding and meaning, the researcher as primary instrument of data collection and analysis, the use of fieldwork, an inductive orientation to analysis, and finding that richly descriptive” (p.11). A case study design, as Merriam (1998) noted: “The interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation” (p.19).

This study follows by the definition used by Merriam (1998), which explains that a case study is “an intensive, holistic description and analysis of a single entity, phenomenon, or social unit” (p.34). In this case, the “single” was one high school with the club members in both citizenship and sport clubs. A case study is appropriate for this study because it can provide a thorough understanding of students’ experiences in the clubs.
How I Came to Choose Evergreen High School

I initially applied to various school boards and private schools for permission to conduct the research. In early September 2012 I heard there wouldn’t be ECA in the Ontario public schools due to a strike. I began to think that maybe this was not a good time to conduct my research in public schools. However, I applied to several school boards where teachers were not on strike. One board right away said “No”. Another board notified me that they had a high volume of research applications this year and were in the process of reviewing all applications. After a few months, they notified me that they were unable to recommend approval of my proposed research. One board approved my request to conduct my research that fall. But after a few months, they notified me that none of the schools they contacted had agreed to participate in my research project. I began to wonder whether at this point I would be able to do my research.

In the meantime, I consulted with my supervisor and he encouraged me to apply to private schools. I contacted many private schools. Several declined; either it wasn’t possible for them to do it at all or they notified me they would make their decisions to participate or not next year. There were some private schools that were interested in my research. One principal offered to give me his insights on ECA because they did not allow actual research on the students.

Other than the problem of finding a school for my research, I needed a school that would satisfy the objective of my research that involved looking at different ECA and having both genders with diverse backgrounds and students from different grades. For instance, one school seemed interested in my research but it was an all-girls school. Another school was also interested but they didn’t offer ECA, except for a small sports program in the upper grades.
There were no clubs at that school, and their curriculum of academics was integrated with arts and movement – they didn’t feel the need for additional programs after school.

I then looked at schools’ websites to ascertain their ECA programs. One of these was Evergreen High School. It was a unique school. The school’s webpage talked about the several areas of ECA; ECA was a requirement for all their students. Every teacher was participating and supported the clubs. I was very happy to find the school and hoped I could do my research there.

I contacted Evergreen in 2012, and spoke with the head of the school. After I sent him all the information about my study, he informed me that he would share my proposal with his ECA clubs’ leaders and would get back to me in a week. About a week after that, he sent me an email that I should wait for the next school year and he would be in touch with me. I decided to be patient and wait - maybe the door would open. In the first week of May 2013, the head of the school sent an email and scheduled a meeting. Evergreen High School accepted my request and agreed to let me conduct my research study there. I then sent the head of the school all the appendices: the participants’ consent forms, information about my study, interview questions, ethical considerations and observational indicators. The head of the school informed me that he would share my proposal information with his ECA clubs’ leaders. Once the head of the school had talked with his staff, he sent me an email that confirmed my research at Evergreen High School. He wrote that the school feels “that your research will have important outcomes for Evergreen and all schools. I look forward to catching up in mid-August to implement your plan.”

So in the new school year of September 2013, the head of Evergreen introduced me to his colleagues - teachers and the principal – who were willing to work with me on my research. He then asked me to proceed and to contact the volunteer teachers and the principal. This consisted
of three teacher participants and the principal. I sent them emails for appointments; I met them and provided them with the information about my research and myself. One of the teachers then introduced me to two other teachers who ran the school’s Social Justice Club and were willing to participate in the study. This added two more teacher participants to the study. In total there were five teachers along with the principal who participated in my interviews.

**Context**

This section describes Evergreen High School and its students’ participation in the different ECA. It also presents the variety of ECA that is offered by the school.

**Evergreen High School**

Evergreen High School is located in the suburb of a large city in Canada. There are two campuses. One is the elementary school - grades one to six, and the other one is the high school - grades seven to twelve. Evergreen is an independent school. All ECA are free. Students mostly come from upper-middle class professional and business families.

Evergreen High School has 22 teachers; sixty percent were women and forty percent men. The school had two administrators: the school principal and dean of student services. Evergreen High School was established less than ten years ago. Some of the teachers who participated in this study taught at Evergreen Elementary School before joining Evergreen High School. The ratio of teachers to students is one to nine. In the school, there is 100% involvement of teachers in ECA. Evergreen High School has 200 students and the major ethnic backgrounds are: Caucasian, Asian, and South-Asian. The ratio of the students’ genders is about equal. The average students’ academic achievement level is B+. 
Teachers’ offices are shared spaces on the second floor. The principal explains that this is very helpful for teachers to interact with each other at all times so they can discuss and share their concern about their classes and their students. Classes are also on the second floor. The main gathering place for students during their daily life at the school where they can have social relationships with peers and teachers is on the first floor. It is used for meals, events, group work, and socializing. On the first floor, there are administrative offices, a full size double gym, library, and a music room. There is a separate campus for Evergreen Elementary that consist of students grades one to six.

**Participation in Extracurricular Activities**

Evergreen requires that students participate in one of the three areas of ECA: art, sport and citizenship. The school keeps track of this participation and it goes on students’ report card. Students write about the ECA in which they participate; they reflect on it and they set goals. The school wants the students to be involved in arts, sports and citizenship activities. Every student, from grade seven to twelve needs to take part in these activities. They either do it through the school or off-campus facilities. A majority choose to do it through the school. The school allows students to initiate clubs provided they find a club advisor. Many teachers volunteer to be advisors. Each term, the number of clubs in the school changes. At the time of the study, the school had 32 clubs.

**Extracurricular Activities in Evergreen High School**

The whole student body takes part in ECA. Evergreen is able to sustain ECA by offering a lot programs that interest students and involve teachers. The school offers sports, citizenship and arts activities.
Students from grade seven to twelve have many opportunities to participate in sports-related ECA. The School offers a broad range of school-based sport ECA. It also has the use of off campus facilities within the local community including: squash, skating, weight training and fitness, and curling. There are several sport clubs for both boys and girls. Clubs are for both junior and senior students in grade seven and eight called under fourteen year old (U/14). For the senior students, grades nine to twelve, the clubs are called under twenty year old (U/20). Other clubs include cross-country, basketball, curling, volleyball, hockey, badminton, ball hockey, softball, track and field, and soccer. Sport - ECA also offers clubs in intramurals, dance, and a variety of activities.

Evergreen High School offers several citizenship-ECA such as the Global Amnesty Club, and Social Justice Club. At Evergreen, there are several Art- ECA in drama, music and visual arts for students in grade seven to grade twelve. Students learn how to work cooperatively with peers in group activities or participate in solo activities.

Participants

I contacted the volunteer teacher participants and the principal through email that contained the letter of introduction, and a letter of consent for the participation, interview, and observation of their clubs. These letters also confirmed the purpose of the research study, the expectations of the participants, and ethical considerations related to the study - (See Appendices: E, D, A-1, and A-2). After the letter of consent was received, the date for interviews was arranged with them.

Teachers who decided to participate in the study were the clubs’ leaders in sport and citizenship clubs. In the sport, there were two clubs; the first club was the junior students under fourteen year old U/14 Volleyball Club, and the other one was with the students under twenty
year old U/20 Volleyball Club. In each of the volleyball clubs there was a teacher who was the club’s leader.

In the citizenship club, there were also two clubs: one was the Global Amnesty Club and the other one was the Social Justice Club. The teacher who led the Global Amnesty Club also joined two other teachers to become leaders of the Social Justice Club. In my first visit to the clubs, after teachers introduced me to the students, I further introduced myself and explained my research interests to the clubs and welcomed them to voluntarily participate in interviews and observations.

I provided the teachers with the student consent forms which needed to be signed by the parents of the student and the student themselves if they wanted to participate (See Appendix: A-3). After the volunteer students brought back the letter of consent form, a date and time for the interview was arranged with them. In total there were ten students who participated in the study. Students were from grade seven to twelve with different ethnic backgrounds, and represented both genders equally.

I interviewed both volleyball coaches. Three students joined me in a focus group interview from the U/20 Club, and two students were interviewed individually from the U/14 Club – see Appendix: B-3 – for the student interview questions. From the Global Amnesty Club, I interviewed the club leader and one student. From the Social Justice Club, I interviewed two leaders and four students. Three students joined me in a focus group interview and one student was interviewed individually – see Appendix: 2 – for the student interview questions. In the next section, the school principal provides information about the culture of running ECA at Evergreen. It also consists of the principal’s views on the importance of ECA for both students and teachers, and discusses supports for student participation in ECA.
School Leadership and Extracurricular Activities

Principal Richardson has been the principal of Evergreen High School for ten years. At Evergreen, all students need to participate in ECA. The principal said:

It [ECA] is a requirement that they [students] participate in the three areas of art, sport and citizenship. We track it, it goes on the report card, they write about it, they reflect and they set goals. So everybody will participate. If somebody does something extensive outside of school, that’s welcome too.

According to Ms. Richardson, all students take part in ECA; whatever their grades are, they are allowed to join. The principal added:

Having said that, if they have to go for league sports, teachers will send an email to other teachers – ‘Johnnie is going on the sports, all their names are there, if there’s any student about whom you have concern, let us know.’ The teachers will make sure that the student finishes the work prior to going on the sport.

The school principal said at Evergreen students can initiate clubs (e.g., Chess Club, Journalism Club, Science Club). “Student-run” clubs are those initiated by students; students and teacher advisors with the same interests can join. According to her, parents have “believed in it [ECA] and they support their children’s participation. They drop them at 7:15 in the morning for sports practice, and pick them up at 4:30 so that they can stay. In fact, they want more and more ECA.” The principal added “students get pleasure from taking part in activities that play to their strengths.” Students “learned they have the power of voice – they are able to communicate their ideas and express themselves.” According to her, in ECA teachers and students build relationships and students’ “confidence goes up”. In the next section, detailed descriptions of the participants in both sport and citizenship clubs and the nature of their involvement are presented.
Description of Participants in Extracurricular Activities

This section presents the descriptions of all research participants - both the clubs’ leaders and students - in the sport and citizenship clubs. The information about students’ background was gathered from each student individually in the questionnaire.

Teachers in the study were typical teachers in the school. They had taught different subjects for different grades and had several years of teaching experiences. Among them, they had many years of leading clubs at Evergreen. The clubs, particularly sports, had a low ratio club leader to student participants as compared to the ratio of teachers and students for the entire school, which was one to nine. However, in the Global Amnesty Club, the ratio was almost the same as the school. Often there were over thirty students in the Social Justice Club; the class was large and there were three club leaders, Jane, Linda, and Flora. The ratio was close to the teacher and student ratio at the school.

U/14 and U/20 Volleyball Clubs were just like any other sport clubs, including cross-country, basketball, curling, volleyball, hockey, badminton, ball hockey, softball, track and field, and soccer. Some students were first time players and some were veterans. Both the Global Amnesty Club and Social Justice Club were among different citizenship clubs such as Green Club, Debate club, Journalism Club. The Social Justice Club was a favourite of many students.

Participants in the study were students who attended different clubs and were interested in trying as many possible activities in the three areas of extracurricular at Evergreen. They all said they were doing well in their schoolwork. None were failing or extraordinary in their academic work. Participants included four girls and six boys from grades seven to twelve. Every student had been in different clubs in that term or in previous years and had participated
in areas of sport, art, and citizenship. Higher grade students had more experiences with clubs than the younger ones. Years of experiences in the clubs differed among participants in some clubs.

Adam was in grade ten and it was his first year in the Volleyball Club; from grade seven on he was in the Social Justice and Green Club. Alex and Kevin, two students in U/14 Volleyball Club, were first timers in the club. This was Rose’s first time in the Social Justice Club, but she had been in other clubs in previous years. It was Sara's first time in the Social Justice Club. This was Kim’s first time in the Global Amnesty Club.

Some students also attended a particular club for several years. Naturally, they had more skills and familiarity with many clubs’ activities than the new students. Experienced students were interested in advancing their skills. Such was the case for Cam, a grade eleven student in U/20; it was his third year in Volleyball. Both Christina and Ron were in their third year in the Social Justice Club. Table 1 below presents information regarding the research participants.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clubs</th>
<th>Club Leader</th>
<th>Students</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Years Of Experience With The Club</th>
<th>Number Of ECA Involved in Fall 2013</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U/20 VOLLEYBALL CLUB</td>
<td>Amy Wilson</td>
<td>Adam</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1st year</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>David</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1st year</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cam</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3rd year</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U/14 VOLLEYBALL CLUB</td>
<td>Jack Smith</td>
<td>Alex</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1st year</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Kevin</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1st year</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GLOBAL AMNESTY CLUB</td>
<td>Flora Sanchez</td>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1st year</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOCIAL JUSTICE CLUB</td>
<td>Linda Carter</td>
<td>Sara</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1st year</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1st year</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Christina</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3rd year</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ron</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3rd year</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The U/20 Volleyball Club Participants

Amy Wilson is the under twenty U/20 Volleyball Club coach and she has been teaching for five years in this school. She teaches Physical Education and, is the athletic director and oversees the whole sports program at Evergreen High School. Every school year she has run the sports clubs and taught three to four clubs. She coaches junior and senior frisbee, senior football, and senior boys’ volleyball; in the winter, she runs the girls’ volleyball club. In the spring, she coaches handball and hockey. She had done a lot of coaching for other school sports teams such as organizing community leagues for different schools.

Three students from the U/20 Club participated in this study: Adam, David, and Cam. Adam is fifteen years old and in grade ten. He has participated in different ECA since grade seven, including Social Justice and Green Club and this is his first year in the Volleyball Club. Adam is sometimes a little behind in his school work as he usually finishes it at lunch time. David is fifteen years old and in grade eleven and he is doing well in his schoolwork. This is his first year in volleyball but he has been in the Badminton Club every year. Both Adam and David expected to improve their volleyball skills and learn teamwork, but mostly to have fun. Cam is sixteen years old and in grade eleven and doing very well in his schoolwork. He likes to take part in sport clubs. He has played in the advanced Basketball Club and expects to widen his knowledge in volleyball and be a leader in the sport. This has been his third year in this club, and he knows most of his club members and they are his friends. David and Adam have an Asian background and Cam has a South American background.
The U/14 Volleyball Club Participants

Jack Smith coached the under fourteen U/14 Volleyball Club. He has been coaching volleyball for several years. He had also led different clubs (e.g., guitar club, academic games). Jack has been teaching art for over fifteen years at this school.

Two students from the U/14 Club participated in this study: Alex and Kevin. Both students are thirteen years old and in grade eight. Alex is doing quite well with his school work. His expectation is to develop skills and make new friends in the Volleyball Club. He is in the Math Club this year too. Kevin is doing well with his school-work and he has participated in Ultimate Frisbee and the Debate Club. Kevin wants to improve his volleyball skills and learn teamwork. Both students have an Asian background.

The Global Amnesty Club Participants

From the Global Amnesty Club, I interviewed the club leader and one student. Flora Sanchez was the Global Amnesty Club’s leader and also co-advisor to the Social Justice Club. She was a senior teacher at the school with over 25 years of teaching experience: she taught math, science, and Spanish. She has been doing ECA for 15 years. In the Global Amnesty Club, another teacher assisted her in the meetings. Two other teachers helped her with the Social Justice Club.

One student from this club participated in the study. Kim was a Caucasian fourteen year old in grade nine. She was doing well with her school work and it was her own idea to participate in the Global Amnesty Club and this year was her first time in this club. She had participated in other ECA such as Cross Country, Debate Team, and a school play. She was in them to learn different skills and have fun with friends. In this club, she was expecting to learn teamwork,
leadership and new skills, as well as learn about global issues. She has been at Evergreen since grade one.

**The Social Justice Club Participants**

Linda Carter and Jane Walker were the leaders of the Social Justice Club, along with Flora Sanchez who was the co-advisor and assisted them in running the club. Linda has been teaching at Evergreen High School for fifteen years, and she led the club for five years. Jane was at the school for twelve years and a teacher for over fourteen years. In the past, they have taught everything from grade one to ten. At Evergreen High School, for the last few years Jane has been teaching a combination of different subjects in humanities and computers.

Sara was fifteen years old, in grade ten and doing well in school; her family background was South American. It was her decision to participate in the club; it was good for her curriculum vita and hours of volunteering work. Last year she was in the Green Club and wanted to be with her friends and do it again this year. Since elementary school, Sara has been in many different clubs, such as: Props club (Duct Tape Brigade), Literacy and Science. She expected to develop skills that she can apply in her school work and in the future.

Rose was twelve years old from a Middle-Eastern background, was in grade seven and doing well in her schoolwork. It was her idea to join the club. As well, this year she was in other clubs: Frisbee and Basketball Teams, and Duct Tape Brigade. Her parents were very happy with her decisions. Rose wanted to develop teamwork skills and meet new people.

Christina was thirteen, in grade nine, and she was doing very well in her school work. Her family background was European. It was her idea to join the club. This is her third year in this club. She participated in different clubs in the past and this year she was in the Dance club,
Duct Tape Brigade, Peer Tutors, Chess Club. She expected to learn skills, have fun, and meet new people. She enjoyed the club because it gave her an opportunity to help others, and develop social skills.

Ron was seventeen and was in grade twelve. He was of East-Indian background and has lived in Ghana. He was doing well with his school work and it was his idea to join the club. This year was his third year in the club. He had done other ECA in the past; this year he was taking Cross Country, Chess Club, and Ping pong. He expected to develop new skills and engage in issues of global importance. He was the president of the Student Council. He was also teaching math and English (grade two) to kids in a Tutorial Learning Center every Friday. He was also a volunteer at a Swabbing clinic (Canadian Blood Services).

Data Collection Methods

Interviews and Observations

The research took place from the second week of September to the third week of December 2013. Along with the interviews of teachers/clubs’ leaders, the principal participated in an interview in the first week of November. The principal’s interview questions were designed to get a sense of what place ECA has in the overall school culture – see Appendix 2. This interview provided a rich detailed description of the school, as well as the school leadership views and expectations of ECA - see Appendix B-1. The interview took place in the principal’s office and it was about forty minutes. The semi-structured interview covered a wide range of topics. Merriam (1998) stated that a semi-structure interview allows the researcher “to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic” (p.74).
I used a qualitative approach because it allowed me to explore students’ experiences in the clubs and how students were engaged with clubs. It was important for me to understand what the participants thought of their involvement with club activities. The interview questions therefore pointed directly to the major research inquiries. Students were invited to expand on their answers from their previous experiences or recall something that had significant meaning for them. Each participant explained their experiences with present and past clubs. Recollections of students experiences in the past added rich data to help explain present data.

Interviews with the teachers/clubs’ leaders took place individually at the school in their non-instructional time. Teachers participated in the interviews at different times depending on their availability; two of the interviews were in the last week of November, and three others were in the second and third weeks of December. As in the principal’s interview, the teachers’ interviews were semi-structured and covered a wide range of topics that were designed to probe their insights into students’ experiences and engagement with the clubs - see Appendix B-2. The interviews were planned to take less than forty-five minutes each.

Both U/14 and U/20 Clubs practices were at the same time and shared the court with each other. It worked out perfectly for me. The practice sessions were 7:15 to 8:00 am for both clubs on Tuesday and Thursday from September to December. Three teachers who were the leaders of two citizenship clubs – Global Amnesty Club and Social Justice Club - were interviewed. The Global Amnesty Club met every Monday at lunch time 11:55am to 12:40 pm, and the Social Justice Club ran from 3:20 to 4:30 pm every Tuesday.

The interviews with the teachers were designed to find out their backgrounds including their reasons for choosing sport - ECA, and their expectations about what the club would accomplish for the students, and their leadership roles. I also wanted to learn what they had
witnessed in regards to student engagement in their clubs – see Appendix B-2 – for the teacher interview questions.

Initially, I sought to interview each student twice. The first interview was planned to be at the start of the term and second one near the end. I did not want to disrupt the students’ daily school schedule so I decided to change the first interview to a questionnaire. After discussion with the teachers, we felt a questionnaire would be better for the students as it will not interfere with their lunch and personal times at the school. The questionnaire established some information about the participants, and particularly their motivations and expectations for participation in the clubs - see Appendix B-3.1. Interviews with the students took place near the end of the term. I interviewed some students individually and some in focus groups - see Appendix B-3.2.

Four students from the Social Justice Club were interviewed. One student was in grade twelve and interviewed individually while the other three students who were in lower grades were interviewed in a focus group. From the U/20 club, three students participated in a focus group interview. In the U/14 club, two students were interviewed individually. There was one student from the Global Amnesty Club who participated in an interview. Arrangement of individual and focus group interviews was based on students’ schedules and their availabilities for participation. The individual interviews took about twenty minutes, and focus group interviews lasted about forty-five minutes. The interviews took place at the school during non-instructional time.

I observed most of the clubs’ sessions. The conceptual framework helped me prepare the interview questions and also the focus of the observations. I used observational indicators that helped me understand how student engagement took place in the clubs - see Appendix C. As
indicated by Corbin and Strauss (2008): “Observations put researchers right where the action is, in a place where they can see what is going on” (p.30). Interviews reflect people’s experiences, opinions, feelings, and knowledge, along with observations that consist of detailed descriptions of activities, participants’ behaviours, actions, interpersonal interactions, and any other process that relates to activities (Patton, 2002, p.4). The observations of the clubs’ research participants were used in conjunction with the interviews to substantiate the findings. Each additional observation, according to Corbin & Strauss, (2008) offers “opportunities to follow up on previously identified concepts as well as to discover the new ones” (p.30). Combining interviews and observations offered the research additional data on both students and the clubs leaders. According to Merriam (1998), knowledge that researchers receive from observations also can be used as “reference points for subsequent interviews” (p.96).

All interviews were audio-taped and then transcribed. Field notes started with notes during my observations. After each session, I added more details to my original observation notes, details that came from my memory to fully recount each club session. Field notes began with time, date, places, and how many students were there and the purpose of the observation which reflects the research question - see Appendix C. Field notes also contained my personal commentaries, reactions, and initial interpretations on such things as the clubs’ environment, participants, activities and clubs’ members interactions and cooperation.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis started with the reading of both the interview transcripts and field notes several times to discover themes, and the focus was, as Merriam (1998) said, “the communication of meaning” in data (p.160). Data analysis was the process “of making sense out of the data”
(Merriam, 1998, p.178). The researcher examined the data in an attempt “to understand the essence of what is being expressed in the raw data” (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p.160).

During the few months of observations, I looked at how students engaged with the clubs and in particular with skills, relationships, leadership development, supports, barriers, motivations and impact related to student engagement. Field notes were useful during the data analysis because they refreshed my mind about the days I was there. I connected the field notes from my own observations with the data that I had gained from interviews. Field notes included just a word, or a short sentence, and often very short paragraphs after each club session. When I started observations, I wasn’t quite sure about the function of my notes – would they be useful at some point for me? In fact, field notes helped me at the end of the study in the data analysis to recall my observations and relate them to participants’ discussions in interviews. Field notes also helped me in interviews to recall the participants’ behaviours or any decisions the participants took part in.

Analysis included different data sources: students’ interviews, club leaders’ interviews, and my observations. This combination of data from three sources was useful in establishing the accuracy of the findings, comparison and commonalities of findings. In the data analysis, I focused on all participants’ responses in any single question rather than going through all the questions at once to see the similarities and differences. In their responses to any question, I looked for common or new themes that emerged from the data. In the data analysis I noticed sometimes that different participants would mention the same theme in answering in other questions. In analyzing the data, I read the transcripts and notes many times and that allowed me to identify themes. I organized data by hand, made notes, comments, reflections, and found themes to answer the research questions which I noted in the margins of the data.
In data analysis, Microsoft word was used. Themes were manually copied and pasted into several files, each one representing information from participants that related to each research inquiry for the sport and citizenship clubs. Each file was scrutinized for the common themes in all participants’ responses. This approach not only helped me in organizing a vast number of responses related to specific themes, but it also resulted in new themes emerging from participants’ responses. I further organized them in order to answer the research enquiries. I compared the data with the findings in the literature review. For instance, themes under leadership were compared with the inclusive leadership approach introduced by Ryan (2006) to explain and interpret the data (e.g. collaborative decision-making in the clubs, including all students in leadership of the clubs’ activities).

In the data analysis, vast amounts of data from interviews and observations were collected which required coding. However, with a big volume of data from both interviews and observations, it was easy to forget specific details. As Merriam (1998) recommends, “as you collect your data it is important to code it according to whatever scheme is relevant to your study” (p.165). Coding was very useful and assisted me in data analysis, and was used for the categorizing process. Coding consisted of interacting with data and making comparisons among them; as Corbin and Strauss (2008) stated, “digging beneath the surface to discover the hidden treasures contained within data” (p.66). In my data analysis, coding was as Merriam (1998) explained “nothing more than assigning some sort of short hand designation” to various aspects of data so that I could easily “retrieve a specific piece of data” (p.164).

The coding was developed from participants’ discussions: the main purpose for the discussions was to see how students engaged with the clubs. For example, several themes emerged from data: helping each other and sharing skills, taking part in different clubs’ activities
and developing relationships, attending on time, putting effort into the clubs’ activities and academic assignments, being part of a community, and helping other communities. These activities showed motivation. Each relevant participant discussion that centred on these themes was organized through coding and categorised under a motivation heading. As Merriam (1998) suggested, these headings would assist the researcher in answering the research questions (p.183).

In another example, themes emerged from the data, (e.g., being respectful and inclusive, bonding with others, friendships, and relying on each other). These themes were organized through coding of grades, gender, years of participation in the clubs, the nature of the clubs, and then categorised under the heading of relationships. The data analysis process, as Merriam (1998) explained, involved “coding of raw data and the construction of categories that capture relevant characteristics of the document’s content” (p.160).

Credibility and Ethical Considerations

I attempted to increase the credibility of my research by including a range of diverse participants. The clubs’ leaders consisted of teachers with different backgrounds such as years of experiences with the clubs and gender. Student participants’ differences are based on the following: different genders, first time participants and participants with prior club experience, different grades, and different ethnicities. This diversity (e.g., race, gender, grades, age, and experience with the clubs) among students helped the research consider the different experiences in the clubs. The gender percentage of the students interviewed is similar to the girls/boys ratio in the school population. Analyzing experiences of the students from diverse background from several sources, which included the clubs’ leaders, observations, and students themselves can bring strength and consistency to the findings of this research.
In this study, research credibility was approached with a careful attention, as Merriam (1998) suggested, “to a study’s conceptualization and the way in which the data were collected, analyzed, and interpreted, and the way in which the findings are presented” (p.200). The study used a data triangulation approach in data collection that consisted of interviews with students and the clubs’ leaders along with my observations of the clubs. In a qualitative case study, triangulation enhances the credibility of data gathered, through multiple data collection and analysis (Merriam, 1998).

The intention of this case study has not been to generalize findings, but to provide useful knowledge about student engagement in two clubs in a particular context. Throughout the research, the description of both the clubs and student engagement were presented. Merriam (1998) stated: “In qualitative research, a single case or small non-random sample is selected precisely because the researcher wishes to understand the particular in depth, not to find out what is generally true of the many” (p.208).

Prior to conducting the research, the proposal was submitted to the University of Toronto Ethical Review Committee for approval. Participation was voluntary in this study, and teachers and students received consent forms prior to participation. Participants had the right not to answer questions they were not comfortable with. All teachers/clubs’ leaders/principal were provided with letters that outlined the purpose of the study, with information to allow them to make a reasoned decision to participate - see Appendices: A-1, A-2, D, E. The letters explained that all information gathered during the research will be kept anonymous. There were no names, school names, or Board names; pseudonyms were employed. Before involving the students in the study, it was necessary that parents sign a consent form on behalf of their children - see Appendix A-3. Students had the option to not participate (even if parents consented). After the
completion of the study, all participants had access to the study results. All interviews were audio-taped and transcribed along with the field notes from observations are securely stored. The data were not been viewed by anyone except the researcher and the researcher’s supervisor. No mental, physical or emotional harm came to the participants.
CHAPTER 4
SPORT CLUBS – EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The following chapter is arranged in two sections. One describes the U/20 Volleyball Club – the interviews with the club leader and three students. The second part deals with the U/14 Volleyball Club – the interviews with the club’s leader and two students. At the end of each section, key findings are provided. Tables related to the summary map of both students and the club leaders are presented.

THE UNDER TWENTY (U/20) SENIOR VOLLEYBALL CLUB

The U/20 had intense practices each Tuesday and Thursday at 7:15 am to 8:00 am from September to December. They also played in tournaments with other schools each Monday or Wednesday after school. Evergreen High School has a large gymnasium with two volleyball courts where the two clubs U/20 Senior Volleyball Club and U/14 Junior Volleyball Club practised and played.

On one September morning that I observed, students came before daylight. Parents brought students to the school for the morning volleyball club practice - some students were there already and some were just arriving. There were thirteen students in the club; twelve of them were players and one student was helping the coach as an assistant. This season they are scheduled to have ten matches with other schools. Some students did laps around the court, some of them helped the coach put the net up, and others got ready to join the practice. Amy coached the U/20 Senior Volleyball Club. The coach divided them into two teams and started working on their skills. Amy played with the students and alternated sides during practice volleyball games. The coach constantly changed players around and mixed the teams so that students played in
different positions and in different groups during the practice. She instructed them and applauded them constantly.

It began to get brighter outside around 8:00 am. Students were coming to the school and the club was still practising, and everybody still wanted to stay and play. Amy reminded them that the time was over and that it was time for students to go to their classes. All students helped the coach take the net down and collect the balls back in the bins. Everyone went in the dressing rooms to change and quickly returned to say goodbye to the coach before going off to their classes. They were to play a game the next afternoon with another school.

**Motivation**

The coach supported and encouraged students at all times. Coaching means a lot for Amy; she says coaching students is an enjoyable, rewarding and challenging experience. She has a keen interest in sport. She has coached since she was a student. When she was in grade 11, she coached the 9 and 10’s junior volleyball teams. During her undergraduate years, Amy coached some of her university’s clubs and planned intra-murals. Even when she was doing her Masters’ degree, she was involved in different clubs. “I’m passionate about that. I don’t look at it as giving back, I look at it as – I love the sport, love being involved in the sport. I know what that’s given me as I grew up so I want to share that. I’m receiving the benefits of it as well.”

Amy explained that the school involved students in the ownership of their clubs by running clubs based on their interests. She said that the school always attempted to satisfy the needs of diverse students by offering a range of clubs. Every year new clubs are developed (e.g., the Global Amnesty, Ultimate Frisbee, Table Tennis) that encourage them to join. At Evergreen, students initiated the clubs, as Amy explained the process of creating new clubs at Evergreen:
A lot of the time it starts in June. Kids will say – ‘Why don’t we have this club or this sports team?’ And they’ll start to talk to me and they’ll talk to other teachers that could help them to introduce the clubs for the following year. And then we’ll have an ECA fair, or club fair…I think in a sense we are meeting the different needs…

All the U/20 Club students attended all the practice sessions on time. Three students from the U/20 Senior Volleyball Club participated in this study: David, Adam, and Cam. Observations showed that students enjoyed being there with other members and wanted to learn and share skills with each other. Students have all positive thoughts about the club. For Adam, the club helped him “… work on individual skills as well as working with the team and developing new relationships with other people.” Adam continued that “it helps you a lot if you take part.” For Cam who is in his third year in the club, “it’s good to see the team come back next year and the year after – you can expand on what you’ve learned from other years.” David, who was in solo sports before, wanted to develop teamwork and communication skills, and make new friends in the club.

Amy said that students are engaged with all the club activities and that shows they are highly motivated to be in the club. “Usually we have a 100% attendance… they are happy, and getting a work out…” The coach indicated that students’ “perseverance and commitment” to the club is clear when they come to early morning practices.

Cam, who was not practicing in a few sessions because of his injuries, still attended the practice sessions to cheer his teammates. Amy said that Cam’s presence in the club shows his motivation to come and to support his club’s mates; it “shows me that they are engaged and they do care about it [club] – versus you have 12 kids on a team and get 6 out for a practice…” The other sign of student engagement in the club was the fact that students took more effort to be in good academic standing to ensure they can travel with the club and go to games. Amy said that it “shows me that they are trying to bring up their academics so they can miss class time for these
Though, there was no written regulation, the school clearly expected that students would keep up their academic standing if they wanted to fully participate in the club.

Along with the Volleyball Club, students joined other clubs. Students shared how they manage to do schoolwork while participating in several clubs. For Adam “It’s a combination of late nights and early mornings” - usually he got his work done. He liked the club as he put it, “… it’s hard work but worth it because you get the teamwork experience and you really learn new skills.” David agreed with Adam. He said that “the experience is worthwhile… I do a lot of work at home.” Cam said joining the club is “like you’re creating, being a part of something that you’re not typically used to. It shows initiative that you are able to manage two lives – academic and athletic lives.”

Leadership

In each of the U/20 Senior Volleyball Club’s sessions, students worked out for a few minutes and did some teamwork, before moving on to discuss upcoming matches. Amy explained the weaknesses and strengths of their opponents, and discussed strategies and tactics she was planning. There was student involvement in these discussions.

In practices, Amy praised and advised students at the same time. Amy constantly discussed with players their choices and decisions in their team play. In one instance, a player gave the ball away to an opponent; in another a player threw himself dangerously to save the ball in a way that may have caused an injury. I saw her intervene and instruct them about their decisions. This kind of coaching at different moments of the practices helped the students recognize what the consequences of certain decisions would mean for themselves and the team. Amy played with the students during the sessions and when she would miss the ball or make a
mistake, she would apologize and then explain the fault to the students. This became a learning experience for the other club members. Throughout the sessions, the club’s members made sure to support each other’s decision-making and offer advice through constructive communication.

In one session which the club had an important game the next day with another school, Amy reminded the students to get plenty of sleep and prepare themselves for the match. Even though the club was fun for the students, it required their commitment, self-discipline and responsibility. She has high expectations for the students - she has benched students when they were late for practices. Amy expected students to take ownership for their action and accept the consequences of their actions and choices. “There are consequences if you can’t communicate and can’t work with others, you’re not going to be a good team player. I think they will work in teams their whole lives.” Amy continually emphasized students’ ownership of choices and decision-making.

Amy explained that students develop leadership qualities such as “creativity, initiative, and risk-taking”.

We’re creating plays that are exposing our opponents’ weaknesses. They take initiative through their leadership skills on the court. If I ask them to run a warm-up, they have to design the warm-up, and do that.

Amy described that students involve themselves in risk-taking by “stepping outside their comfort zone” when they are nervous and playing in front of a crowd of fans. The coach said that in the club students are “coming together as a team, you can’t be six individuals on the volleyball court… you have to talk together, play together, lose a point together, you build off of that.”

Amy pointed out to several skills that students could develop:

… communication, how to effectively communicate, not yelling, constructive communications. Fair play, respect, self-discipline is huge, how to manage their
emotions and pressure in a situation shows a lot of character. Also the responsibility, ownership over being on time, being organized…

Amy continued that “ideally I want to see that the kids have developed more than an interest in the sport.” She explains that “not only for the technical aspect but they’re learning to collaborate with different types of people: the coaching staff, the referee, learning to collaborate within their team.”

Students stated that supportive advice from the coach was significant in their performances and teamwork. Cam was one of the first students who arrived at the gym for practice and helped the coach to set up the net. He also discussed and spoke with the coach about his views about the practice of the day and the planning for the upcoming game. Cam shared with the coach his ideas and thoughts; the coach listened carefully and shared her ideas about his concerns and acknowledged common concerns and obtained feedback from their conversation. Cam shared his ideas with the coach in decision-making and also learned from the coach about things that concerned both of them about the club. Another student, Adam, found that discussions with the coach were also very helpful in his decision-making at the play and practice; the coach had a “lot of thoughtful things to tell you.”

In the U/20 Senior Volleyball Club, there were students who wished to be leaders. Students were supported by Amy to become sports leaders: club manager and captains. These students had opportunities to follow their passion to lead. The support these students received from all the club’s members enhanced their leadership development. Amy stated that “our team captain leads by example trying to get the others to follow him. How he runs the warm-ups, he puts effort and energy into it – they all start to follow”. Referring to, another student who is the team manager, she indicates that - “he’s gaining experience on how to be a coach… do the game
card, or call a time out, he likes to do the statistics, he helps me with the balls… He coached one of the games, in a friendly match.”

Each practice session offers students opportunities to interact with club members that they might not normally come in contact with, especially since they are in many different grades. There were no conflicts among boys in the club. They all said they worked together through cooperation to find resolutions for any conflicts that happened rather than taking an individual approach. The word “we” was common in their responses. Cam added that “we tend to look to others to try to help us resolve the problem and see what the best step is to resolving it and pushing that aside just so we can focus on what’s important at the moment.” Adam responded that conflict didn’t usually occur among teammates: “we make a concerted effort to work together… and when there are, kind of it’s teasing, all in fun. It’s just rivalry or just a joke.” David agreed with Adam.

Students helped each other improve skills and shared their volleyball techniques. Cam wanted others to play their best for the club: “you’ve taught someone what you know, sharing with one another what should be done and what could be better, and what’s good already – just expand from that.” Both David and Adam agreed with Cam; as Adam said, “I’m part of something bigger than myself. I want to contribute something instead of dragging the team down.” The support of others was significant for David: “I’m sure it’s helped a lot of people get out of their comfort zone because learning how to communicate on a team was quite difficult for me at the beginning, until we started to get into the groove of it.”
Relationships

In the U/20 Club, there was a supportive relationship among students. They developed close relationships by sharing knowledge and skills and learning from each other. Amy acknowledged students have supportive relationships with each other in the club; she said students “not only get physical fitness but it’s a time to build relationships with their peers.” As well, they “see their teacher in another light, their teacher as well as their coach. I think that you develop a good rapport and you get to see more in depth what that student is, and vice versa.” Amy believed that the club created life-long relationships for her with the students. She was proud that some of her past students who participated in the club have continued to play volleyball after their graduation. She had even played with two alumni on teams, “I’ve taught them, I coached them – that has given me a sense of pride.”

The club consisted of a diverse group of students (e.g., ethnicities, grades, age, years of experience in the club) who supported each other in the club practices. Amy stated that diversity was never an issue. She added that since the clubs are composed of different grades, the only issue she has seen is the differences in physical strengths. “They tend to affiliate in practice while they’re warming up with their own friends. I don’t like that – I want them to be working with someone weaker or stronger to build them up. So that’s when I have to intervene...” She found that students with different abilities who practise together not only help the club to raise the skill bar and teamwork but also more importantly end up establishing relationships among them. Respect and relying on each other in the U/20 Club brought students a friendly relationship, the coach described it as “a boisterous kind of fun, silliness, it can’t be all strict. They are very respectful and inclusive with each other...”
In the U/20 Senior Volleyball Club, diverse students supported each other and built a community with inclusive relationships. There were respectful and close relationships that created a “bond” among students. As David said “you can meet people that you haven’t talked to before and really get a close bond with them.” Cam described his bond with the club, “it’s like a growing family”. He was being with his club mates from previous years and also being able to share his knowledge of volleyball with those who were new to the club this year. Cam added that on the bench or on the court he supported his teammates, “I am always bringing a positive attitude in practices and games no matter what the score is.” Cam described the students’ relationship in the club as they are “all friends as well as teammates so generally it’s just a fellowship – it feels like that – because we’re together, in a group, so it’s just close.”

The U/20 Senior Club practised and played with the U/14 Junior Volleyball Club in one session. Although it was a regular volleyball practice, it was more about building a community of volleyball players from two clubs who shared the gym twice a week together. Once the U/14 and the U/20 Clubs practised together, the younger kids were eager to play with seniors, and seniors were humble in letting them play as teammates. Seniors showed them techniques and created opportunities so the juniors could score and have fun. The seniors acted as good role models, showing their sportsmanship to the juniors, so they could picture themselves in the senior team. Amy said:

The juniors can look over and see the seniors and kind of visualize what they’ll be doing in a few years – and see how the game evolves. It creates a nice kind of cycle. The juniors really want to stay with the sport and become like the big kids… sometimes we’ll have our seniors work with them.
Skills Development

Students had improved their performance skills and fitness since the observation began in September. The coach also agreed with this observation. She said that students’ development is “a bit more tangible in the ECA versus the classroom. It’s something they’ve signed up for – they’re invested in it. So, seeing it through from beginning to end.” Amy made it clear that volleyball is a sport that requires teamwork and “… there’s a group kind of common goal that they [students] come together to achieve. They grow together; they are all very dependent on each other at times.” Amy explained that the main objectives of sport clubs for students are to “develop self-confidence, life skills, such as team-work and collaboration, and building a relationship.”

Cam pointed to how he advanced his skills and movement on the court, working well with others, and sharing the court with others. David learned teamwork and communication skills. Adam learned to make decisions because “things happen quickly on the court and you need to know where you’re supposed to move and each person’s supposed to go.” Students’ skills development also increased their desire to stay in the club.

Amy highlighted the skills that students gained such as “a sense of responsibility and discipline – and organizational skills… A lot of these skills we see later in life with anything they join.” She explained that just self-discipline was huge, because students have to get here early in the morning, or get their parents up to get themselves here and be on time.

Support

There was a supportive and collaborative relationship between Amy and Jack, the coach of the U/14 boys Junior Volleyball Club. Jack came to Amy several times to consult with her about his
team’s progress and the difficulties that his team had with skill improvement and teamwork. Each time, Amy assisted Jack and joined him for further support. A supportive relationship among the coaches was important in creating an environment for student progress.

Students mentioned that in supporting each other, they developed various skills such as collaboration and leadership. The students also collaborated with each other and the coach. Students were able to design their own warm ups, assisted the coach in planning for the upcoming games and even suggested which player should play what position.

Students always helped each other do their best for the U/20 Club team. Cam explained that, “one of us would go for a spike and we were blocked or if it went in and we scored the point the team would huddle up and we encouraged that player to do what they were doing.” David said that players on the court or the bench cheered one another with “good shot” or “good hit”. Adam said “it shows how we work together.”

The coach said that students and especially the captains have a significant supporting role for her in leading the U/20 Club. Amy pointed out that the most important role for the captain was that whenever there were disagreements among students, she got the captains’ assistance and arranged for a meeting, “I use the captain a lot to help facilitate these conversations and set the example.”

**Barriers to Participation**

There was nothing really, according to the students that they disliked about the club. However, David and Adam said that sometimes the morning practices were difficult to wake up for. They also said though the games after school were always fun for them. Amy explained that the club’s scheduling is very important; it has to be done very carefully to avoid difficulties: “We have the
practices in the morning, which I find helpful with scheduling – they [students] are so overscheduled, they are so busy…” So in the morning, practice is 45 minutes. She gets maximum attendance because students can focus with this timeline.

As an athletic director at Evergreen, Amy encountered one major barrier in running the sport clubs. Amy said that the school offers only the U/20 Senior Volleyball Club for grades nine through twelve, and that U/14Junior Volleyball Club consisted of grades seven and eight. Amy said that was really intimidating for the grade eights graduating into grade nine who will have to play with the grade twelves’ the next year. “Students would ask ‘why they had to play on a senior club.’ So they’re missing that age category – the school doesn’t have enough kids to field three different age categories…” As she explained each two grades need a club, such as: grades seven and eight club, nine and ten club, eleven and twelve club. She continued that “I think it takes away a bit from our program…. When you have more kids you have opportunities, more ages appropriate, that’s kind of difficult for sports ECA here.”

Impact

Students in U/20 Senior Volleyball Club were always on time, developed skills, and helped each other. According to the coach, “I have to say this year has been my most enjoyable – because I’ve seen camaraderie, they’re producing results, they’re coming together, the commitment’s there. I can see that they are working towards something.” The coach pointed out that her students look forward to coming to the gym, because they are passionate about what they’re doing.

If schools didn’t offer ECA, our kids could be at a major disadvantage. They need an outlet. It’s also a great place for stress management, if they are not producing in the classroom, they can produce elsewhere. It gives them that sense of pride and satisfaction.
Students were committed to their practices and to teamwork. For instance, Cam believed that being in the club is “a way of growing your mind, your body; it’s a way of expanding on who you are, and how well you were able to manage your time and show your commitments to other things other than academics.” For David, the club was “a great experience” because he could meet people that he hasn’t talked to before and made friends.

**Key Findings**

Participation in the U/20 Senior Volleyball Club increased students’ self-confidence and a sense of community as they developed skills and relationships, shared their skills and assisted each other, and were involved in decision-making and leadership. Students committed themselves to the club’s activities and academic lives. Students’ ownership of their choices and decisions contributed to their leadership development. As the coach described it, students were able to initiate, to create, and to take responsibility in the practices and games. An inclusive relationship contributed to student confidence in relying on each other for skills development and sharing knowledge with each other. Students’ success and accomplishment had a great impact on their desire to stay and dedicate themselves to the club.

Amy constantly discussed with the students their decisions during team play. The U/20 students were responsible for their choices and actions in team practices and games. She constantly talked with them about the consequences of their decisions, and encouraged them, through discussions, and to take leadership of their actions.

Students from the U/20 Club had different years of experience and they had different expectations for their participation in the volleyball club. David and Adam, who were in first year, wanted to learn teamwork, improve skills, and have fun. Cam, who was with this club for
three years expected to widen his knowledge of volleyball and be a leader in sports. This shows that different years of experiences can impact students’ expectations for the club. Even in the interview, Cam talked more about leadership than the other two novice volleyball players.

Table 2 is the summary maps of students’ responses how they engaged with the U/20 Club. Table 3 provides a summary map of the U/20 volleyball coach’s responses. Each table is divided on the elements that represent the study enquiry: leadership, relationship, skills development, motivation, support, barriers, and impact. For instance, under heading of support, there are several elements that the club leader and students consider as important to their engagement with the club.
Table 2 Summary Map of U/20 Volleyball Club Students’ Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEADERSHIP</th>
<th>STUDENTS IN THE U/20 VOLLEYBALL CLUB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years of experience in the club</td>
<td>3 Yr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cam</td>
<td>David</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assisting the coach in planning upcoming games</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collaborating to resolving any possible conflicts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teaching and sharing knowledge about volleyball</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Getting out of “comfort zone”, and communicating with others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make a commitment to a teamwork and be on time</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RELATIONSHIPS</th>
<th>STUDENTS IN THE U/20 VOLLEYBALL CLUB</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years of experience in the club</td>
<td>3 Yr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cam</td>
<td>David</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Based on friendship and respect</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support teammates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communicate with teammates</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop bonds with others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sharing and getting along</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills Development</th>
<th>STUDENTS IN THE U/20 VOLLEYBALL CLUB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years of experience in the club</td>
<td>3 Yr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cam</td>
<td>David</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X X X X X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collaborate with teammates and the coach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop advanced skills of volleyball and movement on the court</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teamwork and communication</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Decision making</td>
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</table>
### Table 2 (continued) - Summary Map of U/20 Volleyball Club Students’ Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Years of experience in the club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Yr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Have fun and teamwork experience</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To be with teammates</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developing skills</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Be a leader</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attend all the practices on time</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPACT</th>
<th>STUDENTS IN THE U/20 VOLLEYBALL CLUB</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Years of experience in the club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Yr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Commitment to their club</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Managing their school work along with ECA</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUPPORTS</th>
<th>STUDENTS IN THE U/20 VOLLEYBALL CLUB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Years of experiences in the club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Yr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Coaches’ advice and teammates’ suggestions</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supporting each other in developing skills during practices and games</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BARRIERS</th>
<th>STUDENTS IN THE U/20 VOLLEYBALL CLUB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Years of experience in the club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Yr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Early morning schedule made it difficult to wake up</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3 - Summary Map of U/20 Volleyball Club Coach’s Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RELATIONSHIPS</th>
<th>VOLLEYBALL COACH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amy Wilson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Camaraderie</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Warm and inclusive relationships among diverse students</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Having Fun</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Respect and friendship</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Complimenting each other</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sharing techniques</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEADERSHIP</th>
<th>VOLLEYBALL COACH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amy Wilson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Risk taking</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students’ participation in discussions</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Creativity and initiative – designing their warm up</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Commitment and taking responsibility</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Student assisted coach to gain leadership role</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Captain who led by example – role model to help team</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• U/20 team assisting U/14 to develop skills – role model</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students’ ownership of their actions and choices</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SKILLS DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>VOLLEYBALL COACH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U/20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amy Wilson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teamwork and communication</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collaboration</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Organizational skills and self-discipline</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Manage their emotions and pressure in games</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Responsibility, ownership over being on time</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Volleyball skills development</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 3 (continued) - Summary Map of U/20 Volleyball Club Coach’s Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOTIVATION</th>
<th>VOLLEYBALL COACH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U/20</td>
<td>Amy Wilson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Passion for volleyball</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Find new friends and be with their teacher</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attendance</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Commitment</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Perseverance</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPACT</th>
<th>VOLLEYBALL COACH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U/20</td>
<td>Amy Wilson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Friendship</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Camaraderie</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A sense of membership</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communicating effectively and respecting others</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fair play and self-discipline</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUPPORTS</th>
<th>VOLLEYBALL COACH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U/20</td>
<td>Amy Wilson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students’ assistant supportive of the coach</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supportive relationships between volleyball coaches</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Praised students and gave advice</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students supported each other in developing skills</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students helping the coach to arrange and clean before and after practice</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support of school leadership</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BARRIERS</th>
<th>VOLLEYBALL COACH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U/20</td>
<td>Amy Wilson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Club scheduling that works with student schooling and assignment</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• More age appropriate clubs</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE UNDER FOURTEEN (U/14) JUNIOR VOLLEYBALL CLUB

Jack Smith coached the under fourteen (U/14) Junior Volleyball Club. According to him, the U/14 Volleyball Club consists of younger boys, some who are playing volleyball for the first time. The U/14 Junior Volleyball Club consisted of twelve students from grade seven and eight. They held practice each week Tuesday and Thursday from 7:15 am to 8:00 am from September to December. There are two volleyball courts in the gym and they practice at the same time as the U/20 club, but on a different court. At the beginning of each practice, students would get into pairs and start warming up. After they warmed up, Jack divided them into two groups led by him on one side of the net and Jennifer, a grade eleven student who is Jack’s coaching assistant, on the other side of the net. They passed the ball to each other and worked on their techniques/skills development. Jack instructed students at all times; he had them line up on the sides of the court to serve and hit the other side of the net at a target he had created. Although they were not as skilled as the U/20 Senior Volleyball Club, they seemed to enjoy playing together. As Jack said, for the students it is a “… positive life experience.”

In the middle of each session, Jack split them equally into two teams and he joined one side while Jennifer joined the other side to play volleyball. It was fun for students although they often missed the ball. Jack instructed them a lot in the use of the right techniques, and the positions that they had to adopt in order to keep the ball in the air longer. He encouraged them to play with their teammates when they received the ball. Jack said that he is really satisfied, “if they can get three hits – pass, pass, pass.”
Motivation

Students’ skills improved during the two months that I observed them. They also appeared to be more collaborative. Communication and enthusiasm were also greater. There were friendly relationships and respect among the students; when they needed help they sought it from teammates. They listened very carefully to the coach and Jennifer. At the end of the practices, they all helped bring the net down and clean up after themselves. The students stayed in the gym as long as they could until they had to change for their classes.

These young students showed commitment to teamwork and came on time to practise. Jack said, the club “…. gives them a chance to try something new to extend their learning into a realm of physical or creative activity beyond something strictly academic.” Students have different reasons for joining the club; “some kids are more interested in the competitive aspect, some in the social aspect, and some in perfecting skill.” He noticed from the students that fulfillment of these interests resulted in staying with the club. The students developed physical skills, communication and cooperation skills, and also took the risk of trying something that they haven’t done before.

Two students from the U/14 Club participated in this study: Alex and Kevin. They never missed any club sessions. Alex was interested in sport competitions. His favourite memory was a game against another school: “it was our first win… It was fun and enjoyable.” Kevin enjoyed “… being active, I don’t like sitting down in one place,” and he likes playing with his friends in the games.
Relationships - Knowing Each Other Through Friendship

Jack described his students’ relationships with each other in the club as “brothers”.

They rely on each other; they have to communicate with each other. They find ways to complement each other – to account for a lack of skill- they understand each other – ‘oh so and so is a good server… but he might not be as good at the net but I’m going to cover him’.

They recognize teammates’ contributions and they encourage one another by “giving high fives, it’s a nice pass…”

Kevin clearly loved volleyball and probably wished to play with his friends (club mates) all day long. He always cheered his teammates. Kevin stated that in the club he has been able to know his club mates and be more comfortable talking to them. He said, “I think I have a good relationship – we help each other in our weaker areas.” He mentioned that they got along well and there were no arguments among them. Alex had close relationships with his club mates and they became good friends “…most of my teammates are comrades.” Alex continued, “we encouraged each other, and helped each other and corrected each other’s mistakes. Basically, we support each other on the field; call out the plays - ‘mine, I got it’”. Alex described his relationships with the coach: “my coach is actually an art and technology teacher. When the teacher is on the field, he’s quite strict sometimes and then he wants us to be a strong team. Outside of practice, he’s friendly…” A supportive relationship among students gave them confidence to rely on each other for help.

Leadership

Jack specifically instructed students in teamwork throughout the practice sessions.

There are some people are more critical of others, they might start saying things like a coach would say… I’ll have to say: they don’t need to hear that right now… just be quiet,
just sit there and watch. That’s not their role, but kids do that, they call each other out, it’s encouragement for the most part… sometimes they try to instruct.

He stated that most of the students in the club were in an organized sports club for the first time. Teamwork was something new to these young students; they were learning and they needed guidance. Jack believed that the club promoted the development of students’ skills in volleyball and communication, and enhanced leadership qualities such as taking responsibilities, risk taking and trying something that they haven’t tried before.

Alex described his leadership role as a more “encouraging and supporting” to the other club members, “I try to influence team members to get back in the game”. Often Alex got involved in helping other students develop skills. He said:

I know that I’m just 1/6 of the team. It’s just like a table, poles that support the table, if I don’t give my all, it’s just like a pole that’s missing - it’s going to fall down. I have to give my all to support the team

He was involved in decision-making with students and the coach. He believes that “being a leader is something quite challenging. You have got to know everybody’s strengths and weaknesses…”

Kevin would like to participate in teamwork and be involved in decision making with others helps him to be more collaborative with others. He believes listening to the coach’s instructions helped his leadership skills and “to learn how to be more collaborative…” Kevin developed interest in the club and wanted to be a sport leader in the future. He showed concern for the clubs’ success; he supported his club mates throughout the practices. Kevin said, “we would congratulate each other if we did something good… let’s say one of us makes a mistake and lost the game, we wouldn’t blame that person because it’s a team sport.” Collaborative
decision-making and taking responsibilities were significant steps for Kevin in team work and leadership development.

**Skills Development**

Jack was mainly involved during the U/14 Club practices helping with students’ skills development. He instructed students about their positions’ responsibilities and techniques, such as how to pass and keep the ball in the air. Students listened carefully and then would practice the skills. Students worked with each other well but they had skill weaknesses. When students missed the ball they laughed and wanted to try again. Jack said that it is “a learning opportunity” for the students. He added that in U/14 Club “there’s a big skill focus… we work on the basics of volleyball.” There’s a “big skills jump over the course of the team,” which runs from early September to late December. Jack believes the significant skills that students are developing is “obviously… how to interact with others”. He gets a lot of satisfaction when students are cooperating with others and expressing themselves. An increase in students’ self-confidence was related to their success. As Jack said:

> To see somebody who’s been struggling successfully interacting with others…that’s encouraging to me. Their body language and facial expression just tells you that was a good moment for them. They’ve gotten over a hurdle or so, and so now they’re talking to each other, communicating better, they’re able to communicate with each other versus not.

> This is Alex’s first year in the volleyball club and he has made good progress in learning different skills such as spiking, serving and blocking the ball. He found that practices enhanced his volleyball abilities and increased his self-confidence in teamwork. When others told him about how he could improve his skills, he listened carefully and tried to improve them. Kevin, like Alex, also listened carefully to others especially the coach and his assistant. He said that practices and listening to the coach helped him to develop skills. Kevin liked to show others new
techniques that he had learned. Kevin also pointed to the skills that he learned such as communication, teamwork, and collaboration in decision making with his teammates.

**Support**

Alex felt supported by the other club’s members during all the practices. He participated in all the club activities and asked for help if he needed. Students’ support of each other created an inclusive club environment. He said that, when he received any comments about his mistakes, he found them helpful and positive critiques. “No one really picked on me - if somebody said, ‘why did you do this?’ I’ll understand. I’ll refresh myself.” Alex helped others during practices and games, when “… my team doesn’t make a play, I’ll say everybody calm down and get them to focus.” Kevin was supported by the club when he looked for help: “Something I’m weak at, they [club’s members] would help me fix it or make it better than it used to be.”

A collaborative relationship existed between the two U/14 and U/20 clubs’ leaders in the gym which helped Jack in coaching U/14 students in volleyball skills. Jack said Amy, the U/20 Club’s coach, was also an athletics co-coordinator who supported him and provided schedules and equipment so that he could run the club effectively. The other support that Jack brought up came from his assistant Jennifer. She is an excellent support for the club and she has good relationships with the boys. In the past, Jack said that students have helped him in clubs; they kept statistics and scores, but Jennifer is more like a teacher to the other students. Jennifer is in grade eleven and has been playing volleyball for four years; she likes to share and work out with the boys. As Jack explains, students like to hear from a peer or senior student things a coach would say. It “makes the point in a different kind of voice which is also effective at times.” According to Jack, their practice with the senior club was helpful for juniors:
The boys see it as a challenge, they want to compete. It’s a point of pride, obviously, if they can steal a point or a game away from some older boys – that would be a good feeling for them.

**Barriers to Participation**

Both Alex and Kevin were satisfied about the club and didn’t see any problems. A potential barrier that Jack mentioned for coaching the club was his availability. “It’s a time commitment. I don’t know if I would call that a difficulty but it’s a factor you have to consider. It clearly takes your time…” Jack continued that when the club had games, he accompanied the boys to the games. He had to get someone to cover his classes at those times and made sure everything such as transportation was ready. “I guess that’s being part of a coach – part of an extra workload.”

**Impact**

Alex believed that there was so much to learn in ECA; “participating in ECA gives me a lot of confidence at school, in life.” He felt that practising volleyball gave him physical strength and the bond between him and his teammates became stronger with better communication. Alex showed his satisfaction in joining the club by saying that “[I] never had these kinds of experiences and it’s new to me. So, it’s exciting and fun. You develop skills, knowledge and team work. I just like it.” Alex says that in the future he will join more clubs. Alex said:

> Even in the university I’ll get a club or something. I will continue. It’s just another - it’s like school –it’s just learning while we’re at school but adding that it just that thing that spices up everything. It’s like a lighter to fireworks - you put a light to it and everything’s amazing.

Kevin would like to participate in many ECA as possible in the future: “I just like doing ECA.” He believed ECA are important not only for learning sports skills but also for other skills, “to learn how to be more collaborative – if it’s a team.”
One of the positive impacts of the club for the students was the feeling of confidence they got from their accomplishments and successes, and community building as Jack puts it:

You see them doing something they didn’t use to do – two months ago so and so couldn’t do that, now he can. And I can see it. It’s very straightforward – like guitar club – they couldn’t play that song before and now they can. They taught themselves before, now they think about the group or team – being in unison.

**Key Findings**

Alex and Kevin joined the U/14 Volleyball Club to develop volleyball skills, make new friends, and learn teamwork. Through reaching their expectations, they also developed leadership qualities and learned about risk taking, taking responsibilities, communicating with others, and developing relationships with club members. They helped each other and developed skills. Success in skills development and teamwork made them committed to the club.

Jack, the coach for the U/14 Volleyball Club, stated in his interview that the support of the other coach and his senior student assistant had a positive effect on the quality of running the club. Jack worked with younger students and mostly focused on instructing them in developing skills, teamwork, communicating with each other, and learning the fundamentals of volleyball.

Both Alex and Kevin were new in the U/14 Volleyball Club. They were interested in learning skills and they committed themselves to the club’s activities. During the few months that I observed them, they gradually developed relationships, took on responsibilities, and developed skills in volleyball, communication, and teamwork. Both Alex and Kevin encouraged others during practices, helped and sought help from others, and developed friendships with the club members. Both students came on time to practices; they developed skills and shared these with other club members.
Table 4 is the summary maps of students’ responses to how they engaged with the U/14 Club. Table 5 provides a summary map of the U/14 Volleyball Club coach’s responses. Each table is divided on the elements that represent the study enquiry: leadership, relationships, skill development, motivation, support, barriers, and impact. For instance, under the heading of support, there are several elements that the club leader and students consider as supportive to their engagement with the club in their discussion.
Table 4 - Summary Map of U/14 Volleyball Club Students’ Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEADERSHIP</th>
<th>STUDENTS IN THE U/14 VOLLEYBALL CLUB</th>
<th>Years of experience in the club</th>
<th>Alex</th>
<th>Kevin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Yr.</td>
<td>1 Yr.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assisting and guiding others to develop skills</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supporting others during games</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RELATIONSHIPS</th>
<th>STUDENTS IN THE U/14 VOLLEYBALL CLUB</th>
<th>Years of experience in the club</th>
<th>Alex</th>
<th>Kevin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Yr.</td>
<td>1 Yr.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Friendship and respects toward teammates</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teammates are comrades</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• supporting others and sharing knowledge</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SKILLS DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>STUDENTS IN THE U/14 VOLLEYBALL CLUB</th>
<th>Years of experience in the club</th>
<th>Alex</th>
<th>Kevin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Yr.</td>
<td>1 Yr.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communication and teamwork</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Volleyball skills</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collaboration</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOTIVATION</th>
<th>STUDENTS IN THE U/14 VOLLEYBALL CLUB</th>
<th>Years of experience in the club</th>
<th>Alex</th>
<th>Kevin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Yr.</td>
<td>1 Yr.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop skills and make new friends</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Enjoy playing with friends and play in the games</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Being active</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Winning the games</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attend all the club practices/sessions</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4 (continued) - Summary Map of U/14 Volleyball Club Students’ Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPACT</th>
<th>STUDENTS IN THE U/14 VOLLEYBALL CLUB</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Years of experience in the club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Yr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feeling of closeness with teammates in the club and in the school</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and with the coach</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Future participation in more ECA</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUPPORTS</th>
<th>STUDENTS IN THE U/14 VOLLEYBALL CLUB</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Years of experience in the club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Yr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Team members supporting each other in skills development</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BARRIERS</th>
<th>STUDENTS IN THE U/14 VOLLEYBALL CLUB</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Years of experience in the club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Yr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• None</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5 - Summary Map of U/14 Volleyball Club Coach’ Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RELATIONSHIPS</th>
<th>VOLLEYBALL COACH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U/14</td>
<td>Jack Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Having Fun</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Respect and friendship</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A kind of brotherhood</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Complimenting each other</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sharing techniques</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEADERSHIP</th>
<th>VOLLEYBALL COACH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U/14</td>
<td>Jack Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Risk taking</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students’ participation in discussions</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Commitment and taking responsibility</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Student assisted coach to gain leadership role</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• U/20 team assisting U/14 to develop skills –role model</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SKILLS DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>VOLLEYBALL COACH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>U/14</td>
<td>Jack Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teamwork and communication</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collaboration</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Responsibility, ownership over being on time</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Volleyball skills development</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interact with others</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5 (continued) - Summary Map of U/14 Volleyball Club Coach’ Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOTIVATION</th>
<th>VOLLEYBALL COACH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jack Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Find new friends and be with their teacher</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developing skills</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attendance</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Commitment</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Interact as a group intellectually and socially</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPACT</th>
<th>VOLLEYBALL COACH</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jack Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Friendship</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A sense of membership</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communicating effectively and respecting others</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUPPORTS</th>
<th>VOLLEYBALL COACH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jack Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students’ assistant supportive of the coach</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supportive relationships between volleyball coaches</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Praised students and gave advice</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students supported each other in developing skills</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students helping the coach to arrange and clean before and after practice</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Support of school leadership</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BARRIERS</th>
<th>VOLLEYBALL COACH</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>U/14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jack Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Coaching takes away from instructional time – extra load</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 5
CITIZENSHIP CLUBS – EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

This chapter is arranged in two sections. Section one describes the Global Amnesty Club and section two is devoted to the Social Justice Club. At the end of each section, key findings are presented. Tables related to the summary map of both students and the club leaders are also included.

THE GLOBAL AMNESTY CLUB

Flora Sanchez was the Global Amnesty Club leader, and was assisted by another teacher. The Global Amnesty Club met every Monday at lunch time (11:55am to 12:40 pm). There were 20 students in the Global Amnesty Club, but their attendance varied in each meeting from 12 to 20 students. For instance, in one of my visits, there were nine girls and one boy until two other girls who had a meeting with another club arrived a few minutes late. The club consisted of mostly girls and four boys. The Global Amnesty club ran throughout the entire school year. The day I went to the school for my first visit to the club, I saw Flora in the hallway; she had just finished teaching a class, so we went together to the Global Amnesty Club. There were fifteen students already in the room: four boys and eleven girls. It was like a seminar - everybody sat around a large table. Sometimes a student had to leave, or sometimes other students came a little late to the meeting. Students reported to the group on their progress in the club activities and their responsibilities. The students then picked dates to present cases they had chosen which related to Amnesty International. One student asked Flora if she could do a presentation in a group of three students and Flora agreed.
In the noon meeting, Flora and most of the students had their lunches while they worked on the meeting agendas. They worked until almost 12:40 pm. Flora then gathered her notes and reminded the students of the next meeting before leaving for her office and going back to teach her class. Both students and Flora were very busy with school-work before and after the club meetings.

The field notes of the observations recorded such things as teamwork, club members’ rich discussions about all the Amnesty International cases, and students going over ideas for their presentation of cases with each other and Flora. Everybody could introduce their cases to the whole school during the Amnesty International week. December 10 was International Human Rights Day and the club was planning to do a few events. One of them was that for each of the seven days leading up to Human Rights Day, two people from the club would set up a booth in the school entrance where they would have poster boards that displayed an online Amnesty International petition. The club members individually or as a group chose a case based on their interests for that week, and all the cases were on the Amnesty International website – “Write for Rights”. Each week in the club students presented an issue from the Amnesty International Organization website list.

The other activity was that the club members organized for each English class in the school two of seven cases that were taken from the Amnesty International Organization webpage. In each English class, teachers and students together chose one or both cases and wrote letters and mailed them to different addresses that were provided by the Amnesty International Organization. Students could also choose to write more letters or sign petitions at the booths for the cases that the club members had chosen to present that week.
Motivation

Kim attended the Global Amnesty Club on a regular basis and was always involved in discussions with others about the issues. She said that in the club everybody chose their cases based on their interests. Kim is interested in learning about global issues. Flora explained that there was “interest from the students” for this club this year; “the club started from a student proposal. A student said ‘I want to start a club; I feel that we can do more.’” Students looked for a teacher advisor to help, and Flora decided to lead the club. Flora explained the purpose of the Global Amnesty Club is to “give the students a little bit more impact or more knowledge about social justice cases and human rights.” The school was onside with the idea of having the Global Amnesty Club. As Flora said, the club “would be a good way to go.”

Flora found that in the club, members gained knowledge; it teaches them that “there are parts of the world that really need to talk about human rights…” Kim expressed her passion for the club: “I like the fact that we’re international sort of, we’re all connected in the world. I like learning about global issues.” Flora explained that students in high school are very passionate about anything that interests them. “If they are passionate about human rights, they can channel that passion through the club and get activities… they probably start learning about what’s around them and being internationally-minded”.

The meeting often started with the discussion about the cases from the Amnesty International Organization webpage. The club members discussed several cases and they chose ones they were interested in addressing. Flora said “they basically say this is the one – some of them will fight for indigenous people, some will fight for freedom of speech for Asian people… everybody can identify with a cause.” Each case addressed human rights issues that happened in different countries.
The boys and girls in the club were from different grades and different ethnicities; Flora added that the club attracts everyone: “Anybody can bring anything to the table with Amnesty.” She believed that ECA is “a different way of students expressing themselves”, since it is their idea and their choice to participate in activities outside of academics; they want to pursue their interests and become involved. “Some of them might be passionate about sports and they are very good athletes that love to play hockey or other sports.” Flora also pointed out that in high school, students are not only involved in ECA for their interests but also often they need them for their university applications.

Students need to have a portfolio of leadership opportunities or extra-curricular activities, whether it’s sport or club or anything – music, arts, drama – for their university application, as well. Universities are not only looking for academics… they’re also looking to the extra package for the person.

Flora indicated that in addition to students’ interests in the club, the successes and accomplishments that they achieved created a significant impact on students; “I think it forms them as a whole new person.”

In the club, students discussed and chose Amnesty International cases to present to their peers. Flora always reminded students in the club that, “here it’s your idea, your choice, it’s whatever you want to do”, rather than what happens normally in the classroom: “you have to study this, learn that, do this homework.” According to Flora, students in the club can be involved with any activity or case that interests them the most. She gave an example where students created a sign for collecting jackets for needy people, “I didn’t tell them. That’s creating right there… they just say, ‘I’m going to do this or do that’. It’s all their plan, they have a lot of initiative and leadership…” As she described it, students “can see that they can make a difference with their little input.”
Leadership Experiences for Students

Students were involved in all the club activities and took on responsibilities, decision making, and planning in their groups and events. Flora explained that all the activities provided students “hands-on” experience of leadership, such as “…painting something or building something, they’re going to be selling something, actively writing an article or taking a picture…” “I think they’re all leaders in their own little way. It gives them an opportunity to shine here, or shine there.” Flora believed that students’ engagement with leadership inspired them “in the future to be a better leader. It teaches them how to be a leader right now and take action about causes.”

We were saying we’re going to do work for International Rights Campaign. We need to send these letters. We need money for postage. So they were saying ‘ok’ we can do this. We can do a bake sale…. In the Green Club, we plant trees. What they love doing. It’s out of the school… you plant trees. For the typhoon [Philippines’ victims] we said, we’ll look at different ideas on the table and we’ll vote. It was their idea so it’s them hands-on, working on it.

As Flora explained, “it's a great learning experience for them” because they engage in planning, decision-making, and organizing the activities. Flora added students gain a sense of confidence from their accomplishments; they would say, “‘you know what – hey, I can do it!’” Flora continued that students gain leadership experiences in doing tasks that interested them; they took part in clubs’ activities by sharing their individual strengths. Flora elaborated:

They [students] may say ‘I don’t have good communication writing skills but I can do a sign because I’m very artsy’… some of them are good communicators…. They will write the whole announcement, to let the student body know what’s going on. Some of them have very good social skills so they just work with everyone on the team. We have to put this together. Some of them are very quiet but they are hard workers and they can do the set-up for the dance and the events.

Kim and two other students were in one group who had planned to run a booth for the Human Rights Day and present a case. Kim stated that “I’m not naturally a leader, I’m more of a follower but Amnesty, along with my other ECA, has made me more of a leader.” Kim and the
other two students joined together in a group to present an Amnesty International case to the club and afterwards to the school. For Kim, choosing and presenting the case to her group mates and the entire club was the starting point of her leadership. Kim and the other two students discussed each other’s cases and then chose one. They arrived at a decision by consent. Kim explained:

> We chose it on our own as a group and I think that was really good. We make sure that everyone agreed on the issue, we came up with three options… one of my friends said I like this one the most - and I said I like that one too. And then we ask the other friend – do you like this one? And he said yes.

In her presentation, Kim succeeded in engaging others with her issue and she was a source of information to them. The others listened carefully, asked questions, gave feedback, and they discussed the case. Kim’s involvement in decision making and planning shows her leadership in the club’s activities. The sense of student ownership in the club was prompted by their being able to make their own choices in the club. This is illustrated by the following comment by Kim:

> So far we’re working very cohesively as a team, we haven’t really planned out the logistics of the booth, but I guess each of us has to become really informed on the issue so if someone comes up and have a question of how the petition is going to help or something more detailed about the issue that isn’t on the Amnesty website… we should know about that and we should make sure we can communicate that to them [students]. Each of us has to make a certain commitment in time, at lunch on Wednesday. We have to be there to support the team and support the cause.

All students also presented their cases to all the club members as well. Kim was glad that she provided others with sufficient information that increased their knowledge and held their attention. Kim felt a commitment towards educating the student body in the entire school and building a community within the school, one that was aware of her case issues as illustrated in her comment:

> I think in the future we’ll have more opportunities to lead not only the club but our school in educating them about human rights issues. So, especially during Human Rights week,
we’re going to be doing a lot of leadership and educating our peers about human rights issues.

For Kim, research was key in leading the club on her case, “I had to find out about the issue myself so I led the group in explaining what the issue was and how they can help... So that’s how I led them to that activity.” Flora noted that students have to be very well informed about the issues when they discuss them with the other students in the school. Since Kim and her group mates decided to work on a specific human rights issue, they got a deeper understanding of their issues over time. As well, everyone was contributing to the group work. Kim said:

We’ve helped people in a more indirect way of signing these petitions and understanding the issues. When we understand the issues, we feel strongly about the issues. We pass it onto other people. That’s a form of helping people by raising awareness…

Skills Development

Through the course of club sessions, Kim made gradual progress in collaborative group work. She was confident about her presentation when she presented her case to her group and the club. Kim said:

I’ve got a little bit of public speaking fear so that was a little bit of an issue but it’s a very supportive environment in Amnesty. It wasn’t too much of an issue. I saw that everyone was attentive and cared about what you were saying.

Kim pointed out that when others started developing the same skills it was a good time for her to pay attention and learn from them. She shared that in the club: “I’ve learned from watching other people’s presentations – I’ve learned how to present better.” She was able to “lead” others by being a “source of information” for her case. She said:

My ability to express myself in a way that makes sense to everyone – talk about an issue that’s broad and complex and make it simplified and make it quick and short, so that people will keep their attention and will understand what you’re saying.
Kim talked about her success in other clubs where she developed skills that she felt were important. In the Debate Club, she developed communication skill; “it’s more of a public speaking and confidence in articulating your ideas in a way that persuades other people.” In the Acting Club, she developed acting skills, learned to express herself in front of audiences, and learned collaboration skills, observing that “you need to make sure you do your part so that the scene can be a success.” In the Cross Country Club, she developed “competitiveness”. Kim continued that the skills that she developed at the club are not as obvious as the skills that she learned with other clubs such as the Debating Club. In the Global Amnesty Club, she developed a caring personality and showed a desire “to be doing a lot of things educating” peers about human rights issues. Kim pointed out that she developed research skills. She said “when we understand the issue, we feel strongly about it.”

Participation in club activities helped students develop research skills. Flora said that when students want to do petitions, they “have to be very well informed. You have to do your research; you can’t just come and say ‘I need money for this.’” Students’ interests in different cases and the club activities prompted them to gather information and that developed their research skills. Flora said that students need “to get informed for their own point of view about different issues. And it could be debateable. It gives them the tools to form their own beliefs and values, and then take action.” She witnessed that students developed additional skills; they learned to plan and to organize activities, to manage their time in doing ECA along with their school homework, and to deal with the budget for the activity.

**Relationships**

The meetings were like social gatherings. Flora would sit among the students talking about their days at the school while they all had their lunch. Conversations were about students’ interests in
the club, classes, assignments and friends. For instance, a student shared a picture of herself and her siblings when she was younger. The club members had friendly relationships with each other. Flora was the students’ friend; they had fun, and respected one another. Flora listened very carefully to them. They all chatted, laughed and respected each other. Kim said that the club leader Ms. Flora Sanchez and her assistant are her favourite teachers. Ms. Sanchez taught her grade seven math and her club assistant was teaching her this year.

Kim was one of the younger students in the club. She knows a lot of the grade 9’s very well, and she is getting to know some of the grade 11’s. Kim likes the inclusive environment of the club, as she said, “everyone there is positive and it’s a good environment. It’s a nice place to go.” Meeting once a week at lunch helped her to get to know more about her friends’ and grade eleven students’ interests. Flora explained that the club has students from all grades with diverse backgrounds and these students were able to get to know each other through the club and build a stronger community in the school.

You have boys and girls and all kinds of backgrounds. It addresses everybody. Everybody could be part of it. For example, a grade seven student can offer an idea, and a grade twelve can say the same thing…

Flora explained that club members’ different point of views allowed them together to explore the club’s cases “through dialogue”. She added that “if there are two conflicting ideas, then we’d just talk it over. It would come to a vote. They understand.”

Kim said that one of her group mates in the club is her close friend in class, and they also invited another friend from the same class to join. Right now they are three altogether who are in a group working consisting of two girls and one boy. Kim indicated what she liked most about this group work in Amnesty was the sharing and learning about each other’s interests.
I liked hearing about my friend’s topic – human rights… I liked hearing her stance on the issue and how she really feels passionate about it. I’ve never heard that opinion from her before. It was fun to hear something that was important to her.

**Impact**

At the end of November and close to the end of the fall term at the school, students were getting ready for the final exams. The club members were getting into the final decisions of their planning for the Amnesty International week at the school. Students were excited about the event and shared more information with the club members about their cases. Students disclosed their availabilities during the week for further meetings for the event’s final arrangements. In the final meetings, students participated in the club discussions with their suggestions about the Human Rights week and their cases. Their suggestions showed that they were well informed and well prepared to present their cases at their booths each will operate at this event. Students’ suggestions not only illustrated their knowledge about the cases but demonstrated the growth that they had undergone in their abilities in presenting, planning, and organizing. A strong commitment to the club and its activities was seen during the activities. They spent more time on the club despite their academic responsibilities. The club members had decided to increase the meetings to two, and if necessary, three times a week before the event. Each group of students decided to have more meetings on their own during the week leading to the Amnesty International week.

Flora explained that students who are in the club mostly “…are passionate about it [the human rights]. They’re there because they like it. Those are the leaders that are going to be really involved – let’s do this campaign, let’s look at this or that.” She said,

I am very satisfied. It also teaches them outside of the classroom. You see them outside of the classroom; you see what they can do. They are probably poor at math, but they come out as an excellent leader. Whether it’s sport or an activity…
Flora added that there were some students who were “just going through the emotions. I’m not saying that it’s for everybody but they’re there. The thing is we have attendance, we have a group of kids.” As Flora explained there are some students who had to do community service as part of their activities at the school and they attended the club for that reason.

Flora noted that students’ interests are significant determiners in them in joining the clubs. They might be interested in sport ECA and their participation can improve their athletic abilities. Kim believed that each club that she joined in the past helped her to develop different leadership qualities and skills. She explained that the Cross Country Club involved a solo sport, and that helped her in “developing perseverance because you always think you can’t run any further, if you really push yourself you can… that can be translated to a lot of other things – to working in class, any sort of competitive thing.” The other one was a Volleyball Club, a team sport that requires different skills, as Kim explained:

In volleyball, you have to be aware of everyone else around you. That’s true in other activities too that you need to always communicate with your team. You have a personal responsibility that’s important to the success of the team. If you don’t fulfill your responsibilities it won’t look good on you.

Kim was very pleased with her clubs; she said she would participate again in the following school terms. Kim liked taking ECA at the school, as illustrated by her comment about their significance: “ECA are really more important than you think… because ECA are something you choose. They are your own interests and your own ideas so students learn how to expand their own interests.”

**Barriers and Supports**

Flora said that one of the challenges was petition-signing; she and other club leaders had to make sure that students did not disclose any personal information. Other than that, as a difficulty, she
mentioned that sometimes they needed more financial support for running the club’s events. There are other problems that Flora pointed out. Students had to decide which cause they should collect money for. For example, collect money for the typhoon or for the food bank? She added that in the school, different clubs supported each other when choosing events. They get together, discuss issues and make decisions. Flora continued that the clubs “need to get together, we need to sort out – you’re doing this? Ok, I won’t do anything.” Kim pointed to the supportive relationships that the club’s members had in the club and if they ever ran into any conflict, they would find a way to work it out.

**Key Findings**

Kim developed skills in teamwork, communication and public speaking. She was interested in learning about the cases that were presented by the club members, and in researching her topics to present to both the club and her group. Through discussions and sharing cases, the club became a community which was concerned about local and global community issues. Student ownership in the club was encouraged as students made their own choices. Kim, along with her group, chose a case and presented it to the club and the entire school. Her plan was to educate others in the school about issues in Amnesty International. Kim successfully managed her school-work along with the club activities and she developed skills to present her ideas effectively to others. She attended the club regularly and worked collaboratively with other club members and her group on the case.

Kim was successful in educating others in both the club and the school about her case. There was a supportive relationship that gave Kim confidence in developing skills and leadership. An inclusive relationship among students helped them feel comfortable in sharing and learning about each other’s interests in the cases that they chose. In educating others in the
club and the entire school about her case, Kim developed skills in presentation and research, along with many leadership qualities such as taking on responsibilities, and planning for an event.

I noticed in my interviews with both Kim and the club leader that they had a keen interest in the Amnesty International cases. I found that there were rich discussions in the club among the members about Amnesty International cases that helped make students more interested in researching the cases further. Students shared their ideas with each other and the club leader. They made decisions on what they would do individually or with the group about the cases they chose.

There were boys and girls in the club and they were from different grades and different ethnicities. The club leader believed that the club attracted everyone. As she said “it is a great learning experience for them…” The club leader highlighted that a student who wanted to present and discuss an issue should be well informed about that issue. As Kim said, research was crucial to informing others, “I had to find out about the issue myself…”

Table 6 illustrates the summary map of Kim’s engagement with the Global Amnesty Club. Table 7 provides a summary map of the Global Amnesty Club leader’s responses. For instance, under the heading of barriers, Kim stated that she had a fear of public speaking, but under support, it shows how Kim overcame the barrier because of a supportive club environment. Because the club members cared about Kim’s point of view and about the case when she was presenting, it was easier for her to overcome her fear of public speaking. There were other problems brought up by the club leader such as the need for more financial support to run the club.
Table 6- Summary Map of Student’s Responses From the Global Amnesty Club

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student from Global Amnesty Club</th>
<th>MOTIVATION</th>
<th>Years of experience in the club</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>1 Yr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To learn teamwork, leadership and new skills</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To learn about global and local issues</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Attend the club on a regular basis</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student from Global Amnesty Club</th>
<th>LEADERSHIP</th>
<th>Years of experience in the club</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>1 Yr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Contribute to group decision-making</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lead the group in explaining what the issues are and how they can help</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Choosing and presenting the issue and educating peers about human rights issues</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student from Global Amnesty Club</th>
<th>SUPPORTS</th>
<th>Years of experience in the club</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>1 Yr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Club environment was supportive (e.g., attentive and cared) – she felt comfortable in presentation</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student from Global Amnesty Club</th>
<th>BARRIERS</th>
<th>Years of experience in the club</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kim</td>
<td>1 Yr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Public speaking fear</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 6 (continued) - Summary Map of Student’s Responses From the Global Amnesty Club

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SKILLS DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>Student from Global Amnesty Club</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Years of experience in the club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Yr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communication</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Collaboration</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Public speaking</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teamwork</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Research</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RELATIONSHIPS</th>
<th>Student from Global Amnesty Club</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Years of experience in the club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Yr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inclusive and care</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Friendship and respect with group members</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Working cohesively as a team</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPACT</th>
<th>Student from Global Amnesty Club</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Years of experience in the club</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Yr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To learn teamwork, leadership and new skills</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Develop perseverance and responsibility</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Participate again next year</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Getting to know students in other grades</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7 - Summary Map of the Global Amnesty Club Leader’s Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOTIVATION</th>
<th>Global Amnesty Club Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flora Sanchez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The club started from a student proposal</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The club leader is passionate about social justice and human rights</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students are passionate about human rights and they can channel that passion through the club</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEADERSHIP</th>
<th>Global Amnesty Club Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flora Sanchez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students choose the cases from the Amnesty International Organization list</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students empowerment in decision making</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students take a lot of initiative, leadership, and planning</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students have leadership opportunities to explore</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPACT</th>
<th>Global Amnesty Club Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flora Sanchez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• It’s a learning experience about local and global issues, and educating peers</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The club activities will help students in the future to be better leaders</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Self-confidence will be enhanced</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 7 (continued) - Summary Map of the Global Amnesty Club Leader’s Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RELATIONSHIP</th>
<th>Global Amnesty Club Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flora Sanchez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Friendship, respect, inclusive, and care</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SKILLS DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>Global Amnesty Club Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flora Sanchez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Planning and organizing the activities</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Time management in doing ECA and school work</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Managing the budget</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Research</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUPPORTS</th>
<th>Global Amnesty Club Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flora Sanchez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sharing  skills and knowledge with others</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Different clubs involved in cooperation and communication with each other to choose one event for the school</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BARRIERS</th>
<th>Global Amnesty Club Leader</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flora Sanchez</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make sure students do not disclose personal info when signing a petition</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Need of more financial support</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
THE SOCIAL JUSTICE CLUB

Linda Carter and Jane Walker were the leaders in the Social Justice Club, along with Flora Sanchez who was the co-advisor and assisted them in running the club. The Social Justice Club was run by Linda, and both Jane and Flora, who used to run the Green Club. This year, they merged two clubs. Jane explained that the same students were in both clubs and a lot of the time she and Flora ended up helping Linda in the Social Justice Club. So they thought it would be easier for everybody to merge the two clubs.

There were 53 students in the club but the number of participants in each meeting ranged from 30 to 37. Students worked in different groups. Some worked on production of the video for the Toy Mountain, some worked on covering boxes with coloured paper; they would then use the boxes to collect the donated toys and foods. Some worked on speech and writing announcements for the school about the upcoming events. There were a lot of discussions among the groups’ members or they were assisting each other; sometimes the club’s leaders joined each group to guide and assist them. Different groups of students worked together with Linda Carter to prepare the video production. Ron, Rose, Christina, and Sara were among them.

Linda Carter explained the club activities depend “on the year and the students. So different years we’ve done different things and it really depends on what interests them.” She gave examples of the past club’s activities. Two years ago, they raised money for a school in Ghana. Last year they raised money by holding a penny campaign to get fresh drinking water for a developing country; also, one student wanted to do something on Valentine’s Day for the Heart and Stroke Foundation. Linda continued that the representatives of the Foundation came in and spoke to the students, and then the students designed the promotion and initiative. Students made candy grams, sold them to other students and raised money for Heart and Stroke. This year so far
the club has been collecting toys to donate to families in need, and running a Food Drive to raise money for the Food Bank. In addition to these activities, Jane Walker explained some of the activities have previously been part of the Green Club. “Every year, in spring and fall we would go out and clean up our neighbourhood, pick up garbage, whatever is around and so a lot of students came into the justice club – so it’s environmental justice as well…”

From the club leaders’ explanations, the objective of the club was to get students involved in the community around them; as Jane best said “to give students an opportunity to be engaged in their community.” Jane described the club activities as “raising [students’] awareness, but also raising money or getting things for a good cause. Around Halloween we did the ‘we scare hunger’ with Save the Children, so we’re bringing in food… Then we started bringing in toys to give to the toy mountain drive.”

The Club’s Members Motivation for being in the Club

All four students attended all the club meetings with the exception of Christina, who missed two meetings due to appointments. Club members spent much of their time discussing issues and related projects; decisions needed to be made and worked on individually or as groups on parts of the club’s projects. Field notes of observations highlighted that students were engaged throughout the club meetings in teamwork to contribute to their groups’ and the club’s activities. Field notes also indicated that always after 4:30 pm – the end of the time for the club meeting - many of students and the club’s leaders were still in the club and working. Everyone enjoyed what they were doing and wanting to accomplish their tasks. Jane described student engagement this way:

Sometimes there’s lots of little conversations going on, sometimes a lot of laughter, sometimes too much laughter… but sometimes everyone is really focused and people
walk in – ‘I didn’t know anyone was in the room’. And the room is full of students, kids, teachers, staff everywhere. There was a good silence.

The common interest of students was to become involved with local and global organizations that helped people and to learn about various human rights issues. They also had individual reasons for staying with the club. Christina believed that her interests had increased since she joined the club. In the first year she did more helping with the tasks that had been initiated by others; this year, “I can now help and be one of the kids who can initiate and help to spark one of the events we have to do.” Christina described her collaboration with others in doing different tasks for the club:

I get to help start certain events and I got to help initiating certain things and some of the researching, and being contacting with people and doing some of that…. And also just working with other people, I like how their ideas affect what we’re doing.

Christina added that in the school events, club members “can organize a lot of stuff that other students [in the school] can benefit from and learn about different stuff. I think we have been really successful.” Sara joined Christina and talked about how the club interested her, “I really like the independence that the club gives us and how students run it; we’re allowed to choose all of the issues we feel are important to us… environmental, or hunger or poverty…” Sara continued: “Each year I enjoy going out to clean up a park or a trail – seeing the difference that we make…” Rose agreed with Sara and said, “I do definitely enjoy the way Social Justice runs. I love the independence, getting guidance if you need it. I enjoy this experience.” Rose continued, “I’m new in the club. I love it because I just like helping people. It talked about a fundraising and we got to hear a lot of inspirational speakers.” Ron showed his interest in the club by pointing to his involvement in several group projects, such as a Clean Water Project where they brought in all their pennies to help supply people with clean water in other countries; “you are actually helping other people. Those are advantages to the club…” In the club, students
were able to initiate, plan and organize the activities that they felt were important to them, and that motivated them to fully engage with the club.

Both Linda and Jane acknowledged students’ experiences of independence. Jane said: “So we [the club’s leaders] try to let the students’ take leadership, ‘what would you guys like to do? How should we do this?’” Linda pointed out that the purpose of her leadership position “is to hold the meetings… to gather the students to help them plan initiatives that they feel are important… we kind of talk about – ‘is this something that you’re interested in pursuing?’” Linda added that the students’ experiences of independence when they could choose their club tasks, such as initiating, planning and organizing, resulted in their becoming more “creative”.

When the students can be creative, when they can think up campaigns, when they can make a video; that is probably what helps them. Some students get really creative with videos, some get creative with design, and some get creative with how to present ideas. I think the creativity is what engages some most. Each student is very different too. I have some that love public speaking. Rose will stand up and she loves to talk. Ron is a really good organizer. So each student has their own thing that really captures them and they learn more about what their skills and talents are from being in a club.

Club leaders stated that the club gives students an opportunity to be engaged in their community. Both Jane and Linda pointed out that the reason the club interested students a lot was that both students and the club’s leaders were able to take part in building community within the school. Jane said “students who I have not taught for a while, I still get to see them… and do stuff together” and that’s why she believes the club is “so good” for them. Jane described how students’ experiences in the club interested them:

In general it’s a great opportunity for students to do something that they consider important. A great opportunity for them to work with students from different grade levels as well. Maybe often in clubs they end up working with people who they would not on a day to day basis have a chance to work with, especially students in different grade levels.

Linda also explained that when students became involved in the community around them that prompted them to think how they can help others.
Certain campaigns are run that happened over and over again… the food drive is usually one of them. The traditions are we usually bring in speakers for the whole school, we run all sorts of initiatives, depending on what students are interested in.

Linda explained how excited the students were in doing the food drives. “They’ve gone to food banks because they want to see the food; it helps make that really real for them. They have a chance to see how their help makes a difference.” This year students were interested in helping the typhoon victims in the Philippines. “It was immediate, students wanted to do something… they organized that and we made stickers.”

Jane said that it’s a very “enjoyable experience” to be in the club; “to be able to do good for the community, that makes everyone in the club feel really good.” “I hope students will have an opportunity to [say] ‘I wish I could do something like this’”. Linda expressed her opinion about what ECA means to students.

It’s important for students to have a place where they feel safe, where they can take chances and grow. They need these opportunities – having clubs, having ECA, is almost more important than what’s going on in the class. … Maybe not more important, but what you remember about when you went to school. Do you remember your math class? Or do you remember when you met with your friends, raising money for a cause and how well it went? Or going on a school trip or planning an event? Those are the things you remember… you don’t necessarily remember your physics class or chemistry class. You remember your friends and the relationships. That’s why having clubs, building community, building friendships, relationships, getting kids to work together is really huge.

Jane shared her passion about being in the ECA clubs. As long as she has been a teacher she has been doing ECA, even when she was a student herself: “… for me that’s some of my enjoyable times with students and I want to pass that on.” She found that clubs “… provide a venue for people to share interests and to hopefully accomplish something.” Jane continued that “we have a Chess Club; the purpose is to learn how to play chess, and to enjoy each other’s company and to play a game.”
Building Community through Inclusive and Collaborative Relationships

In the students’ group meeting, each group of two or three students joined the conversations about the specific parts which they were engaged. They carefully listened to their peers’ and club leaders’ suggestions. Some students were involved in specific parts of producing the video for the Toy Mountain; they were self-confident enough to ask for help and openly discussed the issues at hand so they could get peers’ and leaders’ constructive ideas. Ron stated that there was a lot of cooperation among his group members in the club. Christina said “when you join a club you are meeting people you don’t necessarily know, but over time they become your new friends both in and outside of the club.” Rose agreed with Christina and added, “even if you don’t have that many close friends, you can still manage a way to meet a lot of new people.” For Sara the club gave her an opportunity to meet new people. She explained that “you have people in your grade, maybe you’ve joined because your friends have joined. When groups are formed to plan things, you already head towards your friends.” She continued that, after a while “… you find people with the same interests as you… you learned someone’s name you didn’t know before.”

Field notes from the observations recorded that students shared their skills and knowledge with those who needed them. Cooperation was noticeable among students from different grades. In group work, respectful, inclusive and collaborative relationships were seen among all students. Older students listened carefully to younger ones’ suggestions, and encouraged them to come up with ideas or feedback to do the tasks. In group work, students learned more about each other and shared tasks according to their interests and strengths. Some prepared the announcement, some did preparation for collecting foods, some were good in art and they drew and made billboards, some counted the food, some researched about how to make the film, some asked other students in the school to participate.
Groups in the club often consisted of boys and girls from different grades; their working together to do different parts of a task showed they respected others’ ideas and interests. Rose had confidence in working with a group of older students; when she had questions and needed help, she could ask them for their assistance. Rose said: “I’ve learned from them in different ways – not just academically but the way to do things…” A supportive relationship was very helpful for Christina to do her tasks; she said:

I’ve been helped in many different ways… everyone’s helping me, Sara’s helping me with my speech. People show me the ropes and make you feel comfortable with how the club works and how things are done. People help me when I try something new – or something happened when I wasn’t there and they would explain it to me.

Students helped each other in tasks; Jane said helping was “a good outcome” of the club. Younger students were able to accomplish their tasks by learning from the older ones. Helping relationships among students from different grades brought them together, as Jane said:

… that’s just community building within the school. When those grade 7’s pass the grade 10’s and 11’s in the hall, they know this person – their name, that it’s a kind person they can ask a question, or ask for help…

Senior students felt comfortable with helping others in the club activities. Ron indicated:

“Since I am in grade twelve, I am one of the older students so it’s kind of like more of a role – model role. I just try to interact with them; it’s a pretty casual relationship.” Helping younger students, as Christina put it:

I think it’s actually just my way of giving back because when I was in grade seven and eight, when I was a young kid and didn’t know how to do anything people would always come up to me. ‘Do you need help?’ and they’d show me how to do it. This is my way of just completing the cycle. You’re helped by someone when you’re little and when you’re older you have to help someone else. So that’s how the world works.

Linda said having different grades working together helped students build relationships. Students are not anymore, as Jane put it, “strangers”. Jane added: “It’s so easy to have the school stratified by grades; kids in one grade don’t know the other. We really try to provide
opportunities so that they can know each other.” Jane continued that students in the club come from grade seven to twelve. When they come into the room, they usually sit with their friends from class.

We do try to encourage them to work together so we’re asking for volunteers, try and pick volunteers from different ages. If there’s a group of young students, ask the seniors – ‘do you think you could help these guys work on X?’… So we definitely encourage them to work together.

Jane continued that sometimes the teachers are pushing this a little bit and often the students even do it on their own. Linda stated “having a student body that feels like they belong” is very important for the school. She continued that:

Our school is really able to do it because of a number of things. One is the size of the school; we don’t have thousands of kids. So having a smaller school, we know our students, I know students who I’ve never taught before. If they came in grade nine but they’ve been in clubs with me, it helps to build community.

Whatever the activities were in the club, there were supportive and friendly relationships among the club members. Jane described her relationships with the students as “you get a chance to talk to students as you’re working about random everyday stuff – your favourite book, your movie – and a chance to work with them on something that’s totally different…”

Diversity among students with respect to ages, genders, grades, and ethnicities were noticeable in the Social Justice Club. There was respect in the students’ relationships; they shared and listened to each other’s ideas and interests. Linda stated that “people become more accepting of each other when they know them.” Linda recognized that having students work together “they realize everybody is more similar than they are different… especially if we’re talking about an issue where we have different sides. Working together in ECA helps to build community in our school.” Linda continued that the club members made decisions together about whatever they were doing; they “have the chance; it improves dialogue and relationships.” Jane
also believed that the club provided an opportunity for dialogue between students who normally do not get together for instance students in different age groups. Based on the students and the club leaders’ discussions, relationships in the club were founded on respect, and sharing interests and ideas, all of which assisted community building among the club members.

**Leadership Development in the Social Justice Club**

On one occasion when I observed a club session, there were several groups of students in the club. They worked together in groups to prepare different parts of the activities for the club. Some students worked in a group with Linda; they were discussing a part of the Toy Mountain video that they planned to produce. There was a combination of different teams in the video production that were working with the club leaders to prepare the video. Christina, Rose and Ron were among them and were involved with others in planning and developing the idea of how to get the video done. Linda explained that they developed suggestions of how to organize it, and they decided to contact some grade twelve students who might become part of their cast when they were filming.

Linda talked about how students took on leadership roles. She gave an example of an activity entirely run by the students. Linda described how students first gathered knowledge by researching the importance of the activity and then planning how to do it. Linda explained:

We were looking at Toy Mountain and what we wanted to do was create a video, a commercial, something with the kids in it to talk about why we wanted to collect toys, how important it is. So we looked at different web sites that had commercials because it is a well-known charity. They [students] created ideas of what they wanted their video to look like which was totally different… So they were taking the idea from scratch… they came up with an idea and their idea was to throw presents from room to room, to talk about the Salvation Army who runs the campaign… when they catch, they make it bigger and talk about why Evergreen High School, and how people get involved. Then they throw it into another room in the school so it looks like the present is being tossed from room to room within the school.
Linda continued that students are “leading the club, we don’t necessarily plan everything”, she gave the example of Christina and Ron who developed the idea of getting the video, contacting people, and helping organize during filming. She added that “they developed suggestions so they’re developing leadership…”

Jane pointed to the significance of student engagement in developing leadership by saying that the club “gives students a great opportunity to take leadership roles if they are ready, [and] to experience what it’s like trying to organize something.” Jane continued that students’ leadership of the activities gave them “a feeling of accomplishment when they’ve pulled it off. There’s also that feeling that they’ve been able to help people.” Linda explained that “when someone takes great leadership and it comes together and they receive feedback that they’ve really made a difference.” Linda gave an example of an activity that engaged a student in leadership. Ron decided to work on a film on Ghana and the school there; he presented that proposal to the club and then to the school. The club helped him to develop a campaign and helped him to gather donations. Linda continued:

… just that a sense of accomplishment for him having achieved all of that. I think that’s really…. When they see that they can really make a difference. They say to themselves ‘I can do that’. Because I don’t think he realized when he was planning his project – he knew he wanted to make a difference but I don’t think he realized that he could change the whole school and the whole school could work together with him all just by asking and making it organizing.

Jane brought up an example of student engagement in leadership that contributed significantly to the development of students’ knowledge, awareness, skills, and community building in supporting their peers. As Jane described an event that took place at Evergreen: “It was purely student driven.” Last year the grade eleven and twelve students did a play; a grade twelve student actually produced it. The Duct Tape Brigade Club was helping him to produce props and sets and worked for the students who were his actors, who were in rehearsals all the
time. “He got people from all over the school, teachers and students… in this play, helping him out. It was amazing.” They were “able to perform a good, long play” that students had written, played in, directed and produced.

Linda mentioned the importance of researching each charity and organization. Linda explained that the involvement of students with the organizations who hosted the charities provided them with firsthand knowledge about the missions and objectives of those organizations and that encouraged them to engage in leadership activities. Students had opportunities to visit a Food Bank and they invited the organization’s representative to come speak at Evergreen.

Last year we had one student who wanted to do something on Valentine’s Day for the Heart and Stroke Foundation. The Heart and Stroke Foundation came in, they spoke to the students then the students designed what the promotion, what the initiative would be. Jane pointed out the importance of research; it helped students in leading others to the activities. “Some students would do the research so we could help educate people about this topic. That would go into the announcements day to day, that would be ongoing education for the school.”

Both Linda and Jane pointed to the importance of students’ involvement in all the club’s decision making that prompted their engagement with leadership. Linda said that when the club wanted to start a new project, the club members discussed their choices and made decisions.

We decided we wanted to do something last year for Valentine’s Day and we were not sure which charity. So one group wanted to do the Heart and Stroke Foundation, another to do something else… let’s present the case and then we will vote… and we will choose between them. Linda added that any conflict happened in decision making was “mediated through discussion and consensus”; she considered that a learning opportunity for student leadership.
According to Jane leadership changed from project to project and students took leadership in different things. Linda added that in each opportunity students gained leadership qualities, such as:

Risk-taking: standing up in front of their peers and talking to them about an issue, that is definitely taking a risk. Rose does that, she loves to speak in front of people. Perseverance, keeping with the campaign, and making sure that every day things are being counted, things are happening, making the announcements, sticking to it. Cooperation, working together with people in your groups, when we did the food drive, there were groups of people who had to count food. Well you had to make sure you were working together, that everybody took turns, turn taking, and responsibility.

Jane said that the club “provides opportunities for students to take leadership, also opportunities for students to follow as well.” Christina described her leadership when she was in charge of doing research for one of the club activities.

I actually got one of my friends in grade 10 to help me with the research. That would assist and guide me because there were so many web sites to look at. I have had the opportunity to be a leader and in that I also got the opportunity to be led by others.

Rose was happy that she had a chance to be led by the older students:

Mostly the older students take leadership. I like this idea. I maybe could be a leader but I really like the older student guidance because I wouldn’t be able to find my way. It’s my 1st year, I’m still new to the school and I appreciate the older students that help us.

Older students’ guidance gave Rose confidence to lead students in her own age group; “I’m almost the team representative in my class, so I’m kind of the leader in grade seven in a few cases…” For Ron, involvement in different activities engaged him in leadership and he became more used to working with everyone and organizing activities. As he put it “… but I think I’ve grown. I’ve actually learned how to be a leader.” Ron continued that he gained experience in leading events and participating in different club activities. “Working with other people and working directly with teachers to make sure everyone’s ideas are heard and the event is a
success.” Those have resulted in developing several leadership qualities for him. Ron explained those:

I’m going to say respect for others first and foremost… if you have people following you, you have to be able to respect them. And then you have to make decisions when you need to resolve issues.

Ron continued that students support each other in the club: “we bounce ideas off each other. If one person can’t make a certain commitment, we fill in for the other person– just help each other out.” A great sense of responsibility to do his best for the club and helping other students was Ron’s contribution to leadership throughout the club’s activities.

I want to work well with others because if we work well, then the activity will succeed. We will be able to raise enough money or whatever we are trying to accomplish.

Students chose their responsibilities; Christina explained how they came up with specific responsibilities to get the tasks done.

We [club’s members] make a list on the board, we separate in groups and then you take it from there. How you will do it – go to the people and decide – we want to do something like this. Take that initiative and then go to one of the teachers and say ‘would it be possible for us to do this’. Nine times out of ten they would say ‘yes’.

Students talked about some of the responsibilities and experiences they had in different club activities which helped them develop leadership. As Christina said “we spent an entire afternoon organizing, doing food baskets. It was an amazing experience – I got to see behind the scenes and how it works. I got to help them with that.” Sara said “we have an on-going job you have to be responsible for. For example, I have to keep counting the food that comes in, on a daily basis. It’s my responsibility.” Rose stated; “usually every time we separated ourselves into three or four different things – food drive or sort the food or we are also thinking about Toy Mountain… and every time we did different things.” Ron explained that sometimes he was responsible for supporting some of the activities that were run by the club. He gave an example that the other
day he went around and asked students to buy two dollar dance tickets to raise money for the Philippines typhoon relief. He was so happy about his effort that he was able to help.

The Social Justice Club leaders explained their leadership in the club. Linda considered her leadership as one who supports students. As she put it “I support the students to do things”, and she added “then following their [students] lead”. Linda believed that her leadership in the club enhanced the development of student leadership and responsibilities. Jane had the same leadership approach which was “facilitating” student leadership. The club leaders often took different responsibilities among themselves based on their interests and expertise. Jane gave an example that:

Everyone’s got their strengths that they bring to it. We try and assign roles depending on what people’s strengths are. For the other club I do the duct tape brigade… the group that does all the arts stuff for the play… for that one I have a more direct leadership role.

Both the students and the club leaders’ discussions show students had a significant role in running the club. Students experienced leadership such as initiating, planning, decision-making, organizing, and developing suggestions for the club.

**Creating a Place Where Students Can Learn About Their Skills and Talents**

Students in the club, who were involved in the production of the video, prepared all the necessary things for the Toy Mountain. They involved in a variety of tasks for the club events. At a meeting that I observed there were about eight students sitting at a table with Linda and discussing the event. A combination of different groups worked together on the video production. Jane and other students laboured on other parts of the activities, covering boxes with the coloured papers and making them ready to use them as donation boxes. It was very close to the event. In the last few weeks, students stayed longer at the club meetings. Most arranged to
meet during the week again and worked with their groups on their tasks to keep up with the activities’ planning schedules. They wanted to finish their tasks and get everything ready for the events.

Students dedicated themselves to the club and were able to manage both club and academic responsibilities even when it was close to the final exams of the term. This especially affected Ron, since he was in grade twelve. Ron said: “I’m a good student.” He added that he has “good time-management skills.” He gave an hour to the club every Tuesday when they met before an event. “I know that time is there so I work around it.” Both Sara and Christina also said they developed time management skills. Sara explained “I am the oldest grade here and my work load may be double or triple… so taking even an hour after school time is really a bit of a sacrifice… I feel I’m really doing something to help but I have to manage my time on Tuesday.” Christina agreed with Sara and said:

I don’t have time to do all the work and balance all my ECA. We do somehow find a balance – if we need to meet earlier, you need to come late or miss a meeting. The teachers are very understanding of that. I find my balance by… I’ll go to the meeting and then immediately after, I’ll sit down for an hour straight… the amount of time I allotted for that meeting… and I’ll work. I make a list for myself of my work and I’ll do it.

As both Sara and Christina put it, they developed “multi-tasking” skills so that they could be involved in different tasks at the same time. Christina stated:

Two years ago was the first time we ever held a dance at Evergreen and there were three of us who actually just sat down and wanted to do it. We had to manage everything, the budget, what day, how to do it, how to get the decorations, how to inform people about it, how to get them hyped up about it. It was a big job… As we started to do it more people would come with ideas. They wouldn’t come to join the group of people… they just come to bring ideas, and then went back to what they were doing. It would be the three of us would had to learn how to multi-task.

Students talked about skills that they developed in the Social Justice Club. In organizing a school dance for a charity, Ron and a group of students were involved in doing different parts of that
event. Ron developed skills in making the posters, making the tickets, getting people to sell the tickets, making a schedule, decorating everything on the day, and cleaning up at the end.

All four students - Christina, Sara, Rose, and Ron - mentioned they had developed skills in research, communication, leadership, and collaboration with the other people. Rose believed that the skills she developed in the club helped her raise her knowledge level. Rose stated that “I’ve learned a lot about poverty…” through research on online websites and discussions with other club members. Rose developed communication and research skills. Sara developed “people skills, working with people…” Christina learned about “professionalism and how you have to make yourself appear to other people who aren’t necessarily in Evergreen High School and you have to maintain that image.” Christina added:

You do learn something new from each ECA. I have developed skills like leadership in Social Justice, research skills and life skills like communication, patience thinking about things from a different angle so creativity…

According to the club leaders, students developed a variety of skills in the club. As Linda mentioned, “… perseverance, getting an idea off the ground, trying to get permission, knowing how to write up a proposal… often times they have to present things to the principal and explain why they want to do it.” As Linda said, students “have to be persuasive.” Jane found that students developed various skills in the club. She added that “students will often find they have a skill they didn’t know they had or they can take their artistic skills and show it off – and do a background for something… there’s a great feeling of accomplishment.” Jane said, the reason that students were able to develop various skills and try something new was related to their feeling of confidence gained from the supports they had in the club. Jane noted:

For the Duct Tape Brigade, they’re making the bases for hats for the play, making them out of paper mache, and so when somebody’s hat base didn’t turn out quite right, instead of – ‘sad I got a bad mark, mom will be mad.’ It was more an opportunity where they
could show off just how bad their hat was and wear it around as a terrible, ugly piece of fashion. More of a chance to be fun and not quite so serious. And also no one’s ever going to say [students] ‘you did really badly on that.’ If it’s something practical, where you’re putting it together, ‘Oh, you put your flower together a little funny, let’s do the next one differently.’ It gives less opportunity to do something that would be negative. There’s just so much more opportunity for them to feel successful – it’s more of that ‘Ha, Ha, I did it wrong, I’ll do it differently next time.’

**Supports and Barriers**

Jane brought up two factors that could support student engagement with the club. First, the “wide range [of clubs] is a good idea”, and the second “the ability for clubs to be visible in a school community.” Jane continued that when the clubs are “… visible so that people who are not involved can see, ‘oh look, that looks like fun. What are those guys doing?’ … they might get interested because maybe it wasn’t what they thought it was.” Jane’s mention of a club’s visibility in the school reminded me of my observations. One of the key elements that I recorded in visiting the club each time was that students brought friends as visitors and explained to them what they were doing.

Jane said that if the club needs help for running the events, many teachers and students at Evergreen would help the club. She gave an example of a school dance that was used to raise funds; it needed a lot more than three teachers, “teachers on duty, supervise, safety, all of that… we don’t have trouble getting other teachers to volunteer to help us with that.” Jane added, students in the club wanted to have various events and they devoted their time to support these events, as she said “generally, people accomplish what they need to accomplish.”

Jane also referred to a specific difficulty or barrier: “teacher time.” She explained that this is the total amount of time teachers have for teaching and running the clubs. Jane added:

I don’t know if that’s always taken into account in terms of assigning other work teachers have to do… we love it but it does add to the load sometimes, especially at the time of
year when there’s a lot of academic deadlines… that weight of all those extra responsibilities.

Jane continued:

All of the clubs that you see running are because people want to. We all feel very passionate we all want to do this. The only problem is there’s only so many hours in the day. So these hours come out of personal time. It’s all after school or the morning… especially for teachers who have more than one club. After a while, you say ‘why am I so exhausted?’ that’s because of all these extra-responsibilities at work that you have taken on willingly you want to do it but it can become heavy to bear sometimes… I think it’s very positive for students, it is very positive for staff generally, but that’s the one downside. It’s just so many demands on your time.

Although teacher time may not seem a direct barrier to student engagement, it had a noticeable impact on the club when the club’s leader/teacher has an important role in running the club.

Linda stated a similar thought about the difficulty in running ECA for teachers, “running clubs at different times may be a way to get more students involved but we really don’t have a lot of different times… It really is tough to do clubs outside of our time.”

There was another limitation in running the club that brought up by Linda: “Sometimes it’s difficult because we’re not the only club who wants to do things, who wants to raise money… we can’t do another campaign while someone else is doing one.” Linda gave an example: “we did our food drive and there was a co-drive. We wanted to do one kind of winter drive too for clothing but we didn’t want to do that when that co-drive was going on because that would be competing against ourselves.”

One of the other drawbacks that Jane saw that affected students in the club was “…simply how busy the students are. They’re drawn in so many ways and so many directions, especially the seniors with university marks coming up – for them to devote that time and effort to something else can be very difficult.” Linda found that students’ “…scheduling, and timing” to join the club can create difficulty for them. Some students “get picked up at 3:20… so most of
our clubs are after school and some parents that is not part of their plan.” Some clubs meet
during lunchtime, as she explained which “might also help to get more students involved. At
lunchtime, the amount of time to sit and to plan is very little. There’s 40 minutes of lunch till
they get their lunch, you’ve only got a meeting of about 20 minutes which isn’t always good.”

Although students were interested in other ECA and wanted to join more clubs, a major
problem for them was school-work. Both Sara and Christina who were in upper grades found
that their school-work and academic responsibilities took time away from more ECA
participation or sometimes reduced their participation. Even Rose, the student in grade seven,
said “I have to narrow down to a few [ECA], because there’s homework and stuff.” Sara talked
about her situation this year:

I’m becoming more and more restrictive, it’s forcing me to prioritize which clubs I need.
On that topic, it’s more important to me because specific clubs I can put on my hours.
Because I am in grade ten going to eleven now, I’m going to choose those clubs where I
get hours that will benefit me more than just for fun. That’s really important for me. In
grade ten to twelve, I want to be more into Student Council and Social Justice Club and

to get more volunteer hours.

A difficult challenge that Linda recognized in the club “would be having students who
are stretched thin, having them keep their commitments to be at a certain place, to be at a
meeting where they were supposed to be.” Linda explained that "we start off with a huge group,
and then as the term gets to the end, we have a smaller group who are really committed, and
come regularly.” The difficulty is “you plan for 40 who are in the group but by the end of the
term we are down to about 20…” Linda said: “I think it engages some of them. Some of them
join it, say ‘yes I’ve got it- my citizenship ECA. I’m part of this committee. I’m here and I’ve
done that one thing.’” “Some are really passionate about certain campaigns and they want to do
it.” Linda continued, “I think one of the biggest issues is how do you get the ones who are not so
engaged involved and it’s finding their own path. That is probably the biggest challenge.”
Not everyone is going to want to be in the Justice Club, not everyone is going to want to be in Amnesty but everyone should be doing something that they really love and finding that is sometimes hard for students.

In the meantime, Jane pointed to the difficulty that comes from having many students in a club. The Social Justice Club “is a fairly large club so it’s a little easier if somebody doesn’t want to be engaged and they are just there.” She added that most of the clubs here are much smaller so students can’t sit quietly in a corner and so everyone’s engaged in doing things.

In a larger club, there’s a few [students] who just sit there say, ‘my mom says I have to do community service.’ But they’re a minority. They can’t help themselves; they see everyone else having fun and doing stuff, they usually start to do it as well. When they see everyone else in the club doing something, they usually don’t need too much encouragement to get in, they will try and be withdrawn but eventually they get in.

Both Christina and Sara also felt the same that the club was large and sometimes it was hard for them to fully engage with the club’s activities. Sara said:

I think everyone’s taken a positive spin on it [the club]. This particular year the club has gained some popularity, so it’s been quite crazy. Sometimes voices aren’t heard. There are so many people in that room, and it feels a bit rushed sometimes. It’s not as pleasant or fun as a club should be. Enjoyment should be a large priority. This is something we are committing to and a sacrifice of time to be here. If I’m not going to enjoy being here, why am I here?

One barrier that Sara brought up was getting other people to give their time, and contribution, “we don’t have enough time.” She found that “We may have trouble fundraising to cover our expenses…” Christina found that the trouble she had with fundraising wasn’t that she had to ask people in the school who were willing to donate money and happy to participate, but she had to ask those “who drag their feet… [saying] ‘Do we have to do it?’” It was challenging and very hard as Christina found “… always thinking of how to get everyone involved in competition, a game or something like that… that’s the one thing I don’t particularly love. It’s having to push certain people, ‘why don’t you vote? Why don’t you do it?’”
Impact

In the club, students worked with their peers and teachers (the club’s leaders) and they were interested in their activities and events. They wanted to get everything ready for planned events. Jane found that successes that students had in the club’s activities greatly impacted students’ confidence.

Students had the opportunity to try and accomplish that [tasks]. And to come out of it with a feeling that not only have they helped people, they’ve participated in these things, we hope they will have some good memories of what they did in clubs. The biggest thing is self-assurance. ‘I know how to do this’, and self-esteem.

Jane added that dialogue and collaboration among diverse groups of students to accomplish tasks had a great impact in building community.

Linda brought up that each activity had its own discussions among the club members. For instance, when they raised food for the Food Bank, they talked about “food security” issues that some people have. She said the club’s discussions, research, and visiting the Food Bank helped students see the importance the Food Bank has for some people. Linda continued that when they did a campaign for fresh water

We talked about… how water is such a vital resource. And again Canada is very blessed. Many countries in the world may have water, but it’s not clean. They get sick from it. So we looked at it, these are … human rights and why they’re so important for us to fight towards.

Linda added that involvement of students with issues in the local and global community not just increased students’ understanding and their obligations as community members but also community development within the school to help others.

Students talked about the impact of ECA on their daily lives and their relationships with their peers. Christina stated that she took any opportunity to help others, “if I see someone
struggling with something, I will come up and say ‘do you need some help? Here’s a different way to try it.’ I do help them through it, and help them develop a skill that they haven’t had before.” In the club, Ron always helped others in explaining what they planned to do and worked with different groups of students from different grades. Ron said that he would help others to develop skills and leadership: “if they have to sell tickets, I will teach them; you have to get this or that, sign here, read the rules.” Ron said that he was very “happy” that he can help others. Sara stated that when other students couldn’t stick to their schedules and designated times and didn’t show up to count food for the food drive; “I’d take the responsibility when people didn’t do their job. I find that people respect me…” Rose stated that she learned to respect other students’ feelings and “try not to upset their feelings if you don’t like them… if I do hurt someone, I have to go tell them ‘sorry’”.

Ron continued that the club provided him an opportunity “… to meet other people and also make a difference in the community.” He gave an example of the Clean Water Project where the club raised money to give to some developing countries. He added that more students had joined the Clean Water Project and he got a chance to meet them. Students and the club leaders’ discussions showed the impact of the club; students supported each other and made friends as they accomplished the club activities.

Key Findings

The club members developed relationships that were based on respect, sharing knowledge, and supporting each other, all of which gave them self-confidence to engage with other club members in teamwork and community building. Students became empowered in leadership of the club, initiating, planning, and organizing activities. Students experienced leadership and the feeling of success that they were able to help others as community members both within the
school and outside the school community. Experiencing independence developed student empowerment and a sense of ownership over the tasks that were based on their choices and interests. Students committed themselves to the success of the club’s activities that contributed to their skill development.

The common motivation for all the students’ participation in the Social Justice Club was development of leadership skills, involvement with the local and global issues and helping people. The students with previous experience took more leadership than newer students. Ron explained that in the club he assisted and guided younger students in the activities and was a role model to them. Christina also had a leadership role and she took the initiative in the club activities by helping and guiding others. On the other hand, Rose, the younger student, said that she needed guidance in the club, but at the same time she loved independence. She was not ready to lead others yet but by seeing the seniors involved in leadership, she wanted to learn from them, and gradually one day become like them by assisting and advising others in activities and decision-making.

Christina and Sara talked about their problems when they were leading other students in fund raising and voting. Their discussions not only showed the challenges they faced in those activities, but also showed their commitment to the club activities and how they felt their activities were important for the entire school. They put as much effort into the club activities as they could.

Some students had concerns regarding the structure and running of the club. Sara felt that the club was too large. Christina was also concerned about the scheduling of the clubs and how that would affect students’ schedules. This problem was also discussed by the club leader Linda.
Carter. Students’ concerns demonstrated their interest in the club, and in trying to get as many students involved in ECA.

Both teachers have several years of experience and they were both passionate about the Social Justice Club. A barrier for them was scarce teacher time, a point which was brought up by other clubs’ leaders as well. Nonetheless, both Jane Walker and Linda Carter sometimes stayed at the club meetings well over the scheduled time to work on different parts of the club activities and on preparations with the students.

Tables 8 and 9 below are summaries of the Social Justice Club members’ responses. Table 8 consists of a summary map of four students’ responses. Table 9 shows the club leaders’ responses. Each table presents the elements of my research questions: leadership, relationships, skills development, motivation, impact, supports, and barriers.
## Table 8 - Summary Map of students’ Responses From the Social Justice Club

### MOTIVATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENTS IN THE SOCIAL JUSTICE CLUB</th>
<th>Years of experience in the club</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Yr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cristina</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Develop skills and learn about people’s issues
- Being involved with local and global organizations to help people
- Developing skills of leadership and work collaboratively
- Making new friends and enjoying the club
- Independence, choosing the issues (e.g., environmental, poverty) locally and globally
- Need of volunteer hours to graduate from high school
- Discover something new that may end up as your career

### LEADERSHIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENTS IN THE SOCIAL JUSTICE CLUB</th>
<th>Years of experience in the club</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Yr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cristina</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rose</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ron</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Initiating plan and leading club activities
- Taking responsibilities in the club activities
- Cooperating with others
- Helping others
- Guiding others
- Need for older students’ guidance
- Decision-making
- Role model to younger students
- Respecting others and make sure others’ idea are heard

### SUPPORTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STUDENTS IN THE SOCIAL JUSTICE CLUB</th>
<th>Years of experience in the club</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Yr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cristina</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sara</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Supported by the club members
- Teamwork among students in the club
Table 8 (continued) - Summary Map of Students’ Responses in The Social Justice Club

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BARRIERS</th>
<th>STUDENTS IN THE SOCIAL JUSTICE CLUB</th>
<th>Years of experience in the club</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cristina</td>
<td>Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do not have enough time and may have trouble fundraising</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• How to get other students involved in fundraising</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Large club and sometimes the voices are not heard</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of time for doing the school work and more ECA</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SKILLS DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>STUDENTS IN THE SOCIAL JUSTICE CLUB</th>
<th>Years of experience in the club</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cristina</td>
<td>Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Time management</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Managing budget, organizing events</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Conducting research</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Professionalism, people skills</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communication, collaboration, teamwork</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Plan initiatives for an event</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Patient thinking, creativity</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Responsibility, decision making</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RELATIONSHIPS</th>
<th>STUDENTS IN THE SOCIAL JUSTICE CLUB</th>
<th>Years of experience in the club</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cristina</td>
<td>Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Respect, friendship</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Made new friends, support</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPACT</th>
<th>STUDENTS IN THE SOCIAL JUSTICE CLUB</th>
<th>Years of experience in the club</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cristina</td>
<td>Sara</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Helping students in the club and the school</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Being nice to everyone</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Learning about disadvantaged people locally &amp; globally</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teaching and assisting younger students to develop skill</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Making a difference in the community</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9 - Summary Map of the Social Justice Club leaders’ Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LEADERSHIP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Social Justice Club</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda Carter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The club gives students leadership opportunities to engage in the clubs’ project and community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Senior students guide younger students in activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Student choice and involvement in decision making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rotation of leadership among students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Plan initiatives and organize activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developing ideas and suggestions for the activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students educated others about topics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUPPORTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Social Justice Club</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda Carter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supportive relationship with other teachers and students to help club leaders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students devote time to accomplish their tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dividing activities responsibilities among the members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Following students’ leadership and helping them to accomplish tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School leadership supports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Running club at different times helps to get more students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BARRIERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Social Justice Club</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda Carter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The club size was too large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students were busy with assignments; university marks coming up; senior students can’t devote time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher time is limited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Scheduling and timing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RELATIONSHIPS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Social Justice Club</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linda Carter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Respect and friendship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dialogue and constructive discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inclusive relationships – interaction among different students (e.g., grade, gender, ethnicities)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Good relationship between students and club leaders</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9 (continued) - Summary Map of the Social Justice Club leaders’ Responses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SKILLS DEVELOPMENT</th>
<th>The Social Justice Club</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Linda Carter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Communication, collaboration, and perseverance</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Getting ideas off the ground</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Write a proposal and getting the school’s permission</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Organizational skills</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Researching, and planning</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Public speaking</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Money management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MOTIVATION</th>
<th>The Social Justice Club</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Linda Carter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students interested in getting involved with the local/global communities and seeing how their help makes a difference</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wide range of clubs inspire students to participate in ECA</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The club should be visible in a school community</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students develop knowledge and skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMPACT</th>
<th>The Social Justice Club</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Linda Carter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Club provides a venue for students to share interests and to hopefully accomplish something</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The club gives opportunities to take leadership roles</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feeling of accomplishment</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Feeling of being able to help people</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Fun way to learn skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Self-assurance, self-esteem</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Opportunity for dialogue, collaboration, and relationships</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students educated about local/global issues (e.g., food security, fresh water)</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Building friendships, and building community</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER 6
DISCUSSION

In this chapter, findings related to the major research question and subsidiary questions will be discussed. Findings that have emerged throughout discussions with the participants are organized under the following categories: community building, empowerment and ownership, and student engagement and the clubs leaders’ roles.

Community Building

Researchers have found that ECA have the potential to contribute to the student’s sense of identification with the school (Finn, 1989); students who participated had greater levels of school connection (Brown & Evans, 2002; Akos, 2006). Participation helped students develop a bond with the school and teachers (Darling, 2005). Results from this research are consistent with the findings of scholars who state that there is a positive association between ECA participation and students’ feelings of connection to a school community.

The main problem with disengaged students is that “they lack a meaningful personal connection with teachers and others in the school” (Fullan, 2001, p.152). One of the standing findings throughout this study demonstrates a meaningful connection of students with others in the clubs. The engagement of students in community building shows their interests and abilities to connect with others. In citizenship clubs, students engaged in community building within the clubs, and the school, and supported the local and global communities.

Students in the U/14 and U/20 sport clubs were part of their own unique communities. They looked forward to coming to the clubs twice a week. In both clubs, the atmosphere was friendly and based on acceptance, and sharing. Clubs connected students to each other; as a
student in U/20 said, “it’s just great to have a team that you can go to in the morning or after school and support the team as community.” A young student in the U/14 said that he has been “able to get to know his teammates and be more comfortable talking to them.”

In both sport clubs, community means the unity of its members. ‘We’ was a common way for students to describe themselves in relation to teamwork, responsibility, and commitment. Students depended on each other and grew as a community. Students showed their commitments to the success of the clubs by setting up the court, being on time, helping each other, and coming to lunch to mentor their peers on the court. There was a common belief among students that they were part of a team that was bigger than each individual and they wanted to contribute to that. The coach of the U/20 Club commented that there’s a common goal that students come together to achieve. They can grow together; they are all very dependent on each other at times.

In sport clubs, the notion of community is similar to the concept of community in education proposed by Sergiovanni (1994) which is that shared beliefs and values create “a sense of we from a collection of I’s” (p.217). Sergiovanni (1994) added that community relies more on purposes, values, socialization, collegiality and interdependence, and empowerment of its members with a focus on “the commitments, obligations and duties that people feel toward each other…” (p.217)

As the leader of the U/14 Club said, students relied on each other and became like “brothers” to achieve a shared goal and do their best for the team. Even club members who did not play for any reason came to cheer and support the rest of the club. In the volleyball clubs, there were not many disagreements among students and if there were any, they collaboratively found a resolution for them. Students were involved in decision-making to assist in building a team. A student in the U/14 Club described his team as “not six people standing on the field, we
are six people with one mind on the field.” In both volleyball clubs, students were committed to teamwork and obligated to the clubs’ success.

The purposes of the activities in the citizenship clubs were entirely different than the sport clubs. The main purpose of the citizenship clubs’ activities was for participating students to build connections and help communities. Each activity was perceived by club members as a learning experience that brought them together to share knowledge and interests as well as learn from each other.

Community was evident in both citizenship clubs – the Global Amnesty Club and the Social Justice Club. In addition to Sergiovanni’s (1994) explanation of community, which was visible in the clubs, the citizenship clubs also showed a distinctive combination of its member’s values, opinions, and individuals’ personalities. The communities within the citizenship clubs were shaped through dialogue, sharing ideas, and interests of diverse students. The leader of the Global Amnesty Club said her club is a community that “addresses everybody” so that all students could be a part of it. The clubs included everyone’s points of view in all the activities. In the clubs, students with different backgrounds learned about each other’s interests and together they worked on something they considered important. The Social Justice Club was a popular club in the school, due to the fact that the clubs’ activities in community building interested the students.

Activities students did in the citizenship clubs engaged them in community building. Activities such as raising money or food banks were for a good cause and also increased student awareness in the entire school. The student in the Global Amnesty Club was committed to educate and raise the awareness of her case with the whole student body. Another example was a campaign that the older student in the Social Justice Club planned to help a Ghanaian school. As
one of the leaders of the Social Justice Club said, the real success of the campaign was students building a community within the school; “the whole school could work together with him [a student]…” to raise the money. The positive impact of the citizenship club activities for the communities brought students a sense of success.

At Evergreen High School, several events took place in the fall. In an event for Amnesty International week, students introduced their cases to the whole school. Each event at Evergreen brought the whole community together for support. The student body helped the club members do different tasks during the events. Often at Evergreen, students had opportunities to visit organizations that hosted charities that helped others in the community. As well as these visits, the school invited speakers from organizations students were interested in to present for the whole school. Involvement of students with the organizations provided them with knowledge about their missions, brought the whole school together and engaged students with their community. Any particular activity in the citizenship clubs was a chance for students to construct knowledge together about communities. Students actively engaged together for community building.

**Empowerment and Ownership**

Evergreen High School made a commitment to student engagement by empowering students with ownership of their clubs. The school allowed students to initiate clubs based on their own interests. The school emphasized that the clubs’ activities created student empowerment since the main focus was students taking charge and being capable of running the clubs. Student empowerment was a key to expanding the community at Evergreen. This was best shown in the principal’s words about the events and activities that took place in the school: “They [students] are leaders of the school.” They help to “organize” and “lead a group of students.” Leadership
and decision-making were about how students exercised empowerment in all the clubs’ activities.

Empowerment is defined as a continuing development that helps people exercise their ability to gain control over their life and community by acting on issues that they consider important (Hur, 2006; Page & Czuba, 1999). Student empowerment was continuously developed in every club. In the sport clubs, students assisted the club leaders in organizing practices, being involved in decision-making and by helping each other. In the citizenship clubs, students chose the topics, planned and organized the activities, were involved in decision-making and helping each other. Students with more experience stated they were involved more than those with less experience in leadership, decision-making and planning. The inclusion of younger students gave them opportunities to practise decision-making with experienced ones. The success of the events was considered by students to be the result of group leadership and decision-making.

Students were able to be co-constructors of knowledge along with their peers and teachers; as one of the leaders in the Social Justice Club said “part of our task is always finding out what we can do about it [the activity]…” Students shared interests and were involved in others’ cases where they could learn about other students’ interests and opinions. Then they shared what they learned from the club activities with the whole school.

Student empowerment in activities prompted their engagement with the clubs. From case studies of two schools that encouraged student empowerment, McQuillan (2005) found that lack of student engagement in learning can be a student’s “reaction to a lack of empowerment” (p.640). McQuillan’s (2005) study highlighted that, student empowerment “requires not only altering traditional structures and practices but changing beliefs and values as well, in particular how we conceptualize the most fundamental elements of our educational system: Students.”
At Evergreen, the teachers and the principal credited students with a significant part of the school’s accomplishments.

School staff supported students leading whole school events. The principal believed that “they [students] understand that whatever they do they have an impact on their community…” The study by McQuillan (2005) found that “as students become empowered, they are more likely to help empower others” (p.664). The data from this study supports McQuillan’s (2005) finding.

In the clubs, students who were involved in initiating, planning, and organizing activities helped other students to take responsibility. Students in the clubs said they have been helped and helped others to develop skills and leadership and became independent in doing tasks.

A study by Smith et al. (1998) reported “insufficient participation” of students in student councils. They found that these activities “were not recognized by students as serious forms of representation and voice… student councils tended to be seen as representative of only a small, often elite, percentage of the student body…” (Smith et al., 1998, p.126) At Evergreen, on the other hand, many students engaged with the school community. Students were ready to take responsibilities and engaged in discussions, meetings and decisions that influenced them. Student participation was not limited to ‘elite’ students. One student from the Social Justice Club, for example was a president of student council, volunteered in the local Red Cross organization, and tutored elementary students after school. Another student in the club assisted the clubs’ leaders in research and writing announcements. A grade eleven student in U/14 Club was an assistant coach for the entire season. Student leadership in different areas of the clubs’ activities demonstrated the way students exercised empowerment. Success in activities was the result of students’ dedication, and their desire to take ownership of the clubs responsibilities and decision-making.
Students had ownership over the decisions they made in all the activities. Students ran events in the school; they understood that as a member of the school community they could help and educate others. Activities in the clubs engaged students in dialogue about the importance of activities for them and the entire school. They came to know each other’s points of view, which prompted them to become further engaged in all related tasks. Students’ dedication to the clubs was seen in their efforts to accomplish tasks, and to make differences in other people’s lives.

At Evergreen, students’ demonstrations of perseverance, commitment, and attendance indicated the ownership they felt in the clubs. Students’ ownership of their choices contributed to their leadership development. In the clubs, students had influential roles in all the clubs’ activities. The teachers encouraged students to take leadership roles in the clubs by giving them responsibilities for running the clubs’ activities. By having choices over what they were doing and being directly involved in decision-making increased students’ desire to be in the clubs. Ownership of the clubs were important motivations to student engagement with both sport and citizenship clubs.

**Student Engagement: Similarities and Differences in the Clubs**

There are similarities and differences in student engagement in the two sport and citizenship clubs. First I will discuss the similarities. Three interrelated indicators of student engagement, as discussed by Fredrick et al. (2004), are behavioural, emotional, and cognitive. This study found evidence of student engagement in all the clubs through the three indicators: cognitive indicators of engagement (e.g., leadership, decision making, creativity, risk-taking, initiative, try to do new things); emotional indicators of engagement (e.g., care, inclusive relationship, friendship, interests for the club); behavioural indicators of engagements (e.g., attendance, support others, cooperation, discipline, respect, commitment).
With regard to differences, one was focused on sport activities and the other on social activities. Sport clubs consisted of two boys’ clubs, one for junior students who were close in ages and grades, and the other for seniors who were grades nine to twelve. Both sport clubs focused on teamwork; students engaged in learning volleyball skills, communication, and cooperation so their team clubs could succeed. Students felt pride in being a part of a team club and their contributions brought success for the clubs.

The citizenship clubs were involved with activities to help communities. Both the Global Amnesty and Social Justice Clubs consisted of male and female students of different ages, grades, and ethnicities. They got together to initiate the events and activities in the clubs. In these clubs, each activity engaged students in dialogue that educated them about communities and their own responsibilities. Students understood that they are part of communities and can do something good for them. Students engaged in leadership and joined together to lead or be led, to explore and accomplish tasks. The clubs’ members were engaged in running the events by choosing tasks, planning and organizing. Students played an influential role in the clubs by fully engaging in decision-making. Presenting their ideas for the clubs’ members and the entire school engaged students in an inclusive approach to educating others. The broad responsibilities of students in activities engaged them in the development of skills in research, time management, and multi-tasking.

Sport and citizenship clubs displayed differences in student engagement based on the clubs’ different purposes. The sport clubs engaged students with community building within the club and dedication to teamwork. In the citizenship clubs, students engaged with the clubs’ communities, the school community, and the community at large. Students in the citizenship
clubs engaged in community building by learning about each other’s ideas and interests and helping other people in the community.

**Student Engagement: The Clubs Leaders’ Roles**

The interview with the school leadership at the beginning of this study showed that the school fully supported student and teacher participation in the clubs. The school involved students in the ownership of the clubs by letting them run the clubs based on their interests. The school offered a variety of clubs to satisfy the needs of its diverse students.

This study found club leaders played significant roles in student engagement with the clubs. They empowered students in all the clubs’ activities and decision-making. Although it was not a simple change in the student-teacher relationship, particularly when the clubs first began, students depended a great deal on teachers to support their decisions. This was particularly the case for new students to the clubs and less for those with previous experiences in the clubs. During the course of the year, clubs leaders’ support for student leadership became more advisory and facilitating. The participatory role of the clubs’ leaders with students in all the clubs activities created an inclusive leadership approach that involved students collaboratively in decision-making and doing the activities together. Club members shared and learned from each other’s knowledge and strengths.

The key to student engagement with several clubs was that students saw that teachers were passionate about the clubs themselves. For instance, in citizenship clubs, students felt strongly about social justice and human rights issues; the club leaders felt the same and assisted students to become involved with supportive organizations such as the Food Bank, and Amnesty International, and other organizations that engaged with helping people. The clubs’ leaders
supported all students (e.g., age, gender, race, grade) equally in their involvement in all the activities. It was clear to students that the clubs’ leaders wanted everybody’s inputs; as Flora said, “anybody can bring anything to the table in Amnesty.” Such a deep belief by the clubs’ leaders in student leadership not only brought them respect but also created a trusting environment that encouraged students to share their interests and opinions. Club leaders strongly believed that students can make differences in their communities even with their limited inputs. Teachers shared their interests with their students by becoming their peers in the clubs. But eventually, the clubs’ leaders not only shared the activities with students they also shared the clubs’ leadership with them.

The clubs’ leaders were not atypical teachers; they were simply teachers who believed that students’ daily education without clubs would not be complete. They had all been involved in running clubs for several years, and also some of them remembered ECA as an enjoyable time when they were students themselves. They believed that without ECA students would be at “a major disadvantage”. It is important to note that there was a common belief among the participants in this study that they didn’t consider extracurricular activities as ‘extra’ in education. The leadership at Evergreen High School was confident that clubs expanded education. According to Holland and Andre (1987), school and community contexts in which ECA take place “are likely to influence the perceived nature and value of extracurricular activities among students” (p.445).

At Evergreen, clubs were requirements that students needed to attend. Clubs engaged students with the school and community by inspiring them to understand and respect each other’s differences and opinions. Each club was different in their offerings: art, sport, or citizenship, but what they had in common was that they were places that included students from different
backgrounds. The clubs were in the center of the school, with open doors, so students can see inside and join. Parents supported their children attending clubs; as the school principal said, parents have “believed in ECA and they support their children’s participation… they want more and more ECA.” Parents brought their children to the clubs as early as seven in the morning and picked them up late in the evening.

Students shared their interests and opinions in the clubs and also with the whole student body at the clubs’ events that they planned for the entire school. In Global Amnesty, each week two students put up a table and they talked about human rights issues to the rest of the students at the school. This showed a supportive school environment that encouraged students to present their opinions to all students.

The most common statement from students was they got help from other students in the clubs. And students wanted to do the same with those who wanted help, as one said “that’s how the world works.” Working together in the clubs’ activities and helping each other led to friendships beyond the clubs, and in the school at large. Students wanted to build community throughout the entire school. Students ran events and in each event, they shared the knowledge and information about the event with all the students. Expansion of the clubs’ activities for the entire school meant including all students by educating them about human rights and social justice issues. This also showed the clubs were the heart of the school, and not just isolated spaces for groups of students who gathered together with the same interests.

Students were involved with many activities in the citizenship clubs that engaged them in dialogue and research. Speakers from different organizations came in to present and students in the clubs visited organizations they were interested in. Experiences from these activities motivated students to engage with the community at large; one student visited an organization
that helps Indian women and said it was “a humbling experience.” It brought her “down to earth.” Students said that when they understood issues, they begun to feel strongly about them. Students may have never had a chance to visit or to get close to community issues, but in the clubs, students felt deeply about social issues and had a chance to be involved with local and global communities.

Many clubs started from students’ proposals that they felt were important to them and they were interested in. The clubs meant to satisfy students’ different needs (e.g., social, intellectual, physical). Every August the school had a club fair and introduced the students’ proposals to the teachers, looking for club leaders with similar interests to run the clubs. Both students and teachers were interested in the objectives of the clubs, and they chose to participate, and expand their interests. The clubs were open to all students. Sometimes students came as guests, stayed with friends and became involved with the discussions and activities at the club. Students shared with the guests what they did and why they did it and shared with them knowledge about the clubs. Sometimes the guests participated in research with the clubs’ members. This shows the important place of the clubs in the life of students’ education at Evergreen.

Students engaged in many clubs’ activities (e.g., planning, initiating, organizing, dialogue, research, and community building). There are recommendations by scholars such as Kuh (2009) in the study of student engagement that engagement “is a two way street” in which both school and student have roles in creating it (p.76). Another scholar says that the study of student engagement needs to enquire into the “meaning and purpose of engagement” (Portelli, 2005, p.76). A question that emerges in this research that is connected to these recommendations is how teachers/clubs leaders took part in creation of student engagement with the clubs. This
required going into an in-depth understanding of the club leaders’ vital roles in creating student engagement. This study showed that the leaders had to take many leadership approaches in the clubs that gradually took them away from the perceived teacher position they had with students. The clubs leaders took on leadership roles such as instructor, intervener, guide, advisor, facilitator; all these changes in their approaches were their gradual steps in sharing their club leadership with students. Teachers willingly and intentionally wanted students to become independent so that they could be fully engaged with the activities that interest them. But, why was it important to student engagement that clubs leaders involved students in leading the clubs? And did the club leaders ever use their authority? The answers to these questions explore the connection among the clubs’ leaders and students resulting in student engagement; and how the meaning and the purpose of the engagement were impacted by the club leaders and student interactions.

The U/20 Volleyball Club objective was to engage students in teamwork such as communication and collaboration, and development of relationship and skills of volleyball. In the U/20, the club leader communicated with students at all times and supported them in their decisions. She advised them that teamwork required communication. The club leader also intervened at moments where students made wrong choices in regards to teamwork or safety and instructed them about their choices and decisions. She used her authority in the club and benched them when they were late and explained that in teamwork everybody relies on each other’s commitment and self-discipline. She used a sharing approach in leading the club by giving students responsibilities to run warm-up and practices, as well as including them in all aspects of the club’s decision-making and planning for the games. She took part in practices as a teammate and listened to students’ advice when she made mistakes or they had suggestions of what she had to do better or improve; students had the chance to see her more in-depth when she was their
peer. She connected with the students through her leadership approaches, creating student engagement.

The U/14 Volleyball Club focused on the development of students’ cooperation, communication, relationships, along with volleyball skills. The club leader had an instructive approach that helped students learn teamwork. For most of the students, it was their first time playing on a team club. He instructed them at all times to communicate and practise with each other. He intervened and stopped students’ criticism of each other during the practices; as one student said, “he’s quite strict sometimes… he wants us to be a strong team.” He encouraged students to try new skills and support others in practices. He organized games among them and played with his assistant on two teams. He supported students to engage with him and the assistant in those play practices by encouraging them to decide what position they prefer for themselves or others or what strategy they think is better and why. The U/14 Club leader encouraged these young students in constructive communication for teamwork, and supportive relationships. Students engaged in supporting and encouraging each other; they listened carefully to the coach and relied on each other’s helps and suggestions.

The objective of the Global Amnesty Club was to give students knowledge of social justice and human rights cases. Students chose the cases they were interested in, and the groups they would like to work with, and became involved in planning and decision-making. The club leader’s role was to be an advisor; she assisted students in running the club and events. As the Global Amnesty Club leader said “we have to put together” students’ interests and strengths to set up the events. The club leader was a peer to students by presenting her issue on human rights to the club. Students engaged in leading the clubs’ activities. Even for Kim, a student who felt
she was not a natural leader, the club was a learning experience to practise leadership, and she considered herself one of the club leaders.

In her advisory approach, the Global Amnesty Club leader listened carefully to all students and encouraged all students from different grades to offer their ideas. When there were conflicting ideas about doing the activities, the club members voted to choose one. Although she acted as an advisor in the club she had high expectations that the students would take on responsibilities for running the club. On occasion she took an intervening leadership approach where she expressed her authority. There was a time when students decided to do petitions or collect money for an event; the club leader did not agree with the activities because students were not well informed enough, so she asked them to do more research about the issues before the activities began. Another occasion was focused on student safety; the club leader did not want them to disclose their personal information when they wrote letters to organizations and signed petitions.

The Social Justice Club was a large club. The club leaders had a lot to do in organizing the club. The objective was to get students involved in the community around them and raise student awareness. The club leaders allowed students to choose issues that they felt were important to them, and guided them in activities. The club leaders offered all students the chance to take part in leading the clubs’ activities by asking them what would they like to do and how should they do the activity. Students in the clubs joined in leading the club (e.g., initiating, planning, organizing) that engaged them with activities. As one of the club leaders said, students were “creative”. As a student in the club said: “Nine times out of ten they [the club leaders] would say ‘yes’” to their planning and decision on activities. The club leaders at times of conflict intervene to find a solution by voting, as a club leader said, “we will choose between them”.
In all the clubs, leaders attempted to empower students. The clubs’ leaders employed several approaches in running the clubs, approaches that made a connection among the clubs’ leaders and students resulting in student engagement. These approaches by the clubs’ leaders were fully appreciated by students. Students valued their experiences in the clubs because the approaches used by the club leaders assisted them in engaging with the clubs. Although ECA at Evergreen are student-driven and informal, they are considered an educational environment that involved the clubs’ leaders in instructing, assisting, intervening, and advising students on their activities.
CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY, CONTRIBUTIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

This study has explored student engagement with extracurricular activities. It examined how students developed leadership, relationships, and skills as they engaged in ECA. Each club was an educational space that involved students with teachers as co-constructors of knowledge. I summarize major findings from this study. In doing so, I answer the study’s main question and sub-questions. Then this chapter is followed by a section on the contributions the study makes to research in ECA, educational policymakers, students, and school-based practices. At the end there are recommendations for future research, and conclusions.

SUMMARY

How are students engaged in the clubs?

The purpose of this study was to understand how students engaged in extracurricular activities. Students in the study were dedicated to their clubs, attended all the meetings, and worked in groups or individually to accomplish tasks. Students were motivated to be involved in many clubs’ activities. They took leadership over them, and they offered to help others.

Club members had supportive relationships with each other. Success in developing relationships gave students the confidence to engage with the clubs’ related skills and leadership development. Students’ engagement with the clubs reflected their strong interest in what they did. Newmann (1986) said “engagement is difficult to define… but we know it when we see it, and we know it when it is missing” (p.242). One of the club’s leaders described student engagement in the Social Justice Club as students enjoying themselves in the activities, having dialogues, participating in decision-making, and focusing on accomplishing tasks.
Students pursued their individual passions by joining both sport and citizenship clubs. Students were involved in decision-making and took leadership over the clubs’ activities. In both sport and citizenship clubs, the clubs’ leaders offered students influential roles in the activities based on their interests, and this brought them a sense of ownership, and empowerment.

In the citizenship clubs, diverse groups of students (i.e., age, grade, gender, and ethnicity) worked together to accomplish tasks, and engage in dialogues. Students found others with similar interests and worked together with them on joint tasks. Students shared their knowledge and strengths with other club members. They were able to be co-constructors of knowledge with teachers and other students.

In sport and citizenship clubs, the feelings of accomplishment that students had in the clubs’ activities deepened their engagement. In all the clubs, students committed themselves to all the clubs’ activities and helped each other to meet the common goals of the clubs. That was particularly the case in Global Amnesty where students met almost every day in the last two weeks prior to the event that the club organized for the entire school.

In sport and citizenship clubs, community building motivated students to engage in activities. In the citizenship clubs, students engaged in various community building activities that contributed to the entire school, and the community at large. And in the sport, students built a community within each volleyball club.

**How do students develop relationships?**

Scholars point out that relationships among school members play a substantial role in student engagement (e.g., McMahon & Portelli, 2004; Fielding, 2004; Smith et al., 1998; Yazzie-Mintz,
Smyth (2006) suggests that schools need to put a greater emphasis on “relationships at the center of everything” schools do in order to enable students to take part in relationships with the school (p.292). In Evergreen High School, all students joined clubs. The principal Ms. Richardson said when a student builds a relationship with the teacher, their “confidence goes up”. One of the main reasons that students said they participated in particular clubs was to meet new people and become friends. Students built relationships with each other that significantly impacted their engagement with the clubs. In this study, club members talk about how they were able to create relationships with others.

One of the leaders in the citizenship clubs explained that students included others in activities, they “enjoy each other’s company”, and bond over something they collectively felt strongly about. Students built relationships as the same club leader said, between those “who would not normally hang out together – like between the different age groups.” A Social Justice Club leader believed that when students knew each other they became more “accepting” and built relationships with each other that went beyond the club. In the sport clubs, as the U/20 coach described, students’ relationships were “very respectful and inclusive with each other…”

By working with students outside of the classroom setting, club leaders learned about students’ interests and were able to build relationships based on that knowledge. Club leaders were gratified that they were able to establish relationships with students they had not known before and also maintain relationships with those who they already knew. As a leader in citizenship club noted, her involvement in the club was one of her most “enjoyable” times with the students.

Friendships among students and teachers were present in all clubs. A U/14 student said that students became good friends with each other by building supportive relationships that made
them friends. An older student in the Social Justice Club who worked with younger ones made sure “everyone’s ideas are heard”, and demonstrated a caring personality and helped them engage fully in the tasks and take part in the group work. A U/14 junior student was comfortable talking to others and felt a sense of membership because of the supportive and inclusive relationships with others; “we help each other in our weaker areas.”

In sport and citizenship clubs, all the members displayed supportive and collaborative relationships as they engaged in activities. A study by Smith et al. (1998) reported students’ collaborative relationships with other school members provided them opportunities for discussions, sharing, and learning that “increased sense of responsibility and ownership” (p. 122). They found that a collaborative relationship is a “key to engagement” (p.121). This study has a similar finding. For example, there were collaborative relationships throughout Evergreen High School. Often different clubs got together to choose an event for the entire school. Then, they supported each other by dividing tasks among members. Other teachers in the school joined the club leaders to support the activities.

**How do students develop skills?**

In the sport clubs, students improved their performance skills and fitness. Students developed skills such as teamwork, communication, decision making. Their success in skills development deepened their engagement with the clubs. Junior students in U/14 Volleyball Club had a lack of volleyball skills compared to seniors. They improved their skills by listening carefully to their coach and helping each other in volleyball and teamwork. Success in skills development gave students confidence.
A student in the Global Amnesty Club developed skills in collaborative group work, presentation, leadership and research. She developed research skills to gather information and developed presentation skills to share her research with others. By succeeding in her presentation and expression of her case to the clubs, she was encouraged to further develop skills important to the club such as time management.

In the Social Justice Club, a grade twelve student developed leadership skills by leading students in new tasks. Other students in the club did the same. Students developed multi-tasking skills in order to have success for the events that the clubs planned to present for the entire school. For the younger student in the club, group work with older students who guided and mentored her helped her develop teamwork skills and do tasks that were new to her.

**How do students develop leadership?**

Research has highlighted the idea that an important outcome of student participation in ECA is the development of leadership experiences (Rubin et al., 2002; Zaff et al., 2003). Results from this study support previous findings. Leadership development was significant for all students in club activities. Students’ discussions showed how they developed leadership qualities. Students took leadership in the clubs; the clubs’ leaders provided students with guidance and gave them a variety of responsibilities in activities.

The clubs’ successes, as attested to by the participants and my own observations, relied on student leadership. Taking responsibility to accomplish tasks was central to student leadership in the clubs. A student in the Social Justice Club said that in her group work everyone had equal responsibility in the activities and they relied on each other’s leadership for contributions. She felt that in the group work she needed to be equally productive in the activities. Students worked
together in planning and developing the ideas to do different tasks for the clubs. For instance, in
the U/20 Volleyball Club, students helped each other and cooperated with the coach in designing
practices and planning for the games.

Students chose their responsibilities based on their strengths. A student in the Social
Justice Club who had been there for three years knew she could help new club members. She
chose to guide new students in several club activities by sharing her experiences with them.
Students did their best for the clubs by helping each other, as a student said “… if we work well,
then the activity will succeed.” The clubs’ leaders said that students were showing leadership by
committing themselves to the clubs; they were willing to take the risk of doing new things, they
applied a high level of creativity, and they involved themselves in groups to design tasks.

The more students were involved in the club’s activities, the more they took
responsibilities and developed leadership. An example of student leadership was seen in a school
play that students had written, played in, directed, and produced, as one of the Social Justice
Club leaders described, it was: “purely student driven.” Student engagement with leadership
came from their empowerment in all aspects of the clubs. As the principal explained, in the
Social Justice Club, students were offering their ideas to the school administration, “so they are
the go-between [students and administrations]…” for organizing events and activities for the
entire school.

In the clubs’ activities, there was an inclusive approach to leadership among diverse
groups of students. For example, students with previous experience in the club led new students
through activities. Students relied on each other’s supports and encouragement to be fully
engaged in the leadership of the clubs’ activities. The involvement of all the clubs’ members in
in the clubs’ activities meant that they were able to influence the tasks and that brought them a sense of ownership and success.

Inclusive leadership is defined by Ryan (2006) as a leadership that relies on many individuals’ contributions and allows everyone a fair chance to “influence” the decisions being made in school. In the clubs, students made decisions together about the event, choosing tasks, planning and organizing the activities. The purpose of working together was not limited to dividing tasks; it was more about the inclusion of everyone in running events in a way that provided students with a chance to influence the events from beginning to end. Students were able to join and apply their ideas when designing each task of the event. An inclusive approach was part of the student’s leadership in the Global Amnesty Club. She felt success about her leadership in the club; choosing the case, researching it, preparing the presentation, and sharing her interest about the case with others. She engaged others in dialogue to explore the social issues underpinning the case. Crucial to her leadership success was her inclusive approach; she wanted to share and educate the entire student body about an issue that she felt was important.

Students influenced the clubs in many ways. In the activities for the Social Justice Club, one student said she had the opportunity “to be a leader … and [she has] also been led by others.” She believed that the clubs’ activities were influenced by all the members; as she said “I like how their [the club’s members] ideas affect what we are doing.” As another student in the club explained, any event was an opportunity “to meet each other and also make a difference in the community.” He said events such as the food bank the club planned were a success; they made sure “everyone’s ideas are heard” and they worked together with “respect.”
How does engagement in the clubs impact students?

This study found that students’ self-confidence rose through the clubs’ activities; they were able to express themselves and to accomplish tasks with a great sense of pride and satisfaction. This study showed a similar finding to Smith et al.’s (1998) study that found “acquiring a positive sense of self, therefore, appears to be a critical precursor to student engagement” (p.121). In the clubs, students fully engaged with all the clubs’ activities. They learned to work with other students who they didn’t know, and they took charge of tasks. One of the leaders in the Social Justice Club found that the biggest impact on students was that they developed “self-assurance.” As a student might say, ‘I know how to do this…”

The development of the variety of skills, leadership, and relationships was considered an important outcome of the clubs, but the club’s significant impact on students was in helping them believe in their strengths; as the Global Amnesty student said, “I can do it.” One of the Social Justice Club leaders noted, in the club, students had “the opportunity to try and accomplish” tasks.

A student in the U/20 Volleyball Club indicated his involvement in clubs as being “… a way of expanding on who you are.” Students were dedicated to accomplish different tasks for the success of both sport and citizenship clubs. The knowledge and skills students gained motivated them to fully engage with the clubs. Learning about social justice issues in local and global communities encouraged students to open up a dialogue and educate themselves about the issues, and organize to help the people affected by the issues. For instance, when the club decided to raise food for the Food Bank, they discussed the importance of people having enough food as “food security”. In their discussions of this issue, students came to realize that food security was
a problem for some people. Students felt a sense of responsibility to help people who did not have enough to eat and decided to organize events to help these people.

Students realized that they were able to do good for their community and that inspired them to succeed. A Social Justice Club leader believed students saw they were able to make a difference in their communities and on the life of others which brought them a feeling of accomplishment, and made them feel like they were making a difference.

How are students motivated to engage with the clubs?

A student’s experiences with ECA affects their decision to stay and continue, or withdraw from the activities. In this study, students showed a full commitment to the clubs. Students arrived at the clubs as early as seven in the morning and dedicated their lunchtimes to work on club activities. The club members wanted to be involved in all the clubs’ activities.

In the preliminary questionnaire at the start of each club, students stated their reasons for participating in both citizenship and sport clubs: development of skills, teamwork, leadership, making new friends, and having fun. In addition to those interests, two students had personal interests. One student wanted to be a leader in sport. Another student needed to do some volunteer hours – these are required by law to graduate from high school - and that’s one of the reasons she joined the Social Justice Club. In the interviews of students that took place at the end of the term each of them talked about their own reasons for staying which was the fact that their positive experiences helped them to fully engage with the clubs’ activities. The student who joined the club to earn volunteer hours liked “the independence” that the club gave her; she was allowed to choose the issues that she felt were important to her and shared them with the club. A younger student in the Social Justice Club “loves the independence, getting guidance if you need
it. I enjoy this experience.” The student in the Global Amnesty Club was motivated to stay in the club because she learned a lot from her own case and others’ cases, and she considered herself “to be a global citizen”. The older student in the Social Justice Club was so enthusiastic that he was able to share his knowledge about an issue he felt students should be aware of.

Researchers have found that the result of learning that occurred in ECA can increase students’ interests in its activities, causing higher engagement (Vadeboncoeur, 2006; Honig & McDonald, 2005). In this research, there is a similar finding. Research and dialogue about the cases increased students’ knowledge, as well as their interests. Learning was an important motivator; it helped students stay with the clubs. The more they learned (e.g., skills, objectives of activities, and knowing each other’s interests) the more their desires to stay grew.

In general, club activities depended on the year and the students’ interests; students have done different things in different years. As one of the club leaders noted, students can "share interests and to hopefully accomplish something.” In the Global Amnesty Club, students were interested in coming to the club and learning about each other’s cases.

This research shows that students had greater interest in the clubs as they took on more responsibilities in the activities. A sense of ownership and having choices over what they were doing increased their interests in the clubs. In citizenship clubs, students achieved their interests in building community within the clubs and the entire school and helping local and global communities.

**How is students’ engagement in the clubs supported or hindered?**

In this study students and teachers had inclusive relationships. Club leaders fully knew that one of the main reasons for students’ participation in the clubs was to know others and to make
friends. The club leaders had the same interests and they were not there as teachers anymore in the clubs, rather they wanted to be students’ colleagues and peers. Teachers fully supported the inclusion of all students in leadership and assisted them in the development of skills that expanded clubs into communities.

This study shows a shared belief among the school leadership and teachers about the value of ECA - that it brings students major advantages such as success in producing outside of the classroom, involving them in decision making and leadership, making relationships with teachers and peers, and building community. This common belief echoes in their full support of student engagement with the clubs. The study found that teachers were enthusiastic about the clubs. It was this enthusiasm that was one of the most important supportive elements for student engagement with the clubs.

The club leaders were students’ colleagues in the clubs. Teachers didn’t take a hierarchical approach to students but rather an inclusive one in leading the clubs. Students joined teachers in decision-making to accomplish tasks; as one of the club leaders put it, students and teachers in these situations see each other “in another light.” The cooperative approach in running the clubs that was taken by teachers brought about the active participation of students in all activities.

Teachers supported students attending the clubs. Often meetings were scheduled at lunch time, early morning, and after classes in order to help students to attend. The U/20 coach was there early in the morning to practise with the students. She scheduled that time for the club practices to maximize students’ attendance.
At Evergreen, teachers joined and supported each other to facilitate the clubs and to help students to engage fully with activities. All the teachers were involved, as well, with clubs other than their own, and as a consequence their lunchtimes and after school hours were always booked with club activities. Their efforts showed their deep interests in student engagement with the clubs. For example, the Social Justice Club was large, but the club’s leaders were so dedicated to the club that they wanted more students to join. The club’s leaders made the club visible for those who were not attending so that they might become interested in joining the club.

Students pointed out that a supportive club environment was the reason why they felt comfortable in trying new things. For example, the student in the Global Amnesty Club found that the supportive club environment gave her confidence and she felt comfortable with her presentation and leading others. In sport and citizenship clubs, students from different grades supported each other. For instance, in the citizenship clubs, older students supported the younger ones in planning, initiating, and organizing tasks. A student who was in grade twelve helped others to develop skills and leadership. He shared his knowledge and skills with the other club’s members. Students assisted the work of coaches in volleyball clubs. For example, a student from grade eleven was an assistant to the coach in the U/14 Volleyball Club. She supported younger students to develop skills, leadership, and relationships; as the coach put it, students like to hear from a peer or senior student being supportive of their efforts.

There was nothing really that students disliked about the clubs except practice times. For example, two students in the U/20 club mentioned that sometimes the morning practices were difficult because it was hard for them to wake up. One of the main barriers for students that one of the leaders in the Social Justice Club brought up was that students were busy academically and they couldn’t devote as much time and effort to the club as they wanted. This barrier was
also brought up by two students in the Social Justice Club who were in the upper grades; they
found that schoolwork took time away from more ECA participation. The U/20 coach, found that
a major barrier in running the sport clubs was that the school offered only the U/20 Volleyball
Club for grades nine through twelve and that wasn’t appropriate for the grade eights graduating
into grade nine who would have to play with the grade twelve students the next year. The school
didn’t have enough students to field three different age categories.

A potential barrier to student engagement that teachers mentioned was their availability
in running the clubs. The hours of the clubs came out of their personal time - morning,
lunchtime, and after school. The clubs’ responsibilities along with their teaching brought them a
very busy schedule every day. Clubs took their time, they needed to arrange and prepare many
things for the clubs such as travelling to the games or visiting organizations. They made
everything ready for the clubs and often they needed someone to cover their classes. A leader in
the Social Justice Club said “after a while, you say ‘why am I so exhausted?’ that’s because of
all these extra responsibilities at work that you have…” Their exhaustion can make it undesirable
for them to run more clubs. Lack of time reduces the quality of their leadership in running the
clubs. According to a leader in the Social Justice Club, teachers want to run the clubs, but in the
meantime they have other work to do and a lot of academic deadlines and there are only so many
hours in the day for them and so many demands on teacher time, “…that’s the one downside.”

One of the other barriers that some clubs’ leaders mentioned was the lack of sufficient
financial support for running the club. The other barrier was having a large club with too many
students; as the leader in the Social Justice Club explained “… it’s a little easier if somebody
doesn’t want to be engaged and they are just there.” In smaller ones, students can’t sit quietly in
a corner when everyone’s engaged in doing things. The issue of size was also brought up by
students themselves; in large clubs, making relationships and being involved with others in doing tasks and being fully engaged in activities is difficult.

**Contributions**

This study shows the clubs played a significant role in the lives of students at Evergreen. The study findings suggest that in the clubs students learned about their own strengths and abilities, developed leadership and skills, made friends, and built community within the clubs and the entire school. Students cooperated and helped each other in running the clubs. The findings highlighted the importance of clubs in community building where students socialized with peers and teachers to accomplish activities.

**Contribution of the Study to ECA Research**

This qualitative case study attempts to explore students’ experiences in clubs from their own points of view. It looks at how students took part in the development of relationships, skills, and leadership and how those relate to student engagement with the clubs. Merriam (1998) noted that case studies “focused on holistic description and explanation” (p.29). This study, using a qualitative case study approach, focused on students’ own words and ideas about their experiences and how they engaged with clubs. The participants’ discussions and my observations explored what student engagement with the clubs meant to students.

A case study approach was crucial in explaining many unknowns in this research, such as how the clubs were valued in the context of the school, how diverse students socialized in the clubs, how student-student and student-teacher connections were established and maintained in the club context, how students desired to stay in the clubs and fully engage with the clubs’ activities, and what the objectives of the clubs were. According to Merriam (1998), a case study
approach has strength and usefulness in the field of education, “it offers insights and illuminates meanings that expand its readers’ experiences. These insights can be constructed as tentative hypotheses that help structure future research; hence, case study plays an important role in advancing a field’s knowledge base” (p.41). This case study adds to the understanding of student engagement with ECA in a particular high school setting. It looks at student engagement by exploring the most important part of student engagement: students’ experiences.

This case study provides a complete description of the participants, clubs, and activities. The study provides detailed information about a case and how students engaged with the clubs. It looks at the contexts of clubs and students’ experiences in them, in order, as Merriam (1998) said, “to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved” (p.19). It shows how students engaged with the clubs in a small- medium sized school with others. This research demonstrates how the school motivated them to become fully engaged with the clubs. It shows students’ own points of view about the support, challenges, and impact of ECA.

I used the case study design because, as Merriam (1998) said, I was interested in “insight, discovery, and interpretation rather than hypothesis testing” (p.29). With this emphasis, novel findings have emerged from the data about the significance of student empowerment and ownership, and community building. Students and the clubs’ leaders continuously referred to the importance of these elements that were not in the initial conceptual framework of this study. This study found that the students were empowered by initiating and running the clubs. They made inclusive relationships and built community which brought them a sense of ownership in the clubs. Findings from this study show the importance of the qualitative case study approach in ECA research.
Contribution of the Study for Educational Policymakers

This research provides knowledge of students’ experiences in the clubs and how such experiences form student engagement with the clubs. Findings highlight the importance of ECA for students’ education. This study shows how in the clubs’ activities students engaged with leadership, relationships, and skills development. It shows that the clubs impacted students in certain ways; it fostered inclusive relationships and friendships which expanded beyond the clubs into the entire school.

A significant finding was that the clubs were places that brought students and teachers together and made connections between them. The knowledge about how students and teachers connected with each other that creates student engagement with clubs could be applied in the classroom. As Fullan (2001) reminds us, disengaged students “… lack a meaningful personal connection with teachers and others in the school” (p.152). At Evergreen, the connections that students developed in the clubs they carried with them throughout the school. This study recommends to policymakers that ECA be fully supported and viewed as a vital part of student education in public school.

Evergreen fully supported students’ participation by making clubs available and basing them on students’ interests. The school offered a wide range of clubs to support their different interests. Even if the school didn’t offer any specific clubs that were interesting to students, they could initiate a new club. At Evergreen, the school leadership and the club leaders believed that clubs were an essential part of the school life and brought the entire school community together. These findings recommend to policymakers that ECA need to be available to all students.
It is important to note that at Evergreen, parental support made it possible for students to participate in the clubs. Their parents brought them early in the morning for the clubs, and picked them up after school hours, making the clubs accessible for students. Several studies have shown that students, for many reasons, cannot participate in ECA, such as a lack of transportation (Cohen et al., 2007), family supports, students who come from single parent families with limited resources (Harrison & Narayan, 2003), and particularly for students who are from low-socioeconomic family situations (Mahoney & Cairns, 1997; Brown & Evans, 2002). This study recommends to policymakers that ECA need to be part of the regular school day and be part of the students’ daily education.

The club leaders who participated in this study fully supported students’ involvements with ECA. All the clubs’ leaders often stayed overtime at the clubs. Teachers had great enthusiasm about the clubs. Teachers had additional responsibilities in running the clubs, such as finding a space for the club, making the room ready for meetings, organizing the meetings, accompanying students to games or to community organizations, preparing materials for tasks, and organizing events. For teachers, time was an issue. They were very keen on running the clubs but at the same time they were busy with their primary responsibility of teaching. This study recommends to policymakers that running ECA requires adequate supports, planning, and resources and should not be the sole responsibility of individual teachers but rather the school as a whole.

Another contribution of this study for policymakers was the exploration of the significant roles teachers played in running the clubs. Teachers/club leaders knew about students’ expectations in joining the clubs due to the fact that each had many years of experience in running clubs. The main reason for students to join and stay in clubs was developing leadership
and skills, knowing other students and teachers, and making friends. The teachers led by guiding, facilitating and assisting clubs to fulfill students’ expectations. They were students’ colleagues, and as club members they shared interests and ideas with students in all club activities. Teachers had inclusive leadership; they were adult role models who inspired students to practise inclusion and empowerment. This study shows how club leaders’ leadership inspired diverse groups of students to engage in community building. The practice of inclusive leadership among club members built community among diverse groups of students in clubs and further expanded community to the entire school. A contribution of this finding for policymakers is the importance of sharing the successful experiences of teachers in running ECA in today's diverse schools with other teachers. Teachers’ training needs in running ECA require the support of school boards and teachers’ colleges.

Another contribution of this research is its focus on the educational value of the clubs. Students felt the knowledge they gained was important to them. At Evergreen, the clubs were a central part of students’ daily lives. Club members shared and learned from each other’s knowledge and strengths. Findings indicate that clubs were the spaces that engaged students in the development of leadership, skills, and relationships. Students accomplished tasks in the clubs that increased their confidence in taking more responsibilities and leadership. They developed a variety of skills such as time management and multi-tasking to manage both academic work and club activities. There was sufficient evidence in this study that showed the school was fully aware of the educational value of the clubs. At Evergreen, clubs were required for all students no matter what their achievement levels were. This study shows ECA have valuable educational impacts. Policymakers can use them to reassess the value of ECA and their importance to educational policy.
Contribution of the Study for Students

The main strength of the study is that it takes into account the students’ experiences in the clubs. This helped me to focus on interactions among them. It looks at how students engaged with the clubs, and how they engaged with development of leadership, skills, and relationships.

Students had inclusive relationships; older students helped younger ones to develop skills and knowledge to accomplish their tasks. They developed close relationships and built community among themselves. This study showed how students were inspired to engage with the clubs. Students chose the activities that were relevant to them (e.g., interests, education, helping people). They helped others and accomplished tasks together, and they could lead and learn from each other.

Connections that students had with other club members through the clubs’ activities contributed to student engagement. Students shared interests, they made friends, they engaged in dialogues to reach a common vision to help others in the school and their communities. The clubs’ leaders learned from students their interests and gathered knowledge from students. By engaging with their communities, students realized that they can help others and have a great impact on people’s lives. This research has focused extensively on students’ experiences in the clubs, experiences that motivated them to stay and dedicate themselves to all activities.

The research found that students had great respect and appreciation for the club leaders. In all the clubs, students and teachers were colleagues. They were able to make a connection. Teachers shared their interests and experiences in activities that significantly contributed to the student-teacher connection. The student-teacher connection inspired students to fully engage with the clubs’ activities and was a great contribution to student engagement.
In the club, students from all grades with diverse backgrounds were able to get to know each other and build a community. They had respectful and inclusive relationships in all the club activities and engaged with clubs’ leaders. Club activities engaged students in decision-making, planning, and organizing; they shared interests and ideas that inspired them to fully engage in dialogue to find a common decision. Students cooperated in all activities with the supportive relationships.

In the clubs’ activities students became involved in discussions, research and gathering knowledge that expanded their interests and informed them about the goals of the activities. Each activity contributed to developing knowledge, to their knowing about their strengths, to trying new things in the clubs. Students demonstrated commitments to the clubs activities; they attended, persevered, and took responsibility.

Developing knowledge in activities was an important motivator to their engagement. For the students, the clubs were an important part of their education. The more students developed skills and leadership, and learned about each other’s interests and ideas, the more they engaged with the activities. The clubs connected students with each other. Students were interested in knowing about their communities and in the clubs they had opportunities, as a club leader said, to “channel that passion through the club”.

**Contribution for School-based Practices**

A significant contribution of this study to school-based practice is showing how students engaged in the clubs. Findings from this case study can be useful in the classroom. It shows, the clubs were fully supported by the school leadership, and students were required to take ECA in art, sport, and citizenship. Students were able to initiate new clubs that they were interested in.
The clubs were accessible to all students. Appropriate resources were in place for the clubs, such as assigned rooms, teachers, material, and transportation for visiting community organizations, and brought in guest speakers. The school’s dedication to having many clubs reflected how the school valued ECA in students’ education.

The school recognized that the clubs are the places that allow students to develop leadership. Club leaders assisted students in running the clubs. Students chose tasks based on their interests and worked individually or in groups to accomplish them. Club activities were mostly initiated, planned, and organized by students. In the clubs, students worked together from different grades; they supported each other; shared knowledge, interests, and skills, and made friends. Every student was included in the clubs’ activities and the outcome of that was inclusion. A close relationship among the club members engaged them with the clubs.

Findings show that students were successful in developing a variety of skills, leadership and taking charge of many tasks, having relationships with peers and teachers, and managing ECA and their academic lives. As one of the club leaders said, success in the club gave students a sense of “self-assurance” about their strengths and abilities in doing many new things that they didn’t think they could. At Evergreen, the school leadership and the club leaders realized that students may be weak at an academic subject, but in a club they succeed and will carry that success into the classroom. Students themselves saw their success was recognized and praised by peers, teachers, and the entire school. In this study, club leaders explained that in the clubs students have opportunities to accomplish many tasks that brought them confidence which had a significant impact on them. For students, success was about community building, making friends, meeting and knowing other people, and being with them in group work or team work in
the clubs. An important finding from this study shows students felt they were part of the success the clubs had.

The teachers’ cooperative approach in running the clubs encouraged students to actively participate in all activities. Each student had influential roles in many clubs’ activities. Students developed relationships, skills, and leadership that made them stay and fully dedicate themselves to the club activities. For example, in citizenship clubs, students and teachers worked together to prepare events for the entire school. Club members had made connections with each other in the clubs that created student engagement.

Another contribution of the study to school-based practice is that it shows the sense of belonging students developed that engaged them with the clubs. The club leaders advised students to develop their leadership potential. Students in the clubs took on a variety of responsibilities in activities based on their interests. As the principal said, students “are able to communicate their ideas and express themselves.” Student involvement in leadership went beyond the clubs’ activities and often engaged them in different student leadership roles such as student council, tutoring younger students, and assisting teachers in running the clubs.

An important finding of this study is that the relationships students had in the club were based on inclusion and care. Inclusion of all students in all activities generated a sense of ownership in the clubs. Students in the clubs were of all ages, ethnicities, grades, and genders worked well together. In all activities, students relied on each other, worked as teams and groups, and shared knowledge and skills. Inclusive relationships were practised in all clubs by including all students in running the clubs. The study contributes to school-based practices for student engagement by demonstrating that at Evergreen the purpose of the clubs’ activities was inclusion that impacted students to engage with the clubs and the school community.
Recommendations for Future Research

More qualitative case studies in ECA are needed to complement this study in order to more fully explore student engagement in ECA. Each case study would not only add to the picture of student engagement with ECA, but would also show the similarities and the differences that exist for students with diverse backgrounds such as ethnicity, SES, and gender. A qualitative approach can provide a full description of the activities and students’ experiences. Future studies need to focus on how development of, for example, leadership, relationships, skills for students occurs rather than explaining the outcomes with numbers. As well, future research in student engagement with ECA should examine students’ points of view, and look at what makes students desire to join and stay in ECA.

This study investigated student engagement where the students came from a similar SES background. Future research needs to look at schools with students from different SES backgrounds, in particular from disadvantaged areas, to explore student engagement in ECA, and how schools support students to engage and also look at the barriers. More case studies will contribute to our understanding about different schools’ leadership approaches - with particular regard to how schools look at the importance of ECA in students’ education. Even cases with similarities, such as elementary or high school, sample size, urban or suburb, and students’ backgrounds, may produce different findings. More case studies need to be undertaken on student engagement in ECA in order to generalize the findings.

The other factor that is important to look at is the school size. Evergreen was a small-medium size school offering a wide range of clubs. Future research needs to look at how students engage with ECA in larger schools. This can be in one school or several, as comparative studies, that show how each school runs ECA and motivates students to engage, and how schools deal
with the supports and barriers to student engagement in ECA. Studies in schools with different sizes can also explore ECA availabilities and accessibilities, and the role of ECA leadership in smaller schools versus larger schools.

Conclusions

Research has demonstrated evidence of ECA’s positive impacts on students such as developing their feelings of belonging and bonding between the students and school. The evidence from this research supports previous research in that regard. Inclusive and caring relationships connected teachers and students in the clubs. Diverse students supported each other and built a community with inclusive relationships. In addition, the findings pointed to the students’ growth of self-confidence in being able to build relationships particularly with other individuals who were not known to them. Students worked with others who had similar interests on different tasks.

Students initiated and ran the clubs. The findings from this study acknowledge that students developed a great sense of ownership in the clubs by having responsibilities and being involved in decision-making and fully contributing to clubs’ activities. Students engaged in developing leadership by having opportunities to be involved in all the clubs’ decision-making.

Success in activities gave students the confidence to engage with the club members and develop their skills and leadership. They received recognition in the clubs for their accomplishments. The evidence shows students had influential roles in the activities based on their interests. This study found the clubs’ leaders played important roles in student engagement with the clubs. They empowered students in all the clubs’ activities and decision-making. The clubs’ leaders supported all students in participating in decision-making, planning, and organizing in all the club activities.
Findings from this study showed important elements, student empowerment and ownership, and community building, in student engagement with ECA. In the clubs, students engaged with community building, leadership, and in co-constructing knowledge within the clubs and the entire school community. Students engaged with the clubs’ activities through dialogue, sharing ideas, knowledge and skills with other students. In activities, students helped each other to develop skills they needed to accomplish tasks that prompted further engagement with the clubs.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/extracurricular


Appendix A-1

Information and Consent Form for the Principal in the Research Study

Title of Research: Student Engagement: A Qualitative Case Study of Extracurricular Activities
Name of Principal Investigator - Student Researcher Name: Fraydoon Bayat
Phone Number of Principal Investigator:
Name and Phone Number of Supervisors: Dr. Jim Ryan:
Date:
Dear Administrator:

My name is Fraydoon Bayat. I am a graduate student in the Department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (University of Toronto), pursuing a Doctoral degree in Education in Educational Administration. As part of my degree requirements, I am conducting research for my thesis entitled Student Engagement: A Qualitative Case Study of Extracurricular Activities, in which I will look at how students are engaged with extracurricular activities (ECA). I will be under the supervision of Dr. Jim Ryan. The purpose of this study is to explore how students are engaged with leadership, skills development and relationships in ECA.

I am requesting your cooperation as a voluntary research participant in an interview. I am interested in learning how students engage in extracurricular activities (ECA). Your views about students’ participation in extracurricular activities will shed light on ECA in your school. You will be interviewed for approximately 45-60 minutes. The interview will be conducted at a place and time of your choosing. The study will also include three teachers in three ECA and 15-25 student participants from your school. I would like to get your permission to meet the teachers who are running ECA in order to present the information about my research to them. I need your permission to observe ECA.

Research indicates that participation in school extracurricular activities can make a difference in the lives of students. Researchers strongly suggest that such participation can be very beneficial to the academic, social, physical, and emotional growth of students. This proposed research will examine participants’ experiences of their engagement in ECA. Specifically, it will examine ECA participants’ interactions, skill development, and leadership in a particular activity.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You may change your mind about your participation at any time. When you withdraw from the study, your data will be destroyed and not used in any written or verbal communication of the findings. All participant interviews will be anonymous and confidential; individual participants, schools, and school board will not be identified. Pseudonyms will be used for all names. Themes, concepts and information from interviews will be used in my thesis, and in the future for potential reports, presentations at conferences or other venues, journal and book chapters; in all cases, the participant’s identity will remain confidential. All data collected – audio recordings, transcripts, and notes from interviews – will be kept confidential. There is no risk of physical and psychological harm from participating in this study. You will not be judged or evaluated on your responses.
Data will be securely stored, and no one except the researcher and my supervisor will have access to the data. The research paper will be on file at the University of Toronto as a Doctoral thesis. The interview information (including audio files and transcripts) will be kept in a secure place and destroyed within five years after the study is completed. Participants may request that any information be eliminated from the project before, during or after the interview process. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will have no effect on your present or future status at your school.

Participating in this study is worthwhile professional development for the teachers and principals because it allows them time to reflect on their practices and views. If you are interested to participate in this research or if you have any questions about it, please contact me at …… or by e-mail, or my supervisor Dr. Jim Ryan at ……… or by email. If you have any questions related to your rights as a participant in this study or if you have any complaints or concerns, please contact the Office of Research Ethics at ...... or by e-mail at ethics.review@utoronto.ca.

If you want to participate in this study, please sign below and keep a copy for your records.

Sincerely,

Fraydoon Bayat

Acknowledgement and Consent
The study “Student Engagement: A Qualitative Case Study of Extracurricular Activities” explained to me. My questions about the study were answered by the researcher.
I _______________________________ (name), agree to participate in the study.
__________________________________________________________ _________________ Date:
Signature of Participant

Please initial the following if you are interested:
To have your interview digitally recorded: _____ To receive a copy of the interview transcript to review: ____ To receive a summary of the results of the study: ____
Appendix A-2

Information and Consent Form for Teachers in the Research Study
Title of Research: Student Engagement: A Qualitative Case Study of Extracurricular Activities
Name of Principal Investigator - Student Researcher Name: Fraydoon Bayat
Phone Number of Principal Investigator:
Name and Phone Number of Supervisors: Dr. Jim Ryan:
Date:

Dear Teacher:

My name is Fraydoon Bayat. I am a graduate student in the Department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (University of Toronto), pursuing a Doctoral degree in Education in Educational Administration. As part of my degree requirements, I am conducting research for my thesis entitled Student Engagement: A Qualitative Case Study of Extracurricular Activities, in which I will look at how students are engaged with extracurricular activities (ECA). I will be under the supervision of Dr. Jim Ryan. The purpose of this study is to explore how students are engaged with leadership, skills development and relationships in ECA. I am requesting your cooperation as a voluntary participant in an interview. I am interested in learning how students engage in extracurricular activities (ECA). Your views about students’ participation in extracurricular activities will shed light on ECA in your school. You will be interviewed for approximately 45-60 minutes. The interview will be conducted at a place and time of your choosing.

The data will be collected through interviews of you, as well as student participants in your ECA and my observations from your activity. I need your permission to observe your ECA. I will be observing most of your ECA for the full length of each session. I would like to invite you to participate in this study. You will be interviewed for approximately 45 minutes to an hour. Interviews will take place at school at lunch time or some other non-instructional time. The purpose of this interview is to help the researcher explore student engagement in ECA. I will interview twice the students in your ECA who are interested in being interviewed and who have parental consent for this. The total amount of time for these interviews will be about 30-45 minutes. The first interview will be done at the beginning of the ECA and the second one will be near the end of the activity. I may follow up with the focus group interview with some students, if responses suggest that further questions will be useful. The focus group will last no more than 45 minutes. My observations of your activity will be used in conjunction with the interviews to substantiate the findings. I need your permission to observe your ECA. I will be observing most of your ECA for the full length of each session. I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

Research indicates that participation in school extracurricular activities can make a difference in the lives of students. Researchers strongly suggest that such participation can be very beneficial to the academic, social, physical, and emotional growth of students. This proposed research will examine participants’ experiences of their engagement in ECA. Specifically, it will examine ECA participants’ interactions, skill development, and leadership in a particular activity. This study will look at extracurricular activities in terms of emotional, cognitive and behavioral constructs of engagement.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You may change your mind about your participation at any time. When you withdraw from the study, your data will be destroyed and
not used in any written or verbal communication of the findings. All participant interviews will be anonymous and confidential; individual participants, schools, and school boards will not be identified. Pseudonyms will be used for all names. Themes, concepts and information from interviews will be used in my thesis, and in the future for potential reports, presentations at conferences or other places, journal papers and book chapters; in all cases, the participant’s identity will remain confidential. All data collected – audio recordings, transcripts, and notes from interviews – will be kept confidential. There is no risk of physical or psychological harm from participating in this study. You will at no time be judged or evaluated on your responses.

Data will be securely stored, and no one except the researcher and my supervisor will have access to data. The research paper will be on file at the University of Toronto as a Doctoral thesis. The interview information (including audio files and transcripts) will be kept in a secure place and destroyed within five years after the study is completed. Participants may request that any information be eliminated from the project before, during or after the interview process. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will have no effect on you at your school, nor will it effects your relations with OISE.

Participating in this study is worthwhile professional development for the teachers because it allows them time to reflect on their practices and views. If you are interested in participating in this research or if you have any questions, please contact me at ……..or by e-mail, or my supervisor at …… or by email… If you have any questions related to your rights as a participant in this study or if you have any complaints or concerns please contact the Office of Research Ethics at ……..or by e-mail at ethics.review@utoronto.ca. If you want to participate in this study, please sign below and keep a copy for your records.

Sincerely,
Fraydoon Bayat

Consent Form for Teachers (Interviews and Observations)
I, ___________________________ , agree to take part in a study on Student Engagement: A Qualitative Case Study of Extracurricular Activities

I understand that:

• I am under no obligation to participate in an interview and observations.
• I can refuse to answer any question in the interview or terminate both the interview and observations at any time without consequence.
• my specific answers and comments will be kept confidential.
• my name or the name of my school and district will not be identified in any report or presentation, which may arise from the study.
• only the research team will have access to the information collected during the study.
• participation in this study provides me with a professional development opportunity through reflection on my own practices.
• I may request a summary of findings once the study is complete
I agree to participate and I understand what this study involves. I have received a copy of this form for my records.

Name of Participant __________________________
(Please Print)

Signature of Participant: __________________________

School:

Please initial the following if you are interested:
To have your interview digitally recorded: ______  To receive a copy of the interview transcript to review: ____  To receive a summary of the results of the study: ____
Appendix A-3

Student and Parental Consent Form and Research Study Information

Title of Research: Student Engagement: A Qualitative Case Study of Extracurricular Activities

Date:

Dear Student:

My name is Fraydoon Bayat. I am a graduate student in the Department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (University of Toronto), pursuing a Doctoral degree in Education in Educational Administration. As part of my degree requirements, I am conducting research for my thesis entitled Student Engagement: A Qualitative Case Study of Extracurricular Activities, in which I will look at how students are engaged with extracurricular activities (ECA). I will be under the supervision of Dr. Jim Ryan. The purpose of this study is to explore how students are engaged with leadership, skills development and relationships in ECA.

Research indicates that participation in school extracurricular activities can make a difference in the lives of students. Researchers strongly suggest that such participation can be very beneficial to the academic, social, physical, and emotional growth of students. This proposed research will examine participants’ experiences of their engagement in ECA. Specifically, it will examine ECA participants’ interactions, skill development, and leadership in a particular activity.

Students’ views about their participation in ECA will not only help my research, they will likely improve the way ECA is run in the future. I would like to invite you to participate in this study. You will be interviewed twice for approximately 30-45 minutes in total. The first interview will be done at the beginning of the ECA and the second one will be near the end of the activity. I may follow up with the focus group interview with some students, if responses suggest that further questions will be useful. The focus group will last no more than 45 minutes. I will ask you questions about your engagement in ECA, your experience and why ECA is important to you. Interviews will take place at school.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You are free to refuse to be interviewed. You may change your mind about your participation at any time. When you withdraw from the study, your data will be destroyed and not used in any written or verbal communication of the findings. All participant interviews will be anonymous and confidential; individual participants, schools, and school board will not be identified. Pseudonyms will be used for all names. Themes, concepts and information from interviews will be used in my thesis, and in the future for potential reports, presentations at conferences or other places, journal papers and book chapters; in all cases, the participant’s identity will remain confidential. All data collected – audio recordings, transcripts, and notes from interviews – will be kept confidential. There is no risk of physical or psychological harm from participating in this study. Data will be securely stored, and no one except the researcher and my supervisor will have access the data. The research paper will be on file at the University of Toronto as a Doctoral thesis. The interview information (including audio files and transcripts) will be kept in a secure place and destroyed within five years after the study is completed. Participants may request that any information be eliminated.
from the project before, during or after the interview process. Your decision whether or not to participate in this research study will have no effect on you at your school.

If you have any questions or concerns about the project, please contact me at…… or by email, or my supervisors: at……, or by email...., or the Research Ethics office at.... (ethics.review@utoronto.ca). If you want to participate in this study, at the time of the interview, you will be asked to sign a consent form and keep a copy for your records. Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Fraydoon Bayat

PARENTAL CONSENT

- Benefits - There are no guaranteed benefits to your child.
- Alternatives - Your child is free to choose not to participate in this research study.
- Costs - There will be no costs to your child or you as a result of your child taking part in this research study.
- Questions - If I have any further questions about the study, I can contact: Fraydoon Bayat at... …………., or email............

I have been given a copy of this consent form to keep.

I have read the information letter and understand the study and my child’s involvement in it.

My child __________________________ has my consent to participate in the educational research study.

Student ______________
(Age)

Parent/Guardian: ___________________________, ____________________________
(Signature) (name)

Address: _____________________________________

Home Phone Number: ________________

Date: ______________

STUDENT CONSENT

I listened to the researchers’ explanation of the study and I have read the information letter. I understand about the study and my involvement in it. My questions about the study were answered by the researcher (Fraydoon Bayat). I understand that my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. I hereby agree to participate in the interviews.

Student Name/Signature: ____________________________________
(Signed in the presence of the researcher)
Appendix: B-1

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

1. What is the demographic makeup of your school?

2. Please give me a description of the school and community.

3. Please explain the school average academic achievement.

4. How many years have you been the principal at the school?

5. How many ECA programs are offered at your school?

6. What is the ECA participation rate at your school?

7. How many students do you have in the school?

8. What is the gender ratio at your school?

9. How does the school encourage students’ participation in ECA?

10. What benefits have you seen from the school ECA programs?

11. How does the ECA participation rate vary among genders?

12. How do students’ parents support their engagement in ECA?

13. Do these ECA need any academic requirements for students to participate in them?

14. Why are some students involved in ECA and why are some not?

15. Are all ECA free at your school?

16. How do ECA develop student leadership, skills, and relationships?

17. What skills do students develop in ECA?

18. How do ECA support students’ relationship with their peers and teachers?

19. How do students choose ECA?

20. How do you think ECA interest students?

21. Can you please describe some of the roles of students who participated in ECA in student leadership at the school?

22. What roles, in your opinion, do ECA have towards student leadership, diversity, dialogue, relationships, and skills development?

23. What changes need to be made to ECA for more involvement/access of all students?
Appendix B-2

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS

1. What were the goal(s) of your ECA?
2. What was your leadership role in ECA?
3. Describe some of the good things that you think ECA provides for the students.
4. What was ECA’s impact on students?
5. What do you think should be the purpose of ECA?
6. How long have you been doing ECA?
7. What areas of ECA (e.g., sport, art) do you like to supervise and why?
8. What is your background, if any, in ECA?
9. Do you think ECA addresses the needs of students with diverse backgrounds? Please explain.
10. What has been the most important outcome of ECA for you?
11. Are you satisfied with this outcome?
12. Would you participate in ECA again and why?
13. Please explain any supports and barriers you experienced in ECA.
14. Do you feel as if the ECA you were involved in effectively engaged students?
15. What parts of ECA were the most interesting to students?
16. Was there a gap between your expectations of ECA and what you actually saw happen?
17. Please tell me important skills that students learned in ECA that helped their leadership.
18. Please give me some examples of student leadership in ECA.
19. What part do ECA play in regards to student leadership, diversity, dialogue, relationships, and skills development?
20. What changes need to be made to ECA for more students to participate?
21. How did you deal with conflict if any in ECA?
22. In your opinion how did students deal with conflict in ECA?
23. How did students in your opinion deal with diversity in ECA?
24. What was the most enjoyable experience you had?
Appendix B-3.1

INTERVIEW ONE: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

1. Questions about participants’ personal data (i.e., what grade are you in? and how are you doing with your schoolwork?)

2. Whose idea was it for your involvement in extracurricular activities (ECA)?

3. Have you ever participated in any type of ECA before?

4. Please list other clubs-teams-groups you have participated this school year.

5. What do you expect to learn from ECA?

6. Why do you participate in ECA?

7. Why have you chosen this special ECA?

8. The most important reason for you to participate in ECA?
Appendix B-3.2

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

Extracurricular activities
1. Describe what you did in ECA.
2. What did you like about ECA?
3. What did you dislike about it?
4. What have you learned through your participation in ECA?
5. Did you attend the program sessions on a regular basis?
6. How many times did you miss the activities and why?
7. What are your favourite memories of ECA?

Leadership
8. What were your responsibilities- if any- in the team activities?
9. In any team activities or decision- making, did you rely on your teachers’ directions or did you make decisions on your own or with other students in ECA?
10. Were you involved in resolving conflicts among others in ECA? If yes, how did you resolve any conflict- if there was one- with others in ECA?
11. How did you manage your school work along with the ECA?
12. Have you had an opportunity to be a leader?
13. What were the challenges for you when you were a leader?
14. How did you lead others?
15. Give one example of your leadership in ECA.
16. What was the most challenging moment for you as a leader? And how did you deal with it?
17. What do you feel about being a leader?

Skills development
18. What skills have you developed?
19. How did you develop skills in ECA?
20. Have you had an opportunity to help others to develop skills in ECA?
21. How did you feel about helping others to develop skills?
22. Please list skills you learned which are important for you as a leader.
23. Did you enjoy your ECA experiences? Please explain

**Relationships**
24. How in the ECA were you involved with sharing things, and making friends?
25. How did you get along with other students in ECA?
26. Were you ever uncomfortable by other students’ behaviours in the activity?
27. How would you describe your relationships with others?

**Supports**
28. How have you been helped through ECA?
29. Were the activities offered in a safe environment?
30. Were they close to public transportation?
31. Was there any cost for you to participate?
32. How did you and other students support each other in ECA?

**Barriers**
33. Was there any cost for you to participate?
34. Have you ever had any argument/disagreement with others? What happens and how did you deal with it?

**Impacts**
35. Will you participate in ECA in the future and why?
36. If somebody tells you ECA are not important, what would be your answer?

**Motivation**
37. What encouraged you to do your best in teamwork?
38. What did you like about ECA that motivated you to attend regularly?
39. What do you think was the most important reason for you to participate in ECA?
Appendix C

The Observational Indicators in the Clubs

The following indicators will be looked at in the observations of the clubs:

- Skills development, relationships, and leadership in relation to experiences of student engagement
- Aspects of student engagement will be looked at including: supports, hindrances, impact, and motivation
Appendix D

Recruitment of the School Principal

Title of Research: Student Engagement: A Qualitative Case Study of Extracurricular Activities
Name of Principal Investigator - Student Researcher Name: Fraydoon Bayat
Phone Number of Principal Investigator:
Name and Phone Number of Supervisors: Dr. Jim Ryan:
Date:

Dear Principal:

My name is Fraydoon Bayat. I am a graduate student in the Department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (University of Toronto), pursuing a Doctoral degree in Education in Educational Administration. As part of my degree requirements, I am conducting research for my thesis entitled Student Engagement: A Qualitative Case Study of Extracurricular Activities, in which I will look at how students are engaged with extracurricular activities (ECA). I will be under the supervision of Dr. Jim Ryan. The purpose of this study is to explore how students are engaged with leadership, skills development and relationships in ECA.

I hope to get your permission to conduct this research in your school. Research indicates that participation in school extracurricular activities can make a difference in the lives of students. Researchers strongly suggest that participation in ECA can be very beneficial to the academic, social, physical, and emotional growth of students. This proposed research will examine participants’ experiences of their engagement in ECA. It will attempt to provide educators and administrators with the perceptions of both students and teachers in ECA about participants’ interactions, skills development, and leadership in an activity. This study will look at extracurricular activities in terms of emotional, cognitive and behavioral constructs of engagement. I would like to get your permission to meet the teachers who are running ECA in order to present the information about my research to them. I need your permission to observe ECA.

The data will be collected through interviews with the principal, teachers, and students. The volunteer teachers and you (the principal’s name) will be each interviewed for approximately 45 minutes to one hour. I will interview twice approximately 15-25 students in ECA who are interested in being interviewed and who have parental consent for this. The total amount of time for these interviews will be about 30-45 minutes. The first interview will be done at the beginning of the ECA and the second one will be near the end of the activity. I may follow up with the focus group interview with some students, if responses suggest that further questions will be useful. The focus group will last no more than 45 minutes. The purpose of these interviews is to help the researcher to study student engagement in ECA. I will observe most ECA sessions. My observations will be used in conjunction with the interviews to substantiate the findings. I may also take notes during my observations.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You may change your mind about your participation at any time. When you withdraw from the study, your data will be destroyed and not used in any written or verbal communication of the findings. All participant interviews will be anonymous and confidential; individual participants, schools, and school boards will not be
identified. Pseudonyms will be used for all names. Themes, concepts and information from interviews will be used in my thesis, and in the future for potential reports, presentations at conferences or other places, journal papers and book chapters; in all cases, the participant’s identity will remain confidential. All data collected – audio recordings, transcripts, and notes from interviews – will be kept confidential. There is no risk of physical or psychological harm from participating in this study. Data will be securely stored, and no one except the researcher and my supervisor will have access the data. The research paper will be on file at the University of Toronto as a Doctoral thesis. The interview information (including audio files and transcripts) will be kept in a secure place and destroyed within five years after the study is completed. Participants may request that any information be eliminated from the project before, during or after the interview process. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will have no effect on you at your school.

If you are interested in having your school participate in this research or if you have any questions about it, please contact me at …..or by e-mail...., or my supervisor Dr. Jim Ryan at ….., or by email....., or the Research Ethics Office at……. or by e-mail at ethics.review@utoronto.ca.

If you agree for the school to participate in this study, please sign below and keep a copy for your records.

Sincerely,

Fraydoon Bayat

I, _____________________, agree to allow this school (Name of the school……………..) to take part in a study on Student Engagement: A Qualitative case Study of Extracurricular Activities.

Principal Signature: ________________________________ Date: ________________
Appendix E:

Recruitment of Teachers

Title of Research: Student Engagement: A Qualitative Case Study of Extracurricular Activities
Name of Principal Investigator - Student Researcher Name: Fraydoon Bayat
Phone Number of Principal Investigator:
Name and Phone Number of Supervisors: Dr. Jim Ryan:
Date:

Dear Teacher:

My name is Fraydoon Bayat. I am a graduate student in the Department of Leadership, Higher and Adult Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (University of Toronto), pursuing a Doctoral degree in Education in Educational administration. As part of my degree requirements, I am conducting research for my thesis entitled Student Engagement: A Qualitative Case Study of Extracurricular Activities, which I will look at how students are engaged with extracurricular activities (ECA) under the supervision of Dr. Jim Ryan. The purpose of this study is to explore how students are engaged with leadership, skills development and relationships in ECA. I am interested in learning how students engage in extracurricular activities (ECA), your views about students’ participation in extracurricular activities, and your reflections on how students were engaged. Not only will your participation help my research study, it will likely improve the way ECA is run in the future. The school Principal (Name) has given permission for this study to be carried out in your school. The data would be collected through interview you, and student participants in ECA and my observations from your activity.

I would like to invite you to participate in this study. You will be interviewed for approximately 45 minutes to an hour. Interviews will take place at school at lunch time or other non-instructional time. The purpose of this interview is to help the researcher study student engagement in ECA. I will interview twice the students in your ECA who are interested in being interviewed and who have parental consent for this. The total amount of time for these interviews will be about 30-45 minutes. The first interview will be done at the beginning of the ECA and the second one will be near the end of the activity. I may follow up with the focus group interview with some students, if responses suggest that further questions will be useful. The focus group will last no more than 45 minutes. My observations of your activity are used in conjunction with the interviews to substantiate the findings. I will be observing most of your ECA for the full length of each session. I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

Research indicates that participation in school extracurricular activities can make a difference in the lives of students. Researchers strongly suggest that participation in ECA can be very beneficial to the academic, social, physical, and emotional growth of students. This proposed research will examine participants’ perceptions of their engagement in ECA. It will attempt to provide educators and administrators with the perceptions of both students and teachers in ECA about participants’ interactions, skill development, and leadership in an activity. This study will look at extracurricular activities in terms of emotional, cognitive and behavioral constructs of engagement.
All participant interviews are anonymous and confidential; individual participants, schools, and school board will not be identified. Pseudonyms will be used for all names. Only my thesis supervisor and I will have access to the data collected. Themes, concepts and information from interviews will be used in my thesis, and in the future for potential reports, presentations at conferences or other venues, journal papers and book chapters; in all cases, the participant’s identity will remain confidential. The research paper will be on file at the University of Toronto as a Doctoral thesis. There is no risk of physical or psychological harm from participating in this study.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You may change your mind about your participation in the research study at any time. When you withdraw from the study, your data will be destroyed and not used in any written or verbal communication of the findings. Your decision whether or not to participate in this study will have no effect on you at your school, nor on your relation with OISE/UT.

Participating in this study is worthwhile professional development for the teachers because it allows time for them to reflect on their practices and views. If you have any questions or concerns about the project, please contact me at .... or by email....., or my supervisors: Dr. Jim Ryan, or the Research Ethics office at .........., (ethics.review@utoronto.ca) If you are willing to participate in this study, please e-mail me at .... If you choose to participate in this study, at the time of the interview, you will be asked to sign a consent form that repeats the information in this e-mail. Two copies of the consent form will be provided, which one is yours to keep. I look forward to your response. Thank you for your consideration!

Sincerely,

Fraydoon Bayat