EDUC 450: Capstone Project

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A compilation of Capstone projects from EDUC 450 class

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Evaluating Student and Faculty Experience and Perception of the

W2 Mid-Level Writing Requirement at Bates College

Final Project Report

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Problem Statement

This research project addresses the perceived problem of inconsistencies in writing instruction in W2 courses across disciplines at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine. Through recent studies, the Bates administration has identified issues with the W2 mid- level writing requirement including the need for "more explicit expectations or guidelines for W2" courses and the "significant variability across departments and programs" ("Writing in the General Education Curriculum: A Report to EPC," 2012). The Office of the Dean of Faculty is currently working with the Writing at Bates program faculty to evaluate the writing-intensive components of the Bates curriculum. This project supplements their research to support this evaluation.

Nature of the Study

In January of 2014 I approached Hillory Oakes, the Director of Writing at Bates, with my interest in researching an issue in writing pedagogy practice at Bates. Dr. Oakes identified that the chief issue currently being addressed is inconsistency in the implementation of the W2 requirement. Thus, I tailored this project to study this inconsistency so that my research would be useful to the Bates administration in their evaluation of the W2 requirement. This research examines the current student and faculty experiences and perceptions of the W2 requirement to clarify the most pressing concerns with the W2 and determine whether they has shifted since the previous studies conducted by the Office of the Dean of Faculty and the Writing at Bates program. I conducted community-based research on the Bates College campus to collect student and faculty reports on their experiences with the W2 requirement. This project also gathered ideas for solutions to these issues from students and faculty and in this Report I propose several suggestions to the Bates College administration for improving the implementation of the W2 requirement.

Rationale for the Study

This project addresses the problem of perceived inconsistencies in writing instruction in W2 courses across disciplines at Bates College by a) studying the current framework of the W2, b) comparing the implementation of W2 courses with the program's mission and goals, c) seeking student and faculty experiences and perceptions of the W2 requirement, d) seeking student and faculty suggestions on what changes they believe would be beneficial to the W2, and e) making recommendations based these findings in a formal presentation at the 2014 Bates Education Symposium and through dissemination of this Report to the Writing at Bates faculty and the Office of the Dean of Faculty. My partner in this project is the committee evaluating Writing at Bates, specifically Hillory Oakes. The target population is students and faculty at Bates College. The ultimate goal of this project is to improve the W2 system so that all Bates students graduate with excellent writing skills.

Background

The W2 is a component of the new writing-intensive course requirement system introduced in 2006 with the implementation of the new General Education curriculum at Bates College. Its implementation predates the establishment of the Writing at Bates program in 2009 (after arriving on campus, the Writing at Bates faculty shifted and clarified the descriptions of and guidelines for writing-intensive courses). The W2 is a mid-level writing-intensive course requirement taken between the W1 (FYS) course and the W3 (senior thesis). It is designed to build upon the college-level writing skills introduced in the FYS and prepare students to write their theses.

The Writing at Bates materials describing the W2 requirement specify it as "teacher guided but with increasing student responsibility" so that students grow more accustomed to planning, structuring, and editing their own writing ("Developmental Progression of Writing-Attentive Courses"). There are five categories of shared commitments outlined in the W2 proposal form: improving students' skills in inquiry, argument, evidence, organization, and style ("W2 Proposal Form"). In addition to these goals, the Writing at Bates program has established five principles as the foundation of W2 courses:

1. Writing is taught, not just assigned.

2. Writing assignments of varying scope or genre are a significant portion of the coursework.

3. Students have multiple opportunities to revise their writing.

4. Faculty members give feedback on writing, commenting on rhetorical issues in addition to content.

5. Research skills and scholarly citation practices are taught, not just assigned.

("Writing-Attentive Courses: Guide to the W2")

Note the focus on *teaching* students how to write, rather than simply assigning writing: in W2-designated courses, the intention is that professors actively instruct techniques for all stages of the writing process.

Currently, Bates policy is that the W2 course must be taken in a student's sophomore or junior year, so that a progression from W1 to W2 to W3 is ensured (however, there have been recent moves to change this policy so that the W2 could be taken any semester of a student's time at Bates). Although W2 materials state that "ideally" students will take their W2s within their majors, this is not a requirement; for example, a Biochemistry major could take a W2 in the Dance department and have it satisfy his/her W2 requirement ("Developmental Progression of Writing-Attentive Courses"). One exception is that certain majors have required courses that also fulfill the W2 requirement, such as the PSYCH 261 Research Methods course in the Psychology major. The lack of a required W2 in every major brings up questions about how the W2 can specifically prepare students for thesis: if students need not take a W2 in the writing style of that discipline, how will they be prepared to write their discipline-specific thesis? However, since students will have taken many other classes in the course of completing their majors, it is assumed that they will be trained in that writing style by virtue of these other classes (these issues will be explored in detail in the "Presentation & Analysis of Data Findings" section). Although most departments at Bates offer at least one W2, some offer more unusual solutions to majors in that department. In the Physics and Chemistry departments, for example, multiple courses within the major add up to one W2 credit, although none of those courses individually count as W2s ("W2s by

Department/Program").

Faculty must submit a proposal for their course to be designated a W2 that must be approved before that course receives the W2 designation. Currently there is no policy that W2 courses be capped specifically because of their W2 designation, meaning that some of these courses may have a high student-to-faculty ratio. Some professors, as well as members of the Writing at Bates faculty, have expressed a desire to specifically cap W2 courses so that professors can focus more attention on critically responding to student writing.

Bates is aware that since the W2 requirement is a new component of the curriculum, it needs to be continuously assessed and developed, and the Bates administration has conducted research and evaluations of the writing-intensive course requirements to that end. Three studies have been conducted that gathered student opinion on the W2: the Honors Survey in 2009-2010, two discussions in 2010-2011 with Peer Writing Assistants, and a student survey in Fall 2013. Furthermore, the First-Year Seminar and Writing Committee wrote a report entitled "Writing in the General Education Curriculum" which was submitted to the Bates College Educational Policy Committee and is included in the 2012 General Education Report. This report acknowledges some of the faults of the W2 requirement. It comments that in the aforementioned studies,

> Students reported that a variety of aspects of W2 courses were helpful, including work on developing research questions, peer review, formal writing instruction, and more frequent assignments. However, students argued that there should be more explicit expectations or guidelines for W2s and were confused by the significant variability across departments and programs. ("Fifth-Year General Education Report," p. 27)

The results of this study generally corroborate these earlier findings, which supports the

veracity of my data and also indicates that the issues with the W2 are ongoing problems which need to be addressed.

Currently the Dean of Faculty's Office is conducting a evaluation of the W2. Their methods include formally surveying the entire student body (a detailed survey was sent out in Fall 2013) and holding discussions with each department concerning how they approach the W2 (these discussion began in Winter 2014 and will continue into the 2014- 15 academic year). My project is designed both to supplement their research and to be generative, suggesting avenues for further discussion and research.

Literature Review

Writing-Intensive Courses in Postsecondary Education

Writing across the curriculum, or "WAC," is an American movement in writing pedagogy that began in the late 1970s. It was founded as a "response to a perceived deficiency in student writing and thinking abilities" that occurred following the diversification of American colleges and universities in the 1960s as institutions struggled to deal with huge variety in entering students' writing abilities (Fulwiler & Young, 1990, p. 1). WAC's basic assumption is that "language, learning, and teaching are inextricably linked," which leads to the first main component of WAC: "writing to learn" (WTL) (Herrington & Moran, 1992, p. 41). WTL emphasizes that writing is not just a means of recording knowledge, nor is it simply a means of assessing students' knowledge of content: it identifies writing as a tool for learning in itself (McLeod & Soven, 1992, p. 3). The other pedagogy promoted by WAC is "writing in the disciplines" (WID), which claims that "because academic writing happens in specific disciplinary contexts, instruction in such writing should also be located in these courses" (Coffin et al, 2003, p. 7). WID supports methods of writing-intensive instruction that teach how to write in the style of a certain discipline within courses that also teach the content of that discipline.

WAC programs are generally based in the philosophies of scholars James Britton, Don Murray, Janet Emig, and Peter Elbow (Fulwiler & Young, 1990, p. 2). They provide an alternative to the "banking" model of education that Education scholar Paulo Freire warns against (McLeod & Soven, 1992, p. 53). Central to WAC theory is the concept that responsibility for teaching writing should be spread across all faculty members at an

institution: writing instruction should not be the occupation of a few English professors, but rather the responsibility of professors in multiple disciplines across campus.

One aspect of some WAC programs, and the focus of this research, is the implementation of required writing-intensive (WI) courses into the curriculum at institutions of higher education. The WI course can take multiple forms on different college/university campuses: sometimes it is a junior-year writing seminar in the student's major, sometimes multiple WI courses are required, and sometimes it is a single course required at any point throughout the student's college career (more institutional approaches to WI course requirements are highlighted in the section "Suggestions for Systemic Alternatives"). At Bates, the WI requirement is that each student take one "W2" designated course at some point during their sophomore or junior years. Some elements of the WI course that are generally agreed upon by WAC scholars are small class size, faculty control over the course, a high quantity of writing assignments, emphasis on revision, writing comprising a large percentage of the course grade, use of class time to teach writing skills, and use of support services such as the Writing Center on campus (McLeod & Soven, 1992, p. 53-4).

As WAC is a nascent movement, there is still debate over best practice for implementing WAC in colleges and universities. First, administrators establishing new WAC programs must decide where to physically locate the WAC program: within the English department? the Writing Center? as a distinct entity? Institutions must also consider who should direct the WAC program. Faculty ownership of—and consequently buy-in to—the WAC program is essential, but should there be an outside WAC director with training and experience supervising the program? Furthermore, how should implementing WAC programming be incentivized? Training for faculty teaching WI courses, smaller class sizes,

and faculty spending more time individually commenting on multiple revisions of students' papers are all expensive, so implementing an effective WAC program requires a monetary investment for the institution.

Although it has been adopted by many colleges and universities, the WI course requirement is controversial among WAC proponents. Some scholars (including Barnett & Blumner, 1999) are against the very idea of instituting WIs, arguing that requiring WIs runs counter to the WAC belief that writing be taught in every course across every discipline. They fear that if there are specific courses dedicated to writing instruction, responsibility for teaching writing will be diffused and faculty who are not teaching WI- designated courses will not feel responsible for teaching writing in their courses at all.
Others (including McLeod & Soven, 1992) argue that effectively taught WIs are necessary for integrating writing instruction into the curriculum. Two arguments in defense of WIs cited by McLeod & Soven are that "(1) students' writing skills will diminish if not reinforced and practiced between freshman composition and graduation and (2) students' writing improves most markedly if they write while they are engaged by their major subject" (McLeod & Soven, 1992, p. 52). By researching how writing skills are taught at Bates through W2 courses, this project examines whether W2s at Bates are problematic because having them means that professors of non-W2 courses do not teach writing, or whether they are a necessary component of the curriculum because they ensure that there is attention paid specifically to writing instruction in certain classes.

Since WAC and the institution of WI courses is a fairly new pedagogical movement, it has not yet stood the test of time: scholars are just beginning to be able to evaluate its long-term impact on how institutions approach writing instruction. Additionally, there has

been debate on how to assess the effectiveness of WAC and WIs: they purportedly improve

students' critical thinking and reflective skills (among other abilities), but these skills are

not easily quantifiable (Witte, 1983). This Report addresses the gap in the literature of the

lack of assessment of WI courses by providing research on the student experience of the W2

requirement at Bates College.

Research Questions

The chief research question in this project is *What are the student experiences and perceptions of the W2 mid-level writing requirement at Bates College?* Clearly this is a sizable question, so there were several sub-questions that I explored in the course of my research. They included the following:

How do a student's perceptions and experiences of the W2 course requirement vary according to that student's major field of study?

Since the Office of the Dean of Faculty had identified "significant variability [in W2s] across departments and programs" in the 2012 report, I wanted to research whether this was still an issue that students perceived ("Fifth-Year General Education Report," p. 27). I wanted to identify how exactly W2s in different disciplines vary; what are the differences in the ways that professors in different fields teach writing? I also wondered whether students in different disciplines perceived writing courses differently; for example, do students in the arts/humanities feel that their W2s are more effective than students in the sciences/mathematics?

Do students feel that their W2 course experiences directly prepare them to write thesis?

As the step between the W1 (FYS) and the W3 (senior thesis), the W2 is designed to bridge the gap in writing skills by developing students' writing abilities and giving them the tools they need to write their senior theses. I was curious whether W2s are satisfying this need: are they simply providing general writing skills which can be applied to thesis among other projects, or are they explicitly providing instruction for long-term academic projects such as thesis? And, again, how does this vary by discipline?

How can the W2 requirement better develop students' writing skills?

Finally, since this project supplements the research of the Office of the Dean of Faculty and the Writing at Bates program, I wanted to be able to offer suggestions to them as to how the W2 requirement could be improved. I solicited student ideas on how the W2 course might better advance their writing skills and faculty ideas on how they could be better trained or how W2s could be restructured on an administrative level so that they would function better. It was important to me to gather widespread opinions so that in this Report I was not merely expressing my personal beliefs but rather reporting general opinion.

Methods

My Investment in the Project

I came to this project through my interest in writing and how to effectively teach writing, motivated by my background as a Peer Writing Assistant and an English and Dance double major having taken many writing-intensive courses at Bates. I had observed that the writing instruction in the W2 courses I had taken varied across disciplines and professors. I had also perceived that there was a lack of specific writing instruction in these courses; generally, I felt that writing was heavily assigned but rarely taught. Entering my senior year and preparing to write my theses, I realized that in some respects I felt prepared, but I wasn't sure that I could attribute my sense of preparedness to the writing training in my W2 courses; I may only have felt ready because of my experiences as a Peer Writing Assistant or Research Assistant, for example. These experiences made me question how W2 courses vary across disciplines and professors, whether Bates students feel adequately prepared to write their theses because of the W2 requirement, and ways in which the W2 requirement might be improved to better support the development of students' writing skills. Through this project I hope to contribute meaningfully to Bates' effort to improve its Writing program.

Methods and Forms of Data Collection

I collected both quantitative and qualitative data from students and faculty through various means. First, I met often with Dr. Oakes to learn about the structure and history of the W2 and to ensure my developing findings were consistent with her general perception of attitudes about the W2 on campus. In order to get detailed insight into how one professor approaches teaching the W2 and to determine which questions would be most relevant to ask

faculty in my subsequent survey, I interviewed Prof. Carol Dilley, Director of Dance and a professor of two W2 courses, about her W2 pedagogy on 2/26. Seeking more information from a broader pool of faculty members from various disciplines, on 2/22 I sent all faculty teaching a W2 at the time (Winter 2014; 30 professors) an email query requesting that they write a blurb detailing their approach to teaching W2 courses. When this email yielded no responses, I framed the questions in the form of an online survey and sent that to them on 3/7, with more success: I received eight responses.

In order to gather detailed feedback from students regarding their experiences of the W2, I convened two student focus group discussions on 2/27. I was able to direct the focus group discussion to obtain relevant information; because there were only six participants, I was able to have an in-depth, detailed discussion with them. The rich discussion in the focus groups clarified my research questions. In order to gather more specific data about these questions and have more breadth in my sample, on 3/7 I sent an email to the announce listserv containing a survey about student perceptions and experiences of the W2. I received 35 responses to this survey from students of all class years across a wide range of majors.

These various modes of data collection yielded qualitative and quantitative data from multiple populations. In order to present and analyze this data, I coded it for themes. I did not perform advanced statistical analysis, since the sample size was small and the study was intended to be generative rather than conclusive. In this Report, I present the quantitative data graphically and offer excerpts from focus group discussions, interviews, and written responses on the survey to present the qualitative data.

How Scholarship Informed Methods

I chose these research methods because I observed that they are commonly used

means of collecting data on the Bates College campus. My project uses Community- Based Research methods, with the community being faculty and students at Bates College. In conducting this study, I was aware of the need to acknowledge my own biases and recognize how I am situated within the field that I am studying. Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) note that "it is a distinctive feature of social research that the 'objects' studied are in fact 'subjects,' and themselves produce accounts of their world" (124). I extend this concept to my own relationship with the subject matter; it is important for me to be aware of my own prior experiences with the subject matter, and I also need to be conscious of my respondents' biases and how they affects their responses.

I closely followed the guidelines set by Jehangir (2003) for reporting qualitative research studies, including clearly reporting my own experiences in the W2 system, my methods of research, and how I checked the validity of my findings. I also triangulated my data by using multiple forms of data collection with multiple groups of people on campus. This enabled me to perceive the nuances of students and faculty experiences and perceptions of the W2 by allowing multiple perspectives into the data pool. By using this practice, I followed Stake (1995), who characterizes triangulation as "the search for additional interpretations more than the confirmation of a single meaning" (115). In my research practice, I allowed students and faculty multiple ways in which to share their opinions; through the focus groups, I encouraged conversation and asked students questions to confirm or deny my interpretation of the data. I also consistently shared my findings with Writing at Bates faculty in order to check whether my findings were consistent with their general perceptions of the W2 on campus.

Ethical Concerns

My primary ethical concern in this project has been walking the line between accurately reporting my findings and appearing to be overly critical of Bates policies and practices. Many respondents in my research reported frustration with the W2 requirement and perceived inconsistent teaching practices (although these negative sentiments were not universal). In this Report, I seek to fairly report student perceptions and experiences; however, I do not wish to imply that Bates is failing its students. I do not have the big- picture perspective; for example, I am not responsible for managing the College's budget or leading workshops on how to teach writing to college students. Working with Dr. Oakes has been valuable because she gives me insight on the challenges the Writing at Bates program faces that prevent them from implementing the "ideal" writing requirement system. I am concerned that the findings from my project might be misconstrued to blame Dr. Oakes and her colleagues for issues that might be more systemic or unable to be helped without shifts in funding.

Another ethical concern I encountered in this project was maintaining confidentiality. I consulted with Prof. Dilley to ensure that she was comfortable having her name associated with her comments in our interview (she was). With focus group and survey responses from students and faculty, however, I kept all data anonymous in order to protect their confidentiality. The surveys sent to students and professors did not collect names or usernames, so there is no way for me to trace comments made in those surveys back to the people who wrote them and thus no way for me to know their identities.

Veracity of Findings

One concern about the veracity of my findings is that those students who attended the focus groups and replied to the survey email are people who are naturally interested or invested in the W2, so their comments may not be representative of ideas of the entire student body. Students with strong negative feelings about the W2 may have been more likely to take the survey or attend the focus groups in order to vent about their experiences, which may have skewed the results negatively. However, I have personally observed that the findings of my research are consistent with what I have heard students saying about the W2 in the past, so I do not believe that these results are excessively skewed. Furthermore, Dr. Oakes has stated in personal communications with me that she was not surprised by the research findings and that she was previously aware of those sentiments in the student population, so I do not believe that my findings in student perception and experience of the W2 are severely skewed.

The potential for skewed results because only interested people respond is also true with my faculty research. I chose to interview Prof. Dilley because Dr. Oakes and I agreed that she is invested in teaching writing skills in her W2s and is committed to constantly improving how she teaches the W2 (I had taken two W2s with her and appreciated the high level of writing instruction in these courses). Because of her extraordinarily high level of commitment to the W2, she may not be representative of all faculty members teaching the W2. Furthermore, the professors who took my survey are likely more invested in the W2s they teach, so their opinions cannot be generalized to all professors teaching W2s at Bates.

Patterns or Uniqueness/Multiplicity

My study searched for both patterns and variety of experiences and perspectives: it identifies patterns in how students and faculty experience and perceive the W2 and illustrates the diversity of experiences and opinions. My findings naturally reflect a diversity of experiences due to the fact that W2s are offered in all disciplines at Bates and because each professor has a unique teaching style, so my approach took into account that natural variation. However, it was also important for me to find and report trends so that this Report could indicate how the W2 is generally perceived and experienced. This way, the Bates administration can get a sense of where frustrations and satisfactions lie so that they can determine where changes might be made to improve the W2 requirement.

Challenges and Limitations

The chief limitation to collecting data was the low response rate of students and faculty. The sample sizes are quite small, so it is difficult to make conclusive statements. Furthermore, certain groups are not represented—for example, no sciences/mathematics professors responded to the faculty survey—so there were certain hypotheses that I was unable to test because I did not have data from those groups.

Presentation & Analysis of Findings

Gathering data from multiple sources (students and faculty) in multiple ways (focus groups, interviews, surveys) yielded a diversity of results which I could compare and contrast. To analyze this data, I identified trends in student experience and perception of their W2 courses, then compared those findings with the faculty data. I will now present the major trends that emerged from my data, beginning with key findings from the student data then presenting faculty data and comparing those results with each other to determine how the way professors are reporting that they teach the W2 corresponds with the way students report that they are experiencing their W2 courses.

Student Data

First I will present the trends in student experiences and perceptions of the W2. This data was derived from focus groups, emails sent directly to me, and the email survey. Six students attended the focus groups (two students in Session A and four in Session B). The focus groups participants reflected a range of class years (four seniors and two juniors) and disciplines: there were two students majoring in the arts and humanities, two majoring in the social sciences, and two majoring in the sciences/mathematics (for raw data on these focus group sessions, please see the Appendix). My survey yielded 35 respondents: 17 social sciences majors, 10 science/mathematics majors, 10 arts/humanities major, and two undeclared students (there were four double-majors; I have counted each major above, bringing the total count to 39. For a full breakdown of the majors represented, please see "Statistics of Student Respondents to the Survey" in the Appendix). There was a fairly even distribution of survey respondents among class years: 40% of respondents were seniors, with

28.6% sophomores, 20% juniors, and 11.4% first-years. In addition to the results from the

focus groups and surveys, some students replied directly to my announce email with their

ideas about the W2. I did not include their responses in my coded data because for most of

them I do not have the baseline data of class year, major, etc., but I did take their statements

into consideration and I include excerpts from some of their statements below.

Perceived Inconsistencies

Since the previous research conducted by the Office of the Dean of Faculty and

Writing at Bates had found that a major trend in student experience of the W2 was perceived

inconsistency of writing instruction across W2 courses, I focused on this issue in my

research and analyzed my data for this trend. My research corroborated the findings of these

previous studies; I also found that inconsistency of writing instruction across W2 courses

was a major trend in student experience and perception.

To gather information on this issue, I asked students both in the focus groups and the

online survey: *Have you noticed a difference in the level of writing instruction between the*

W2 designated courses and the non-W2 designated courses that you have taken at Bates? Of

the focus group participants, one replied "Yes," four replied "No," and one replied "Other,"

and of the students surveyed, 18 replied "Yes," 12 replied "No," and three replied "Other."

All of the respondents' answers are represented graphically below:

Have you noticed a difference in the level of writing instruction between the W2 designated courses and the non-W2 designated courses that you have taken at Bates?

[Pie chart with legend: Yes (blue) 48.7%, No (red) 41%, Other (orange) 10.3%]
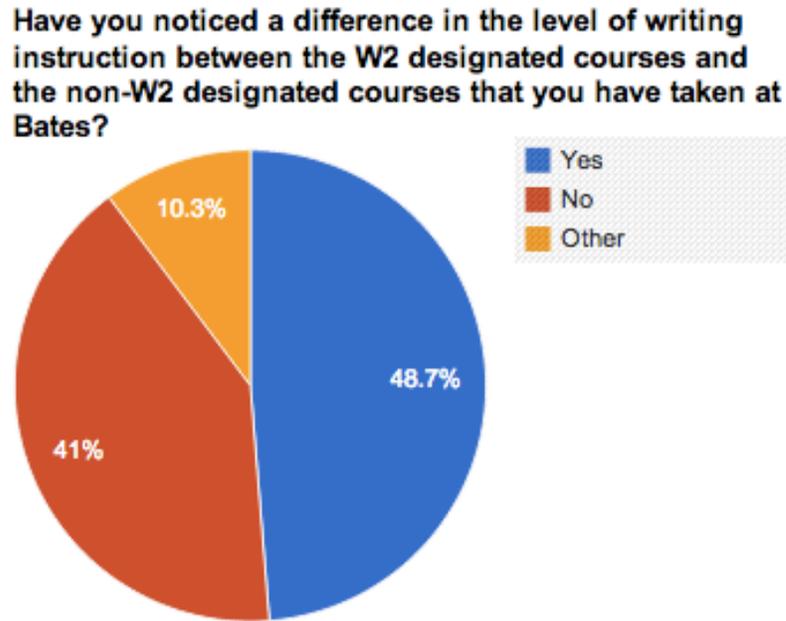
Figure 1. Data drawn from focus groups and student survey (n=39)

Analyzing these results, we can see that nearly half of student respondents did perceive a difference in the level of writing between their W2 courses and non-W2 courses; these students assumedly perceived there to be more writing instruction in W2 courses than non-W2 courses. However, 41% of students did not observe a difference, indicating that they perceived that their W2 courses did not necessarily contain a higher level of writing instruction than their other courses. This is a significant percentage of students, indicating that some W2 courses are not teaching writing at a higher level than an average Bates course. This implies the problem of inconsistency in writing instruction across W2s that the Office of the Dean of Faculty found in their previous studies persists today.

My question specified the level of writing *instruction*, rather than simply the number or intensity of writing assignments in the course, so it is possible that many W2s do contain more writing assignments than the average course even if they do not explicitly teach writing skills. This theme was implied in one focus group student's response to my question *Can you*

always tell when a course is a W2?:

> They seem very inconsistent to me. There are some that clearly say, 'This is a W2, I'm going to learn the writing in this class that I need to,' and some that I will probably be surprised to learn were W2s, because there either wasn't focus on writing itself or [the professor] wasn't using teaching methods that improved the writing, it was just 'Write this paper.' (Focus Group: Student E)

Another student shared this experience, reporting that he/she "did not see a difference in teaching style between classes that are and are not W2's [sic]" (Student Survey: Environmental Studies major '15). Although the W2 guidelines specify that in W2s, "writing is taught, not just assigned," it seems that some courses are not fulfilling that requirement ("Writing-Attentive Courses: Guide to the W2").

One trend that emerged was students reporting that some of their courses did intensively teach writing skills; however, often these courses did not have the W2 designation. A student in one of the focus groups shared the following experience:

> I took a Politics seminar in the Winter that was the most intense writing I've done, the longest paper I've done, the most critical writing I've done, and it was a 300- level but not a W2 and I think it was purely because the professor didn't feel the need to go through the process of getting a PWA and the legitimizing stuff. (Focus Group: Student B)

Other students also shared the experience of taking writing-intensive courses that felt like W2s but lacked the W2 designation. The data suggests that there are some courses which fulfill many of the requirements for W2 courses but do not have that designation, and some which are designated W2s but do not fulfill those requirements. One focus group participant

discussed her positive experience in her Rhetorical Theory course and expressed confusion

over why it was not designated a W2:

> Rhetoric has a class built in that's supposed to prepare you for the theory section of
>
> your thesis, Rhetorical Theory, and it's not a W2. It's one of the most writing-
>
> intensive courses I've taken at Bates. It should be a W2. All Rhetoric majors have to
>
> take it. (Focus Group: Student A)

There may be many reasons why a professor might not designate his/her course as a W2 even

if it fulfills those requirements; these bear further study. However, it seems important that

these discrepancies be addressed, since this experience came up as thematic in the data.

Some students, particularly arts/humanities students, noted that most of their courses

were writing-intensive regardless, so it was difficult to perceive a difference between W2

courses and non-W2 courses. One student responding to the online survey expressed that

"[c]lasses within Politics, Sociology, and Philosophy all tend to be writing intensive; whether

it is deemed a W2 or not it doesn't seem to make a difference in how much you write. I have

taken W2 courses where I have written less than with other courses" (Student Survey: Politics

major '14). The perception that most humanities courses are already writing-intensive

regardless of their designation brings me to the next trend in the data: how student experience

of the W2 varies across disciplines.

Discipline Specific

The guidelines for the W2 state that "some W2 courses teach students how writing

furthers scholarship and learning *within a particular field*; they may teach skills useful for

writing in upper-level courses, and for writing the senior thesis" ("Writing-Attentive

Courses: Guide to the W2"; emphasis mine). In this sense the Bates writing curriculum

follows the "writing in the disciplines," or WID pedagogy model, because ideally students will learn discipline-specific writing skills along with content. However, the guidelines emphasize that discipline-specific writing instruction is an option, but do not specify that the W2 needs to instruct students in a writing style specific to that discipline; it is also acceptable to teach writing skills which can be generalized to writing projects in multiple disciplines. In order to determine how experiences of the W2 differ across disciplines, I asked students in the focus groups and survey questions about how discipline-specific the writing instruction in their W2s was and broke down their responses to many questions by their major discipline. I also asked faculty whether they consider their approach to teaching writing in their W2s discipline-specific or not; this data will be presented later.

In the survey, I asked students, *Do you feel that the writing instruction in the W2(s) you've taken was discipline-specific or general?* Their responses indicated that students perceive W2 courses in the sciences/mathematics to be discipline-specific while students perceives W2s in the arts/humanities as teaching writing skills that could more easily be generalized to writing in other disciplines (perceptions of W2s in the social sciences varied). One student reported his/her experience that "[the writing taught in W2s] was mostly discipline-generic across the humanities and more discipline-specific for the sciences ([B]iology, e.g.)" (Student Survey: Environmental Studies major '14). Another student shared that perspective, stating that "[i]n science, the skills transferred across all disciplines. In Anthropology, the skills transferred across all liberal arts fields (Student Survey: Biochemistry major '14). Another student indicated the difference in his/her experiences of W2 courses in his/her Biology major versus his/her Sociology minor:

There was a lot of instruction for my [B]iology W2 because we were learning scientific

> writing which is a very specific style. However, my [S]ociology W2 did not seem to
> have so much instruction on writing style and practice. It was much more centered on
> how to do research. (Student Survey: Biology major, Sociology minor '14)

This perception that more discipline-specific writing instruction was provided in the science/mathematics fields was also a trend in the focus group discussions. During a conversation about discipline-specific writing instruction in W2, one student stated:

> The W2s that I took were very science-writing focused, which—if you're going to
> write a science thesis in the future, it seemed to set you up fairly well. But I don't
> think it would be useful to other people. So if you're doing a science degree but you
> don't want to go into the academic sciences, you want a broader range of writing
> [skills], I don't think it would have helped. All of the W2s I've taken have helped me
> understand what's required, what the conventions are for a scientific papers, but not
> necessarily having improved my writing, other than to fit it better into what's expected
> for a scientific paper. (Focus Group: Student E)

Another student added that "with [Organic Chemistry], it's more, 'Here's the template. Fill it out, turn it in'" (Focus Group: Student F). These responses indicate that writing instruction in W2s in the sciences are more geared towards instructing students how to write scientific papers rather than teaching generalizable writing skills. In contrast, many students in the arts/humanities reported that the writing taught in their W2s was less discipline-specific and more easily generalizable. They tended to report that many of their courses were writing-intensive anyway—one student succinctly stated that "with English you're always writing"—so they did not necessarily notice a difference between W2 courses and non-W2 courses (Focus Group: Student C).

Another way that I analyzed my data to test whether students in different disciplines perceive the W2 differently was by breaking down their responses to the question *Does seeing that a course is designated W2 impact your decision of whether to take it?* by discipline. 34 students in the survey responded to this question, with 18 indicating that it does not impact their decision, nine indicating that it makes them avoid that course, two indicating that it makes me want to take the course, and five responding with "Other." I do not include the focus group responses in this graph because their responses were more nuanced; I will discuss them later. Below is a graphic representation of this data broken down by discipline: the graph indicates the proportion of students in each discipline who replied with each response.
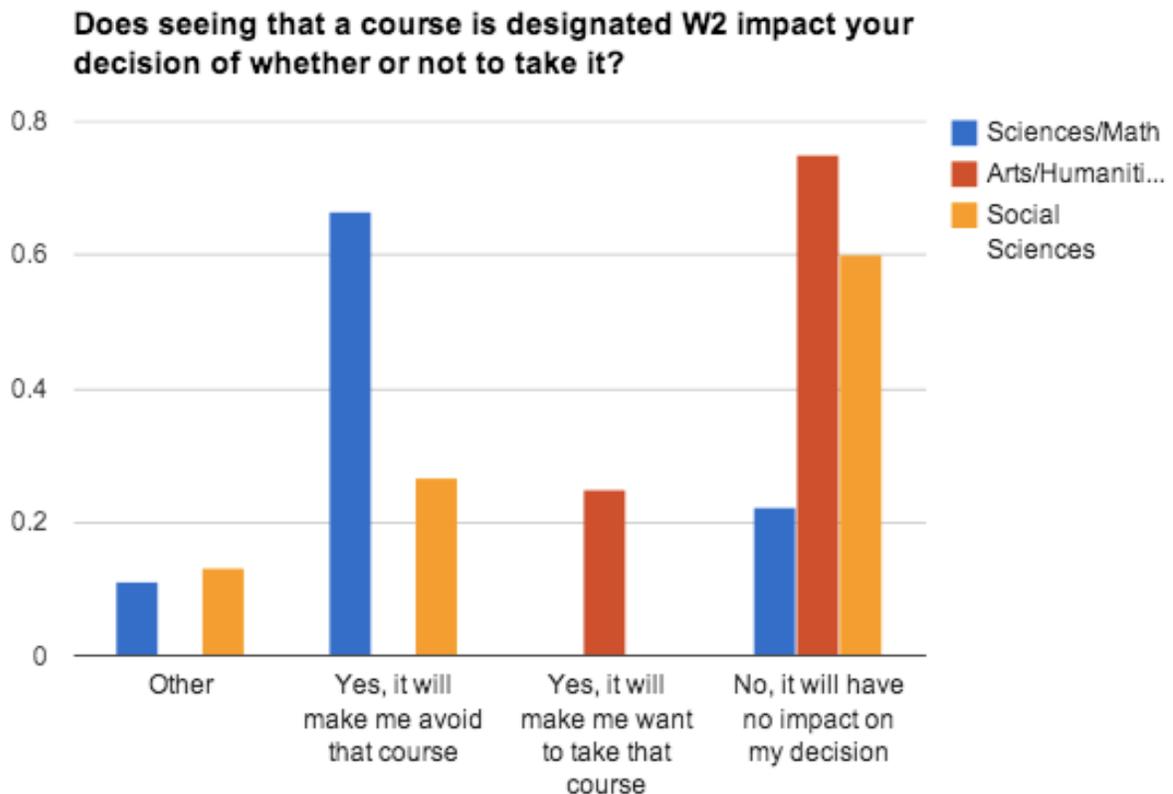
Figure 2. Data drawn from student survey (n=32 students: 34 total respondents, the two undeclared major students were omitted from this graph)

A high percentage of science/mathematics majors (66.7%) indicated that seeing that a course is designated W2 deters them from taking that course. In contrast, no students in the arts/humanities indicated that the W2 label was a deterrent; rather, the majority of arts/humanities students (75%) stated that the W2 label has no impact on their decision whether or not to take the course, and the remaining 25% indicated that seeing the W2 designation attracted them to taking the course. Students in the social sciences reported more mixed results, with 60% indicating that the W2 designation made no difference in their decision-making but 26.7% indicating that it was a deterrent (the variation in the social sciences reporting may be partially attributed to the variety within the social sciences, as some disciplines in the social sciences are naturally more geared towards writing than others). The chief implication of this data is that students in the sciences/mathematics are deterred from choosing W2 courses whereas the W2 designation generally does not matter for an arts/humanities student or even attracts them to that course. In discussing this finding, it is important to note that these responses may have little to do with the Bates College W2 requirement in the sense that students who are drawn to the sciences/mathematics field may be less likely to enjoy writing or have improving their writing skills as a key goal.

In the focus groups, student respondents were able to have a more nuanced discussion of how the W2 designation impacts their decision of whether or not to take a course, and they discussed how they generally avoiding taking W2 courses outside their majors. Student C, an arts/humanities major, commented on her aversion to taking a W2 course outside her primary field of study, and Student E, a sciences/mathematics student, agreed: "I know that in a high-level English course I would be totally lost, I'd have 100 pages to do and no idea how to write

them. That factor can be intimidating when you're trying to take classes outside your discipline, to see, 'Oh, that's a W2 in English—I don't have the skills to keep up with that'" (Focus Group: Student E). I asked students the question *So seeing a W2 label on a course outside your major deters you from taking that class?* for clarification; their responses are below:

> **Student E:** Yes. It strikes me as something meant to build upon something I don't have.
>
> **Student F:** And that comes with the assumption that you're not going to learn how to write in a W2 English class, or learn to write in an 'English' way—that that is going to be what's required of you already. So that's not very standardized or straightforward or well-communicated.
>
> **Student E:** And there's so much variety in there as well. It could be something that's extremely beneficial if it's one that teaches you how to write a good paper. But if it's just one that's assessed at a W2 level, you'll be hopelessly lost and will probably drop that course. (Focus Group Session B)

This introduces the question of whether W2s are intended to be upper-level courses teaching advanced discipline-specific writing skills (in which case students would be deterred from taking W2 courses outside of their majors) or whether they are intended to be uniform, all teaching a similar set of writing skills so that there is consistency across all W2s no matter what the discipline. The complication with the latter option is that students in the humanities, where many courses are designated W2, would receive the same information over and over again. This issue was shared by one arts/humanities major:

> I don't really pay attention to it too much, especially after I got the first one done, but I

think—actually, I think it almost deters me from taking a course sometimes, because I don't want the redundancy of learning how to write a paper in a course if I've already had it. (Focus Group: Student C)

This issue begs a rethinking of the core intent of the W2: is it to teach students the same writing skills so that instruction is uniform across all W2s or is it to develop students' writing skills in the writing style specific to the discipline? There seems to be inconsistency in the way that this core goal is communicated to professors; clarifying this might decrease some of the inconsistency among W2s.

Direct Preparation for Thesis

Since a core goal of the W2 is to prepare students to write their senior theses, I wanted to determine whether this objective is being met. Here I present the student perspective on this subject; in the "Faculty Data & Comparison with Student Data" section, I will present the faculty perspective. In the focus groups and student survey, I asked, *Do you feel that the W2 course(s) you've taken directly prepared you to write your thesis?* 26 students replied (20 survey respondents, six focus group respondents). Nine students indicated that yes, they felt that the W2 courses that they had taken had prepared them for their theses. However, 11 students replied that they felt that these courses had not prepared them for their theses (three replied "Somewhat" and three had more nuanced responses). These results are represented graphically below:

Do you feel that the W2 course(s) you've taken directly prepared you to write your thesis?
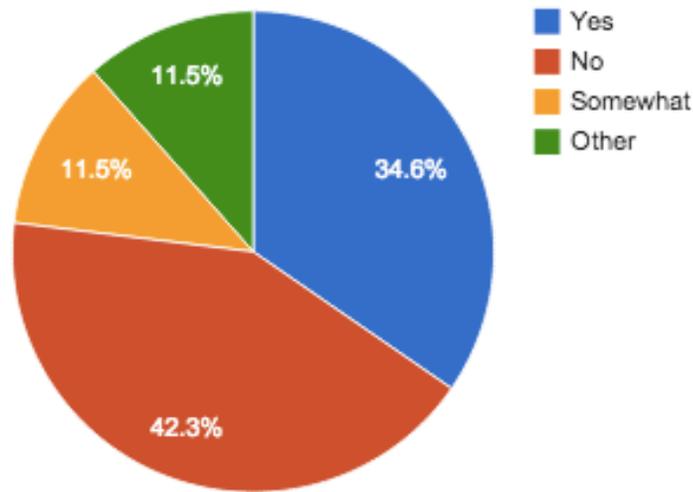
Figure 3. Data drawn from focus groups and student survey (n = 25)

The data collected indicates that half of students felt that their W2s did not explicitly prepare them to write their senior theses. Some students expressed that their W2 courses did develop their writing skills, and this in turn led to their increased ability to write their thesis, but the writing instruction in the W2s was not specific to the senior thesis.

Students who felt that their W2s had not directly prepared them to write thesis often cited their lack of preparedness from a structural, logistical standpoint—they felt unprepared for the length and the different organizational demands of the thesis. One focus group respondent articulately related his/her experience of W2 courses in terms of direct thesis preparation:

> When I was writing thesis, I had no idea what to expect. In retrospect, I would expect that a W2 would be more adequately preparing me for that. I approached thesis—and this may not be the best way to approach it—as, 'I have four ten-to- twenty page papers due throughout the course of the semester and each one will be fairly independent and I'll put them together somehow.' Which may not be the best way to

write a thesis but it's the only way I could teach myself to write a thesis. And I was

really hoping the W2 would do that in retrospect. (Focus Group: Student D)

Another student described thesis as a "shot in the dark. You've done things that are similar

but you really have no idea what you're doing," indicating that he/she felt that previous

writing instruction had not adequately prepared him/her for the written component (Focus

Group: Student A). Students who expressed feeling unprepared to write their theses often

cited a lack of specific instruction on projects of the thesis length and style. A typical

sentiment is reflected in this student's response: "I would have liked more direction or

guidance in the W2's that were directly relatable to thesis writing. Thesis writing is a very

different kind of writing that I was not prepared for." (Student Survey: Neuroscience major

'14).

However, student experiences of thesis preparation in W2 courses were not

entirely negative. Some students did feel prepared to write thesis due to the natural

progression of their writing-intensive and other courses, such as the student below:

> Thesis is definitely the largest writing assignment I have had, but it seems as though
>
> my writing has followed a natural progression from my freshman year to now, and the
>
> task isn't as daunting as I remmember [sic] thinking it would be as a freshman!
>
> (Student Survey: Music Composition major '14)

Science/mathematics majors in particular reported feeling that their W2s gave writing

instruction applicable to their senior theses. One survey respondent stated that, "Yes, Cell Hell

was my W2 and introduced me to the style of writing I will be required to do for thesis"

(Student Survey: Biochemistry major '15).

Initially reviewing the data, I hypothesized that whether or not students felt that the

W2 courses they took directly prepared them to write their theses was correlated with their discipline: I though that students majoring in the sciences/mathematics would be more likely to feel prepared for their theses because they had received discipline-specific writing instruction in their W2 courses. However, when I broke down the data by student major, there was no significant difference between science/math, humanities/arts, and social sciences majors in terms of how prepared they felt to write their theses. Since my data is derived from a small sample and was self-reported, it is not the best sample to draw conclusions for on this matter; this is an avenue for further research.

Ideal Elements of the W2 from the Student Perspective

Since one of my goals for this project was to propose solutions for improving the W2 requirement, I solicited student ideas about their concept of the ideal W2 course. First, I asked them to select from a list all of the writing skills that they would like to be covered in their ideal W2 courses. Their responses are represented graphically below by the proportion of respondents who selected that skill out of the total pool of respondents.

Which writing skills would you want to be taught/covered in a W2 course?
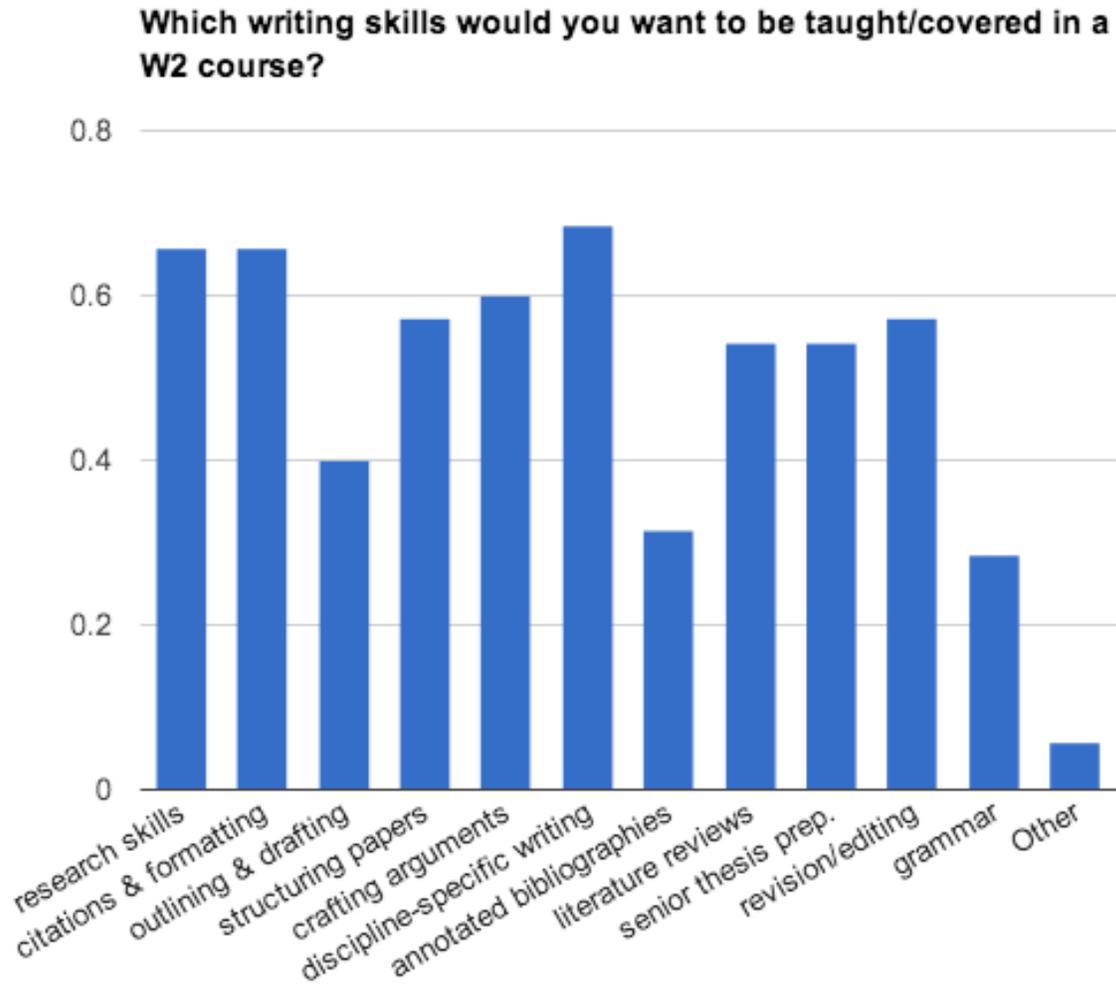
Figure 4. Data drawn from student survey (n=35)

Analyzing this data, we can see that many students (68.6%) reported that they desired

discipline-specific writing skills taught in their W2 courses; this may indicate an attitude

among students that the W2 is intended to give writing instruction in the specific style of that

discipline. Many students (65.7%) also desired their professors to teach research skills, as

well as citation and formatting skills (also 65.7%). Lower numbers of students reported

wanting outlining and drafting techniques (40%) taught in their W2s; hopefully this is

because they feel that their FYS courses or other courses already prepared them for that

aspect of writing. Alongside this question, I also asked students which writing skills were

actually covered in their W2 courses, and I will present this data and compare it with faculty

responses in the "Comparison of Faculty Teaching & Student Learning" section.

That survey question investigated the skills students wanted taught, but I was also curious about the ways in which students wanted this material taught. To discover this information, I asked students to list the teaching techniques of their ideal W2. To ensure that they would tailor their responses to writing-specific elements of the course, I narrowed down my question by asking *What would support the development of your writing skills the most?* I then coded these results for themes. A total of 26 students, drawn from both the focus groups and the survey, provided lists of the components which would make a W2 course the most effective for them. These results are self-reported through a written response; students were not choosing from a list and were able to list multiple components. These results are represented graphically below:

Ideal Components of the W2 from Student Perspective
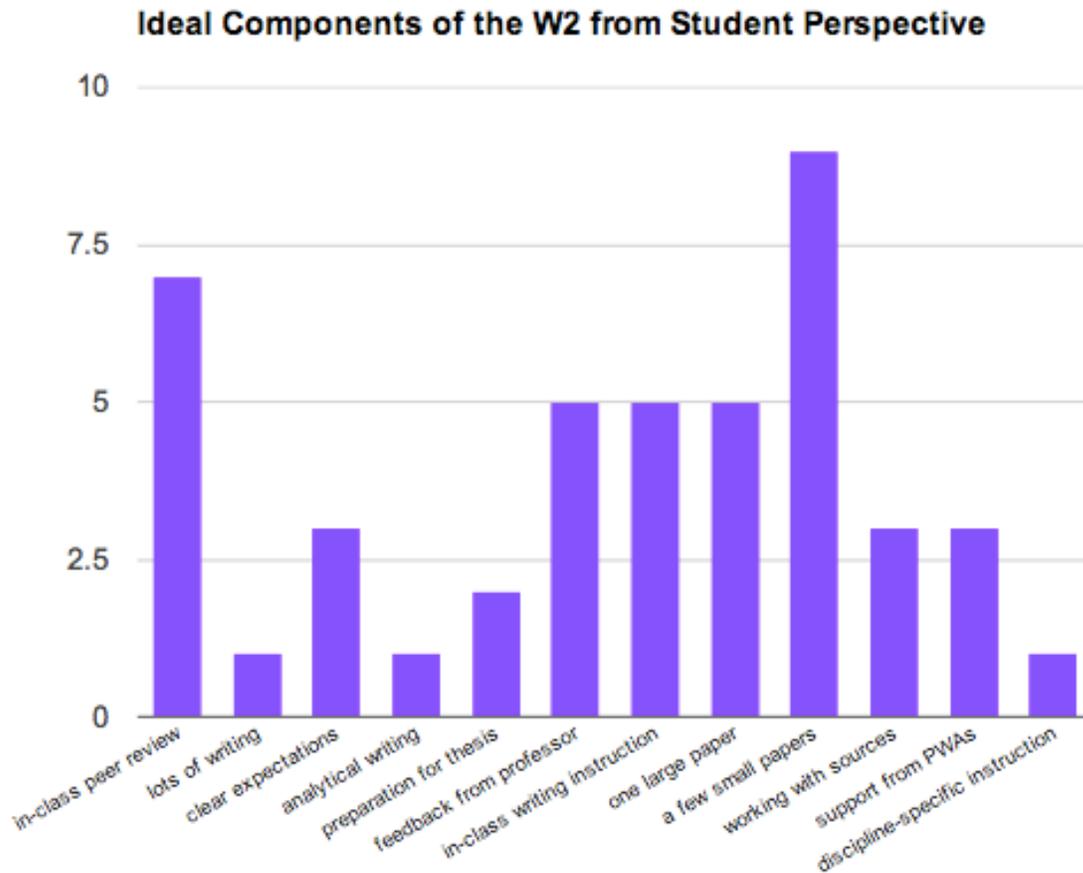
Figure 5. Data drawn from focus groups and student survey (n=26)

Some of the most highly reported components were in-class peer review, explicit in-class instruction on writing skills, and feedback from the professor. We can determine from these results that students value receiving feedback on their written work from professors and peers. Other ideal components reported included having clear expectations/rubrics from the professor, direct preparation for thesis, working with sources, and support from Writing at Bates services, including the Peer Writing Assistants and Writing Specialists.

An interesting trend that emerged from this data was the varying preference for being assigned either one large paper which students developed over the course of the semester versus multiple small writing assignments. Of the survey respondents, five students reported preferring one large writing assignment while nine students reported

preferring multiple small writing assignments. Students who preferred being assigned one large writing assignment developed throughout the course of the semester cited multiple reasons for this preference. A survey respondent articulated his/her preference: "[I prefer] being assigned one large paper that is broken into smaller more manageable papers. This is very similar to the thesis process and teaches students important writing skills but also time management skills" (Student Survey: Rhetoric major '14). In addition to the way that this course structure mirrors the thesis process, thus preparing students to embark on a semester-long writing-intensive project, it also allows the professor to teach various stages of the writing process in a logical progression; he/she could begin by teaching outlining techniques, then drafting, revising, etc. Following this concept, it is possible that students who take W2s with the "one long paper" course structure feel that their W2s more explicitly prepared them to write their senior theses; more research is needed to confirm this hypothesis. Another reason students cited for preferring this course structure was that it allowed them to continue delving into a single topic, improving their writing skills while engaging deeply with the course material and becoming experts on one topic.

On the other hand, some students prefer being assigned multiple small assignments throughout the semester. One survey respondent stated that "[b]eing assigned multiple small papers is helpful because you can improve throughout the course. One large paper can be a little daunting and take up a very large percentage of the grade" (Student Survey: Latin American Studies major '15). Another benefit to this course structure is that students can practice their writing skills on multiple assignments, thus transferring skills to different subject matters.

These varying preferences for opposite course structures illustrate an important fact to

keep in mind while conducting this research: students all learn differently, so there is no singular, perfect way to structure a W2 course. Given more time, I would have liked to specifically ask students about their preferences for longer or shorter papers within writing-intensive courses. This would allow me to advise W2 professors on the results so they could tailor their teaching practices to the structure that works best for the majority of students, while understanding that different teaching methods appeal to different students.

In addition to the debate on multiple short assignments versus one longer assignment, other trends emerged from the students' reports on the components on their ideal W2, including the preference for explicit in-class instruction, which 11.1% of responding students noted. One survey respondent stated that

> Having very clear instructions on how to do each aspect of the paper - researching, outlining, etc. is really helpful. A lot of students come in to the class without ever having explicit instructions on how to write high level papers, and I think that the more information given the better. (Student Survey: Music Composition major '14)

In the progression of the W1-W2-W3 system, ideally students would receive introductory instruction in college-level writing to level the playing field from varying high school writing experiences, but since the FYS system has been perceived to contain a similar level of inconsistency to the W2 system, that may not always be the reality. Regardless, the guidelines for the W2 clearly state that writing skills need to be taught, not merely assigned, and this research shows that there is student support for explicitly teaching writing skills in W2 courses.

Another significantly reported ideal component of the W2 was extensive feedback, from peers as well as professors. 15.6% of respondents reported valuing in- class peer

review, whereas 11.1% wanted feedback from their professor. One survey respondent listed

that his/her ideal components of the W2 included "lots of in-class peer review, and perhaps

scheduled sessions or the option to schedule a session with the professor to review a draft

together, rather than just getting notes from them" (Student Survey: Biological Chemistry

major '14). Several students also reported finding the Writing at Bates support services,

including the Peer Writing Center and Writing Specialists, helpful. Further research could be

conducted on which elements of these support programs prove most useful to students in

W2s, as I did not collect specific data on this.

I did not ask students in the focus groups to list the components of their ideal W2 in

those words, so focus group data is not included above. However, responses from students in

the focus groups echoed many of these themes. One student in the science/math field

expressed a desire for more direct training in how to clearly communicate complicated

concepts, particularly abstract scientific or mathematical theories, through writing (Focus

Groups: Student F). Another major theme that emerged in the focus group discussions was

the helpfulness of peer review, which echoed the data from the student survey.

Student Opinion on Requiring Additional W2s

One trend in my data that surprised me was the proportion of students who were comfortable with the idea of Bates requiring more W2s. This data was drawn from the student survey, since I did not ask this question of students at my focus groups. 28 students responded to this question on the survey, with 13 reporting that "Yes," they would be comfortable, nine reporting "No," and six whose answers were too nuanced to fit into the Yes/No binary (several in this category states that they supported additional W2s if other factors were changed). These results are represented graphically below:
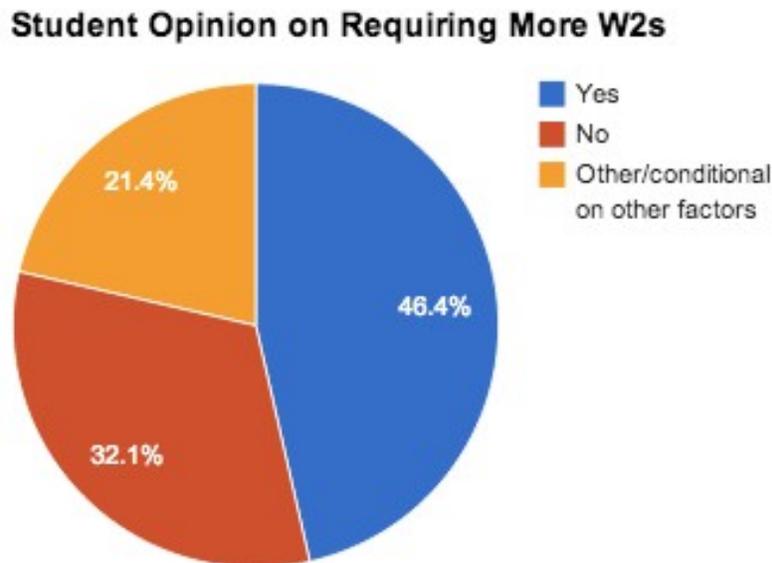
Figure6. Data drawn from student survey (n=28)

Presenting this trend, it is important to note that the veracity of this data could be compromised because responses for the survey were self-volunteered, so students who responded may be naturally more invested in their own education and thus more likely to respond positively. However, the data is still significant because it indicates that nearly half of students who responded would be comfortable with the idea of Bates requiring additional W2

courses. One possible explanation for this finding is that these students may feel that they are already taking multiple W2 courses, so changing the requirement would not affect them in reality. To check this hypothesis, I reviewed the data for the number of W2s each students self-reported that they had taken at Bates. In the survey, 34 students answered the question *How many W2s have you taken at Bates?*, and I also obtained that data from all six participants of the focus groups. These results are represented graphically below:
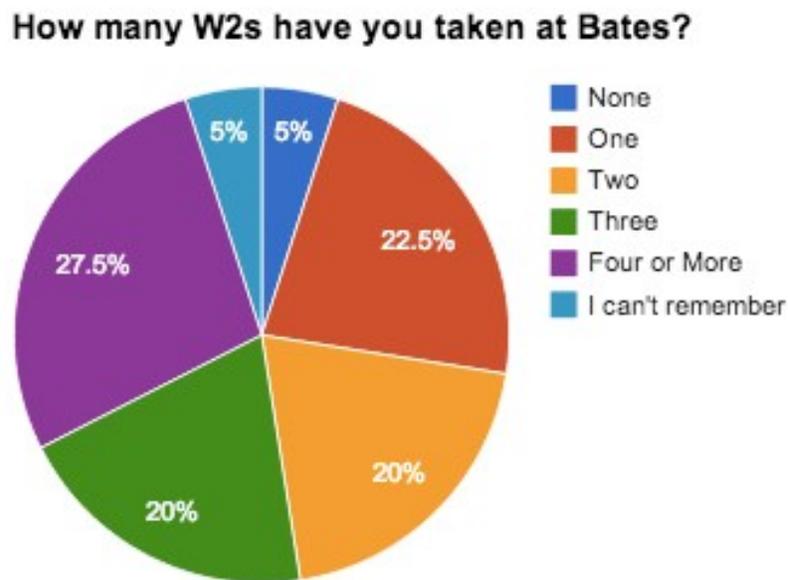
Figure7. Data drawn from student survey and focus groups (n= 40)

Only two students reported having taking no W2s, and they were a first-year and a sophomore. 67.5% of respondents had taken two or more W2 courses. Some students explicitly stated that many students already take multiple W2s to explain their approval of Bates requiring more than one W2s, such as the survey respondent who stated, "I think [requiring additional W2s] would be fine—it seems almost impossible right now not to take more than one W2 course so I don't think it would change much" (Student Survey: Music Composition major '14). So, it seems that the high percentage of respondents who would be

in favor of the Bates administration requiring additional W2s were at least partially motivated by the fact that they felt that they were satisfying that requirement already.

Another reason cited for supporting additional W2 requirements was that it would give students more opportunities to focus on and improve their writing skills. Some students noted that requiring more W2s would be more consistent with the Bates mission to improve student writing. Others cited the imbalance of requirements for sciences majors and humanities majors due to the lack of a Humanities requirement when there are Science, Lab, Quantitative (SLQ) requirements. These students felt that it would be more fair if there were more W2s required so that science/mathematics majors had to leave their majors for required courses just as arts/humanities and social sciences students do.

However, not all students were in favor of additional W2 requirements. The chief argument against requiring more W2s was the already taxing course requirements at Bates; many students felt as though they were already required to take too many courses for the General Education curriculum and felt that it was difficult enough to check all of those boxes without adding another requirement. Another comment was that if Bates students were required to take more W2s, more W2s needed to be offered so that that was possible.

When posed this question, several students and faculty expressed a desire to rethink the entire system of requirements at Bates, so their opinions on requiring additional W2s were contingent on the entire system being shifted. I will discuss these ideas in depth in the "Suggestions for Systemic Alternatives" section.

Faculty Data & Comparison with Student Data

Now I will present findings from my research into faculty experiences and perceptions of the W2. As the faculty research was conducted chiefly in order to compare it with the student research, the survey sent to faculty members was shorter and less detailed than the student survey. Here I will not make grand conclusions as to faculty sentiment, but rather use this data as a point of comparison with student results in order to evaluate whether the way that professors report that they teach the W2 is consistent with the way that students report that they perceive the W2.

My two research methods for collecting the faculty perspective were interviewing one W2-teaching professor, Prof. Dilley, and sending a survey to all faculty members currently (in Winter 2014) teaching at least one W2 course. My interview with Prof. Dilley was conducted primarily to gain insight to how one faculty member approaches the W2 so that I could consider which questions would be best to ask on the survey. Since the questions I asked her did not always correspond to the questions I asked of faculty in the survey, I do not include her responses in the data presented here; however, I do include quotes from our conversation when relevant. There were 30 professors teaching W2s in Winter 2014 (teaching 33 W2s), eight of whom responded to the survey. Of those eight, four are social sciences faculty, three are arts/humanities faculty, and one did not report his/her field. Unfortunately, no professors in the sciences or mathematics fields responded to the survey, so I was unable to compare their experiences of the W2 with those of other faculty members. This represents a gap in my data and an area for further research. Now I will present several key findings from my research into faculty experiences and perceptions of the W2.

Comparison of Faculty Teaching & Student Learning

As aforementioned, I wanted to examine whether the way that professors teach the W2 is consistent with the way that students they perceive the W2. To investigate this question, I asked a nearly identical question of both the student population and the professor population. The questions posed to students were *Which of these writing skills would you **want** to be taught/covered in a W2 course* and *Which of these writing skills **were actually** taught/covered in the W2(s) you've taken at Bates?* (the responses to the first question were presented above in the "Ideal Components" section). By asking these two questions, I sought to determine which elements of the W2 were most useful to students and compare that with the reality of what they were being taught in their W2 courses. The question that I posed to faculty members was *Which elements of writing do you plan in your syllabus to teach or focus on in your W2 courses?* By comparing the data yielded from these questions, I was able to perceive how the skills students perceived they were being taught in their W2s corresponded with the skills professors felt that they were actually teaching. The student responses to the question of which skills were actually covered in their W2 courses are compared graphically with the faculty responses to the question of which skills they plan to teach below:

Comparison of Faculty and Student Perception of Writing Skills Covered in W2 Courses
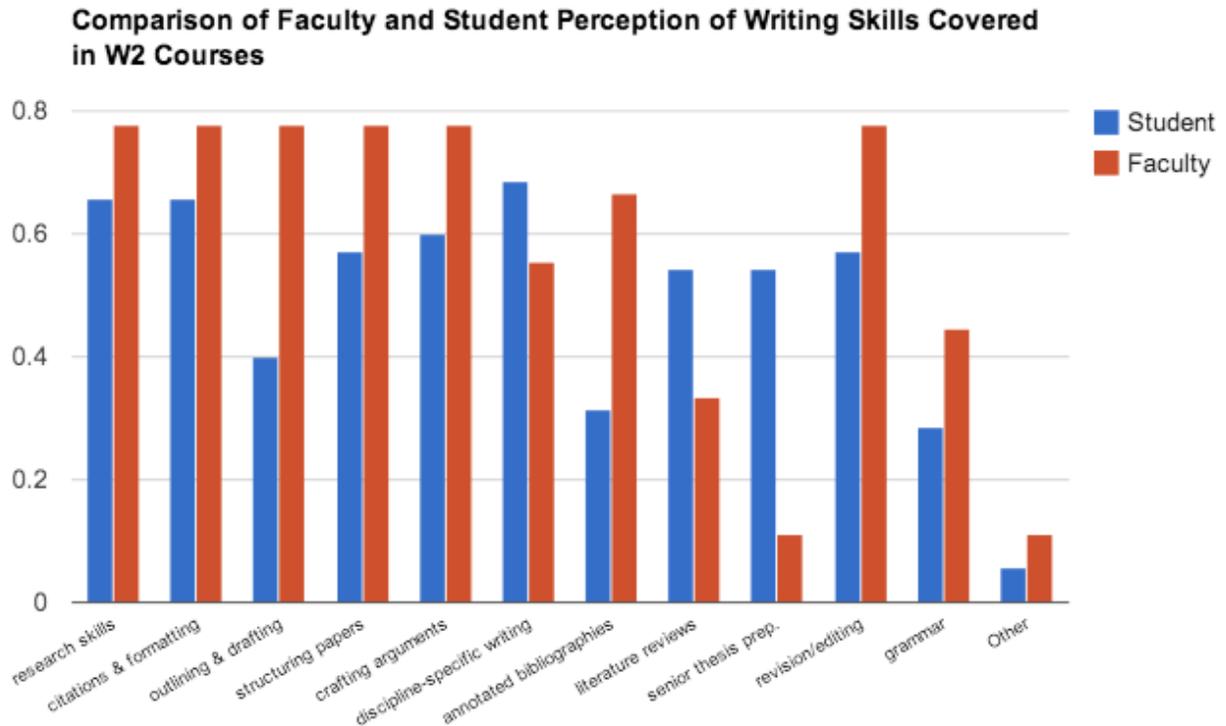
Figure 8. Data drawn from student survey (n=35)

Analyzing this data, it appears that in some areas, faculty and student perceptions of what is being taught in W2 courses is consistent: for example, both faculty and students agree that grammar is not highly taught in W2 courses. However, in some areas their perceptions deviate. A high percentage of faculty polled (77.8%) perceived that they were teaching outlining and drafting skills, whereas a low percentage of students (40%) perceived that they were being taught those skills. Many faculty (66.7%) also perceived that they were teaching students how to write an annotated bibliography, whereas a lower percentage of students (31.4%) perceived that they were learning how to write one. Interestingly, a higher percentage of students (54.3%) perceived that their W2 courses were preparing them to write their senior theses, whereas few faculty (only 11.1%) perceived that they were teaching skills specific to writing thesis.

The fact that the majority of professors who responded were social sciences faculty

may account for some variation in the data. For example, social sciences faculty may be more likely to teach discipline-specific writing whereas arts/humanities faculty may be less likely to teach it, so since my student survey yielded a diversity of student majors, that may account for some variation. Further research on how the skills students perceive they are being taught in their W2s correspond with the skills professors feel that they are actually teaching would be useful.

Discipline-Specific Writing Instruction

Professors reported varying results about whether the writing instruction they gave in their courses was discipline-specific or not. When queried, *Do you consider the writing instruction in your W2s to be discipline-specific?,* three professors replied that their writing instruction was discipline-specific, two reported that it was not, and two had responses that did not fit into the Yes/No binary (one professor abstained from responding). Of the professors who responded "Yes," some reported that they clearly structured their W2 courses to teach writing skills in the style of the discipline, such as this respondent:

> Absolutely. My course is built around the challenges of ethnographic fieldwork as a mode of knowledge production. We draw inspiration from literature, literary criticism, history, and post-colonial studies, but our primary focus is always on anthropological writing. (Faculty Survey: Anthropology W2 Professor)

Other professors, however, felt that the writing skills they teach in their W2s are more transferrable to writing in other disciplines. One professor stated that "I think much of what I say is pertinent to other courses, especially in terms of critical thinking" (Faculty Survey: English, American Studies, & African-American Studies W2 Professor). Unfortunately, since there were no science/mathematics professors in the sample, I was unable to determine

whether professors in the STEM fields are more likely to teach discipline-specific writing and compare this result with the student perceptions of discipline-specific writing instruction in W2s; this is an avenue for further research.

Direct Preparation for Thesis

In the faculty survey, I asked professors, *Are the W2 courses you teach specifically geared to prepare majors to write their senior theses in that field?* Their responses were remarkably similar in the sense that none of the respondents gave a clear Yes/No answer; all of them reported a variation on the idea that while their courses endeavored to give students writing training that would prove useful for writing their senior theses, they did not necessarily directly discuss the thesis writing process or give students skills specifically geared towards writing thesis. A faculty respondent's answer reflects this theme:

> The goal of my course is to introduce students to fieldwork and ethnographic writing, so in that sense it is inevitably geared toward thesis preparation. That said, we don't spend much time actively discussing how they might approach their senior theses. (Faculty Survey: Anthropology W2 Professor)

Another faculty member articulated a similar perspective:

> I would say 'no' but I also think that many/most of the writing skills that I aim to develop and encourage *do* guide and prepare students to more advanced writing. I also do articulate what they will be expected to do (or what they may want to do) for their thesis writing. So it's not "absent" from my courses, but I think of it more as a continuum of skills rather than a strict 'here's the next step in learning to write a thesis.' (Faculty Survey: Education W2 Professor)

These themes indicate that professors of W2 courses generally do not consider their classes to

be responsible for giving students the specific skills needed to write a thesis in that discipline, although they do believe that writing skills taught in their courses transfer to thesis writing.

Since 42.3% of student respondents in my research indicated that they did not feel that their W2 courses explicitly prepared them to write their senior theses, it appears that these students desire more active instruction in their W2 courses on how to complete the written component of the senior thesis. Student preparedness and faculty support for the senior thesis at Bates is another topic which this project does not primarily address, but further research should be conducted into how Bates can best prepare students to write their senior theses and the role that W2 courses should play in this preparation.

Implications

The findings from this study are consistent with the findings of the First-Year Seminar & Writing Committee presented in Fifth Year General Education Report in 2012. That report found that "more explicit expectations or guidelines for W2" courses are needed and that the "significant variability across departments and programs" should be addressed ("Fifth-Year General Education Report"). The fact that these two issues were major trends in my data indicates that although some progress may have been made, the issues present two years ago with the writing curriculum at Bates are still present and problematic for students today. Since my study did not replicate the methods of these earlier studies, it is not possible to determine whether these issues have improved over the two years since that study; it is possible that the work done by the Writing at Bates program and the Bates administration since that time has mitigated these issues, but the fact remains that they are still problematic.

Recommendations

Based on the significant trends revealed by this study and the suggestions proposed by students and faculty, I offer recommendations for ways that the W2 requirement might be improved to better advance students' writing skills. First I suggest changes within the W2 system, then I highlight some more drastic suggestions proposed by students and faculty that would involve changing the entire Bates writing requirement system, or even the General Education requirements.

Suggestions for Changes Within the W2 System

One of the most important findings from this research is the lack of clarity around the intentions and goals of the W2. Students and faculty expressed a lack of understanding over whether W2s are supposed to be discipline-specific, explicitly prepare students to write their senior theses, or taken within one's major, among other issues. Clearly, W2s will vary naturally due to differences in subject matter, discipline, and the individual professor's teaching style. However, since there is misunderstanding of the core goals of the W2 among both students and faculty, it seems that clarification is needed. The resources provided by the Writing at Bates program clearly define the objectives of the W2, but it seems that they either need to be better distributed or brought to students' and professors' attention through other means.

Another issue that emerged in the course of this research was the lack of widespread knowledge about the policies around the W2. Although virtually all students respondents (97%) were aware of the requirement that students take one W2, only 73% of surveyed students were aware that students must take satisfy their W2 requirement in either their sophomore or junior years. Several respondents stated that they took a W2 as first-years, then

were frustrated when they realized that it did not count. The majority of respondents did not understand this rule or expressed frustration with it (11% expressed not understanding, 51% expressed dislike). Since there is a lack of information about these policies (and that lack of information might be more widespread than this survey indicates since it was a voluntary survey that students who already knew about the W2 were more likely to take), it seems that more publicity about the policies of the Writing requirements at Bates is needed.

The fact that 62% of respondents expressed either not understanding or disliking the rule that students only receive W2 credit for W2s that they take during sophomore or junior year bears further discussion. Many students desired having the W2 count if taken during freshman year, or at least during Winter semester freshman year, and several also suggested that it count in Fall semester senior year if a student is conducting thesis in Winter semester. One focus group participant articulated his/her ideas:

> Instead of not having it count your freshman and senior years, possibly changing it to: 'you have to have completed a W1 before you begin your W2, and have to have taken your W2 before you begin your W3.' I took my W2 at the beginning of sophomore year, but I feel like it wouldn't have made a huge difference for me to have taken it second semester freshman year. I feel that taking it up closer to thesis might help.
> (Focus Group: Student E)

The theoretical underpinning of the current policy is that students progress forward in the W1-W2-W3 system on a yearly basis so that there is a logical development of writing skills over four years. However, since this concept does not seem to be working in practice, further research and discussion on this policy is needed.

Another proposed improvement was to give faculty more training in how to teach

writing skills so that they are better able to directly teach these skills in their W2 courses. I did not question faculty on how prepared they felt to teach their W2 courses, but this was an issue that emerged in my interview with Prof. Dilley. She stated that she "[doesn't] feel like [she's] equipped to teach writing in that way. I can say what is not working about your writing, but I am not particularly equipped to very effectively say 'do this, that, and the other thing, and it will work better'" (Dilley Interview). When I asked her whether she believed that professors could be gotten to the point where they are equipped for that, she replied,

> Well, I would certainly sign up for a Teaching Writing workshop that was not about how to organize your class, but 'How do you teach somebody to write a good paragraph or structure a good paper,' which is elementary. I've never taken a course like that, so I don't even know how you'd organize a course like that, but I would certainly take one. And the workshops that we get are more about 'If you do this kind of writing assignment…'— they're about teaching a course about writing rather than teaching writing, the moment of writing. (Dilley Interview)

More research is needed to see if other faculty members share Prof. Dilley's perception that Bates professors are not given explicit instruction on how to teach basic writing techniques. If feeling unprepared to teach students writing skills is a trend among Bates faculty, it would be logical for the Writing at Bates program to offer more workshops geared at teaching faculty how to teach students to write.

An observation that came up in my scholarly research and my discussions with Dr. Oakes was that writing-intensive courses that are capped to ensure a low student-to-professor ratio can better serve their students because they allow for more faculty revision of student work. Bates currently does not cap the W2 requirement; W2s may be capped, but not

specifically because they are W2s. Many other small liberal arts colleges cap their writing-intensive courses, such as Swarthmore (15 students), Colby (16), and Hamilton (20) ("Caps on Writing-Intensive Courses at Representative Small Liberal Arts Colleges," 2013). If Bates adopted caps specifically for its W2s, this might improve the quality of the writing instruction that students receive because professors would be better able to focus on addressing the writing weaknesses of the individual students in the classroom. Obviously this change, as well as the aforementioned addition of writing teaching training for faculty, would require an increase in funding. However, these changes are important steps to improving students writing abilities, and prioritizing them would reflect the College's commitment to academic excellence.

Suggestions for Systemic Alternatives

Some students and faculty members expressed their opinion that the W2 is not inherently a problem; it is the entire system of requirements at Bates that is problematic. They suggested overhauling the current system in favor of different writing systems, and I highlight some of their suggestions below.

One of the most commonly expressed frustrations in the student research was from arts/humanities majors feeling that the balance of course requirements was weighted against them. Many expressed frustration at the policy that arts/humanities majors must go outside their major courses in order to fulfill their Scientific, Lab, and Quantitative (SLQ) course requirements while students in the sciences and mathematics do not need to go outside their major courses (the opinions of students in the social sciences varied, since some have their Q requirement covered within their major but some do not). They thought it particularly unfair that students in some majors, such as Physics and Chemistry, do not even have to take a W2

course since those majors count multiple courses as "adding up to" one W2 credit. Many of these students expressed a desire to have the curriculum more balanced. One arts/humanities student articulated his/her ideas on the subject:

> The W requirements can [be] and often are fulfilled in a students [sic]own discipline— there is a W1, 2, and 3 in nearly every major or broad field of study, not to mention that two of those three are automatically part of every student's curriculum, that leaves one mandatory "writing course" that a student may have to take outside of their major. This gives very little focus to writing compared with the S, L, and Q requirements which place heavy emphasis on the quantitative side of academics. One could graduate Bates without learning college level writing. (Student Survey: English major '16)

Several students proposed solutions to this issue; some suggested a Humanities requirement, some wanted the science/mathematics departments to drop the policy of having multiple courses add up to a W2, and others simply wanted Bates to require more W2s. Many students felt that the current imbalance of the requirements could be perceived as Bates' valuing sciences and mathematics over arts and humanities, and these students were frustrated because they felt that their institution was not valuing their fields of study. This opinion was also expressed by a member of the faculty, who stated, "I firmly believe that W2 needs to be streamlined. This is also a larger discussion about requirements generally and the fact that there is no humanities or social science requirement" (Faculty Survey: English, American Cultural Studies, African American Studies Professor).

Another proposed suggestion was having mid-level writing-intensive instruction occur not in a W2 course which could be taken in any discipline, but in a Methods course required in each major. One student responding directly to my email proposed the following idea:

I am a Politics major, and over the years I have taken many classes with the W2

designation and I haven't really noticed a difference between W2 and non-W2 classes.

. . . Maybe the W2 requirement could be the methods course within a major that would

have defined requirements rather than the current model. (Direct Email: Politics major

'14)

The idea of a Methods course required within each major would support the objective of the

W2 to directly prepare students to write their senior theses, since it would provide explicit,

discipline-specific writing instruction in the style of the field. If required during the junior

year, this course could also directly prepare students to write their senior theses. However,

Bates policy would need to shift so that each major had a required Methods course and so

that students would not be able to obtain their W2 credit outside their majors. In the larger

context of Bates, where students generally perceive the current requirements to already be

taxing, this might be a difficult change. It would also not support the idea of learning writing

skills in the W2 which would generalize out to other writing assignments.

Other suggestions for improving the Bates writing requirements were more drastic;

some suggested getting rid of the W1-W2-W3 system in favor of other writing- intensive

course models. Prof. Dilley, for example, suggested that the responsibility to teach students

writing skills should not fall to professors in classes where they are also required to teach

content. She proposed that Bates adopt a system with Expository Writing courses:

I don't think a W2 is the place to teach writing. It's the place to practice what you've

learned. . . . I think [that teaching] should be in writing courses. In Expository Writing.

Back in my day there was E52, which was an English writing course, and that's the

one course everybody had to take. Courses that are all about how to write without

content instruction. We used to be in a place where we'd get those in high school. But I don't know that that's—it's much more over the place. And we want people to come from all backgrounds. So we need to take up the slack on that and have an Expository Writing course that is where people learn to just structure paragraphs and put adverbs in the right place, that we don't ever get to teach. (Dilley Interview)

This approach could produce benefits such as leveling the playing field for students who did not receive explicit writing instruction in high school, as Dilley argues (although this role is ideally played by the FYS). However, having an expository writing course would run counter to the WAC pedagogy of writing instruction across the curriculum.

Furthermore, if content is divorced from communication, the central point of writing—to convey ideas and learn what you think—might be lost on students.

Other models for alternatives to the W1-W2-W3 system can be borrowed from other small liberal arts colleges' mid-level writing requirements. Allegheny College, for example, requires a 3-semester First-Year/Sophomore program, whereas Union College requires a Sophomore Research Seminar (For a more complete list of the writing programs at other similar colleges, please see the Writing at Bates document "Making Sense of the W2: Summary of Other Schools' Midlevel Writing Requirements").

There are myriad approaches used by different colleges to develop students' writing skills. As Bates continues to assess the effectiveness of the W1-W2-W3 system, it can learn from the successes and failures of these other models.

Conclusions

The intention of this research was to be generative, presenting trends in data but not making conclusive statements about the state of the W2 at Bates today. My ability to accurately draw trends from the data was limited by the small sample size. In the course of my research, many intriguing hypotheses arose which would be valuable to explore. One of the most interesting is the breakdown of student experience and perception of W2s by discipline. Given a larger sample size including students from a wider range of majors, it would be fascinating to study how all of the trends I report here break down by student major so that Bates can determine how students in each discipline perceive the W2 and can tailor the improvements to the W2 system to the specific needs of students in each fields.

Currently, the Writing at Bates staff is holding discussions with each department to examine how they choose which courses are W2s and how writing skills are taught in those courses. These discussions are an important means of continuing this discourse about how academic writing skills are taught at Bates. These discussions should occur regularly so that departments continue to actively consider which courses should be designated W2s and how to enhance writing instruction in all of their courses regardless of their designations.

The most encouraging aspect of this research is that fact that so many students were willing to sure their experiences with the W2 requirement. This semester, I consistently found that when I brought up my research topic in conversation, students eagerly began discussing their experiences and ideas. They voluntarily came to focus groups, took the survey, and even emailed me directly to share their thoughts on the W2.

To me, this reinforced the fact that Bates is a community of active, engaged students with the enthusiasm to advocate for the best education possible. In order for the W2 to improve so that

it reaches its potential to substantially develop each student's writing skills, the Bates administration needs to continue seeking its students' (and faculty's) advice on how the W2 can best meet their needs. This survey yielded interesting results which deserve to be further investigated. Holding open forums, sending surveys, and generally promoting a reputation of being approachable and flexible will help the Bates administration to gather honest, accurate feedback from the Bates community about how to improve the W2.

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Music Opportunities for Maine Students: A Comprehensive Look at Music in Schools

I grew up in Exeter, a small town in rural Northern Maine. I attended school thirty minutes away in Dexter, where I became involved with the Abbot Hill Ramblers, a bluegrass group started by my Language Arts teacher. This incredible group was started in 2000 through the use of a 21st century learning grant, and then eventually through the Bluegrass Music Association of Maine and the district budget as the program grew and proved to be successful. Dexter is a financially impoverished area, and this program brought people together when there wasn't much else going on within the community. In school, this bluegrass group provided me and many other students a place to expand as a musician outside of the traditionally offered band and chorus at the school, a support system of fellow students and community musicians, a way to connect with the community, and an opportunity for leadership, to name a few benefits. Through this program, I realized my own passion for bluegrass music and for music education. It is largely a result of the wonderful experience I had in the program from Middle School until I graduated High School that I want to become a music educator myself. Unfortunately, this teacher retired last year and the program was disbanded, exemplifying the current importance of individuals to music programs in Maine.

I.   PROBLEM STATEMENT

Current trends in the field of education including accountability schemes, privatization and standardized testing have pushed curricula towards math and science and away from the arts. This creates a problem for students who would benefit from involvement in the arts, and tends to divert money away from arts programs. Because of this, funding and support for arts programs tend to be based on local communities and abilities and therefore highly varied, meaning that based on location some students could receive a very strong arts education, and some could receive almost nothing. The lack of explicit government support and guidelines for the implementation of musical opportunities also seems to create a sense of ambivalence for schools, which could hinder new programming.

II.   NATURE OF THE STUDY

In this study I will analyze many levels of support including policy and funding from the Maine government, community programming and support, and individual actions within schools. Research will be conducted using existing publications about music and the arts in education, personal interviews with individuals who have connections with the arts in education, and a survey sent to administrators across Maine. I will provide an overview of the state of Arts Education in Maine as it exists currently, will identify strengths and weaknesses of current programming and support, and will provide recommendations for how to strengthen musical opportunities throughout the state. Although this project will not directly influence music and arts programs in the time that I will be doing research, it is my hope that distribution of the final report will be utilized as a resource for individuals

interested in music advocacy. Eventually, I hope my research will have a positive influence on arts programming in the state of Maine.

III.   RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

My project addresses the current state of music education in Maine by examining the sources of support for music programming in Maine schools, and what makes for a successful music program. Throughout this research process questions will be raised about the importance of support through funding, government initiatives, and individual actions. This project is significant both because of the importance of music in the lives of students, as explained earlier, as well as the current trends in the field of education that are moving away from supporting these opportunities. I believe that it is important to assess the current atmosphere in relation to the arts, especially with the emerging focus on science and math. I also believe that this research will expose important information about what helps to support a successful arts program, and what factors make different schools more or less suitable for strong arts programs. I believe that I have a unique perspective in terms of this project as I am the product of a very positive primary schooling experience in Maine, mostly thanks to the wonderful music opportunities I had there. So, I will be able to draw from my background as a musician, singer and performer from Maine to find relevant musical opportunities, and to make connections.

IV.   LITERATURE REVIEW

Much of the research about music in education focuses on the fact that music is unique in that it affects multiple aspects of the individual as well as the larger society. For individuals, music positively influences the mind, body and feelings (Reimer, 1999; Davis, 2009). In terms of the larger society, music has a positive influence individually, culturally and universally (Reimer, 1999). In a world that is increasingly divided, music can provide alternate meanings and significance and can promote unity in comparison to conformity (Reimer, 1999; Gates, 1999).

Individually, music can strengthen individuals by shaping personalities, promoting responsibility, self-discipline, personal growth, self-esteem, self-worth, self-reflection, cooperation, motivation, analytic skills, evaluation skills, and higher levels of thinking (Davis, 2009; Mones, 1958; NSfAE,1994). Music and musical opportunities can also provide individuals with emotional outlets and a comfortable atmosphere to explore (Davis, 2009).

Culturally, music can act both as a historical artifact, and an agent of cultural and societal change (Reimer, 1999; NSfAE,1994; Mones, 1958). Music can pass ideas and beliefs through generations, can deepen and refresh cultural practices, and can validate or challenge social norms of the time (Reimer, 1999; NSfAE, 1994; Mones, 1958).

Music can also act universally in that it allows individuals to recognize similarities and unity between themselves and others (NSfAE, 1994). Music can allow individuals to sympathize with others in a way that other types of media cannot, and technology allows this to be almost immediate (NAfME, 2007). In a world that is full of an abundance of sensory material and data, knowledge of music can allow individuals to perceive, interpret, evaluate and understand this data more accurately and quickly (NSfAE, 1994).

Academically, there are many studies linking music to a richer learning environment, leading to higher test scores, improved notational skills, improved memory, higher speech sensitivity, fine-tuned auditory systems, higher graduation rates, improved attendance, increased cognitive capacities, and more precise analysis skills (NSfAE, 1994; NAfME, 2007; Gates, 1999). This has a direct correlation with future plans for music students, and it has been researched that students find music meaningful in terms of vocational and career plans as well as for personal reasons (Davis, 2009). Music allows students to acquire job skills such as working well with others, creative thinking, management skills, creating abstraction from complexity, symbolic and metaphoric representations, and creative brainstorming (NAfME, 2007).

There are many debates within the field regarding what should be taught in schools for music education, what the state of music education is at this moment, as well as whether or not music is valuable for students at all. It is well known and documented that the move towards standardization and quantitative research is having unintended negative effects on music programs and funding (Branscome, 2012), and it is also documented that students express less of an interest in music education as they get older (Davis, 2009). The current boom in technology also can have negative effects on music education by making music acquisition a much more individual activity rather than communal (Yarbrough, 1999; Spearman, 1999). However, others believe that this current push for education reform, and new ideas about intelligence actually opens opportunities for music educators to be innovative and break new boundaries and create new music standards (Reimer, 1999; Branscome, 2012; NSfAE, 1994).

Through the research I have done, there seems to be a lack of practical information

about how to start or strengthen musical opportunities in the current state of education in the United States. There are a lot of broad, general statements about music education, but not much explicit practical information. There also is a lack of information about the support for music education. Music opportunities are very localized and dependent on many things outside of the control of the school, and much of the research I have found does not seem to take individual context into account.

To understand my collected data, it is also important to have some background knowledge of relevant research done specifically about Maine. In 2008 a survey was conducted and then published in 2009 that examined opportunities in Maine to learn through the arts. This survey was distributed to arts educators specifically to ask them about what they offered students. There was a significant music portion, and many observations were made about the state of music opportunities in Maine at the time. This report was compiled for the Maine Alliance for Arts Education, and provided an overview of the data collected through the surveys, similar to my project.

Overall, it was determined that music opportunities in Maine were distributed inequitably from school to school, and this inequity was based on many factors including funding or lack thereof, dependency on individual dedicated teachers, and lack of overall support. This study was able to provide a more extensive analysis on opportunities by geography, and presented a significant correlation between the strength of arts programs and the wealth of the surrounding community. Many of the music teachers surveyed stated that the lack of funding was detrimental to their ability to offer music opportunities, and that many used out-of-pocket money to cover basic costs. Overall, the amount of money allocated to arts educators for use for resources for their programs ranged all the way from

$0-$18,000, highlighting the inequity of resource allocations across the state.

Money isn't everything, though, and this study shows that there are are other factors that can determine the strength of a music program. This study identified individual schools that offered extensive music opportunities, and credited dedicated teachers within the schools, or engaged community advocates. The lack of continuity in music programs was also highlighted in this survey, and added that the lack of sequential learning was detrimental to students.

Soberingly, this report also indicated that three-quarters of schools stated that there were no initiatives at their schools focused on strengthening their current arts programs, and that in all cases, people noted that they had sensed a decrease in support for the arts in the last five years. Moving forward from the publication of this report, the study also indicated concern for political changes that were happening in 2009, including the push towards standards-based education, and the move to re-evaluate core curriculums in Maine schools. The compilers of this report stated that they were worried that without an explicit focus on strengthening arts programs, this overall negative feeling about the arts would continue, and more and more support would be lost.

It is also important to note that there is no data being regularly collected with regards to music opportunities in Maine. It is not tested, so there are no standardized results that can be shared, and the government collects absolutely nothing in terms of what is actually offered within schools. This creates a lack of accountability both for schools, as they are not required to report about what they have or do not have in terms of music opportunities, and for the Maine government, as there is no raw data indicating areas that need to be strengthened. The 2009 report also mentioned this lack of publicised information, saying that there was no

comprehensive list of arts educators in Maine, which inhibits communication and collaboration options. Because of this, I think it is incredibly important that reports such as the one done in 2009 and mine are produced and distributed around Maine. Regardless of whether the report is a professional commissioned project with a lot of time and money or a college senior research paper, it is important to at least get people talking.

After presenting the countless benefits of music education it is discouraging to hear of any weaknesses in music opportunities in Maine. This indicates that there are certain barriers present that are preventing Maine schools from having the music programs that they could have. For this reason, I believe my research will fit in well with current research as it will be an individualized, contextualized case study taking these macro ideas about benefits of music education and relating them to the micro level of what is realistic and practical within Maine schools. I hope to address the debate of the state of music in education by determining what is happening around Maine as a result of standardization, as well as what new ideas and programs are coming out of education reform.

V.   METHODS

My extensive background in music in Maine that prompted me to conduct this study also brings a level of legitimacy to the project. Maine is small, and I have been very active musically around the state for a long time, so I have been able to reach out to musicians, employees and administrators in an academic way,   but also with a personal touch which adds an edge to my research. Also, coming from a school with very successful musical opportunities, as well as furthering my education with a focus on music gives me an idea of what a strong music program could look like, and therefore gives my research context.

As a result of this project, I hope to receive a broad base of knowledge of what music opportunities are available for Maine students. I hope to learn about places where music programs are strong and the reasoning behind that, as well as places that seem to be struggling and the reasons behind that. I also hope to gain insight on activities happening around the state that are strengthening music opportunities, as well as hear suggestions from stakeholders around the state of how to further do so.

I started my Education Studies Minor my second semester sophomore year, and every Education class taken since then has prepared me for this final project. I have taken many classes in many areas of interest, but have never completed a fully self-driven project such as this, which reflects my progress as an individual throughout the last couple of years. I have done almost 200 hours of field placement, and have established many connections with individuals in the local community. I also have many contacts in the Maine Government and in Maine schools as I have grown up, gone to school in, and worked in Maine my whole life. I was prepared to take on such a large research project because I have been leading up to this with the papers and projects I have done in previous Education classes. I also was able to take an Education class in Ireland while studying abroad at University College Cork, which has given me a wider perspective on education trends around the world. All of my Education experience at Bates has propelled me to become more independent with my interests and my research, and this project is a culmination of that work.

My project is predominantly research based, and the timeline reflects that. The first step was collecting a base of knowledge about music education. I have collected a wide variety of research articles from scholarly journals, published articles, and blog posts on topics ranging from the idealistic view of music in education and the benefits of music education, to

more grounded articles written on techniques, lesson plans, as well as the reality of what is available in terms of music opportunities. This research provided me a base of knowledge with which I could contextualize the site specific information I gained about music in the state of Maine.

Once I felt comfortable with the background information, I started reaching out to individuals I knew from my experience who are connected to music in Maine to get specific information from them. Their responses were so impassioned and inspiring that I decided to send an open-ended survey in the form of an email to every Principal that was listed on the Department of Education website, encouraging them to either respond to the questions themselves or to pass them along to the music teacher(s) in their schools. From this approach, I have received 101 responses to this date, and more are continuing to flow in. The responses I have received are both contributing towards my overall research and providing new networking opportunities.

I have conducted phone interviews with four separate people, all individuals who had sent an original email with their answers, but wanted to talk further about the topic. These phone interviews were done informally, and I took notes during the interview on things that I deemed would be beneficial for my research. I also met with Argy Nestor, the Director of Arts Education at the Maine Arts Commission in Augusta. We talked about what the Department of Education is doing, as well as what the Maine Arts Commission has in the works, and how my project can both utilize and expand on existing research in the field. She also gave me links to some webinars and blogs having to do specifically with music in Maine schools, and gave me the contact information for many individuals who could help me.

The next step was to start synthesizing and analyzing the collected data, which

culminated in a presentation of data by emerging themes. Finally, the most important step in the timeline of this project is the presentation and distribution of the information. I presented a brief synthesis of the information at the Bates Education Symposium, and will be presenting my final project, complete with recommendations, to the individuals that I worked with, as well as with other individuals around Maine who I believe could benefit from the information I am presenting. It is my hope that my work will continue to be shared with the purpose of being used as a resource for schools, educators or for the Department of Education.

Because this study is more of a collection of information rather than observation and analysis, it was a more straightforward process for me to decide what research methods to use. The most useful academic reading for me was the Hammersley & Atkinson (1983), as it spoke about ethnography in general, and collection of contextualized information. Although my project is not exactly an ethnography because I am not doing much observation, this reading was the most relevant.

The most important part of understanding the information that I have received is acknowledging that the information is contextualized and can therefore never be completely confirmed or denied. Any on-the-ground information such as the data I have collected comes from one set of experience and ideas, and then the way I analyze the information comes from my own individual set of experience and ideas and is therefore shaped to fit my overall understanding, and therefore cannot be considered perfectly "pure" information (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983).

The other implication of my research methods is the fact that I have solicited information from people in a certain way because I sent an email with pointed questions. By asking questions after providing a background of the project, I am giving the people an idea

of what kind of information I am looking for, and therefore might be skewing people's perceptions (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983). For example, by asking schools to identify strengths and weaknesses of their music programs after explaining that I am analyzing the overall strength of music programs in Maine, schools might be more inclined to respond mostly with what makes their program good, rather than point out the weaknesses. Because of this, it is very important for me to understand how my presence affects the data collected in the interactions by email or by phone.

Choosing people to interview was another method that I used from the Hammersley & Atkinson text. In order to ensure that my side of the data collection was unbiased and fair, I needed to send the survey email to a large number of people rather than picking and choosing individually. By choosing to email all the principals listed on the Department of Education website, I was ensuring that each school received the same thing, and that I was in no way undermining administrations at schools. I then gave each principal the option of passing the questions off to their music directors, which I did, again, in order to get a variety of perspectives without undermining administrations.

The overall trajectory of my project followed the method presented by Spradley (1980). This method of ethnography writing starts with original questions based on what I wanted to do with the project, then starting the work, and then re-examining the original questions and potentially changing them to fit the data collected. This was important for me because my original questions reflected my understandings of music in Maine as someone who grew up playing music in Maine, but I have had to re- examine aspects of my project as more information came in.

The fact that my study is predominantly having to do with grade schools inherently

means there are ethical considerations that I have had to be aware of. I am not doing any direct interviews with students, so I don't need to worry about going through the IRB proposal process, and do not need to worry about the ethical considerations of working with children. However, I am studying programs that directly affect Maine students, so I still need to be wary of how I present my data, and the implications that arise about the atmosphere at schools for music students.

I also have to be wary on the analysis side of the project about making snap judgements about musical opportunities in schools. I am asking individuals within schools to tell me weaknesses and strengths in their music programs and am then going to be analyzing what they tell me in. Every school that I look into has their own backgrounds and contexts, and it will be impossible for me to fully understand the complete circumstances of each, so I need to make sure that I do not pass judgement without fully understanding situations. Also, without any experience being a principal or music teacher in a Maine school, I have no practical experience in any of the positions I am asking about. In order to navigate these ethical issues, I have tried to stay much more on the observation side of the research with a focus on the positive, rather than trying to implement new programs or solely focus on identifying weaknesses. By staying positive and by using the words of the people I interview more often than using my own, I think I will be able to avoid stepping on people's toes while still getting important information out there.

Another thing I have had to balance ethically is how to present this project to people that I am interviewing or talking to. It is the highest level research project I have done before, but I have needed to make sure that it is clear that as a college senior, I am not sufficiently qualified to present this as a fully competent research project. While this is a project that is

important, interesting and beneficial, it is important that I do not try to pass it off as more legitimate than it actually is.

The information that I have been collecting is a reflection of varied experiences and perspectives on-the-ground, as Maine is a very large state and music opportunities are far from consistent even between schools in the district. I chose to take this approach of data collection because I am inquiring about things of which I have little experience with, so it would be incredibly inappropriate for me to make general assumptions about the state of music education in Maine, even if my information was coming from stakeholders in the field. This way, I also can present the final project as an overview of what is being done across the state with evidence, rather than an outsiders perspective on the whole thing.

That being said, I will be highlighting patterns across my data in order to present overall trends in the field as I identify them. I think that this will be important so as to present something that is unified and understandable by a wider audience, and presenting all the raw data without some sort of analysis would, in my opinion, not be useful. In order to do this, as I received data, I started identifying themes that seemed to be consistent through many of the responses. The themes I identified and then coded for were: Funding, Scheduling, Administrative Support, Opportunities Offered, Benefits Understood, Participation/Interest, Facility, Lack of Staff, State Policies/Attitudes and Continuity. When reading a response, I would look for mentions of any of these themes, and then would indicate that in the spreadsheet. As I started doing this, I found that for most of themes identified there were some schools who stated the topic was a weakness or a problem for their music program, and then other schools attributed their successes to the same topics. This interesting connection was found as I asked each school to identify strengths and weaknesses, and this is where the

themes tended to show up the most frequently.

For example, one school might state that their biggest weakness was a lack of adequate funding for their music program due to budget cuts, whereas another school might attribute the strength of their music programs to their financial stability. So, both responses mention the same topic, but in very different contexts.

In order to adequately represent these differences, I would mark a positive reference of the theme differently than a negative reference of the theme. For a school that stated that support from their administration was a huge weakness, I would mark an "x" in that column. For a school that stated that administrative support was crucial to the strength of their program, I would mark a "xx". This way, I could see how many people in total indicated that administrative support was a factor in their music programs, but also be able to distinguish between schools that saw this as a problem versus schools that indicated that this was a strength. I decided to include both mentions of the themes because finding indicators that are present in strong music programs but are missing in schools that identified weaknesses corroborates the need to focus on these themes. A reduced version of this chart from which I extracted my final data is included in Appendix C.

The balance between receiving information from people within the schools (principals and music educators) and stakeholders within the fields of Music and Education outside the schools has been a good way to gauge what the overall thoughts in the field have been. Although there have been very few studies like this done in Maine, with the exception of the comprehensive study of the Arts in Maine in 2009, there are many people in Maine who are very interested in music opportunities and who are very knowledgeable about what is going on in the state. In order to ensure that I was on track with my research, and to validate my

data, it was important that I shared my initial findings and got feedback on them. Through conversations with Argy Nestor, Director of Arts Education at the Maine Arts Commission, Nancy Curran, President of the Maine Music Educators Association as well as a couple of invested music educators, I was able to share initial data and stay on the right track. This is encouraging, as it means the information I have been collecting is consistent with previously known trends, but also discouraging in that it means not much has changed in the field of music opportunities in Maine in over five years.

The disparities between answers that I have received have been between answers from principals versus answers from music teachers. A lot of these disparities are found in the question about identifying weaknesses in current programs and asking if there are things that need to be strengthened in their schools. This was interesting, as one of the shared understandings I have found in my research is that administrative support is key to a successful music program, so the fact that there were differences between administrators and music educators seems to further verify that fact.

The biggest limitation that I face in my collecting of data is that my study is completely voluntary, so I am not receiving information from everyone who is involved with music in Maine. In a similar vein, the people who do respond are more likely to be people who are already invested or at least interested in examining and strengthening music opportunities in the first place. If this is the case, then the people who might need the most support for their music opportunities might not be a part of the process because they didn't feel inspired to respond. This is a huge limitation, and cannot be adequately addressed with this project.

This limitation means that I have to take my results with a grain of salt. Although my

response percentage was around 20%, this number may be skewed as it may contain more people who are truly passionate about music education. This limits my ability to make connections or generalize about data because it is not a completely accurate picture of what people all around Maine think.

The biggest challenge that I have faced thus far has been figuring out what to do with all of the information I have received. I was not expecting so many people to respond (101 individual schools at this point), and I was not expecting to get as many detailed, nuanced and thoughtful responses as I did. This, of course, is a good challenge to have, rather than getting no responses, but it has changed this project into something that I was not fully prepared to do. In order to deal with this, I have had to take a step back from the project and focus on a couple aspects of the information that I have received. I also have had to remind myself and some of the people I have been in contact with that this project is not intended to be a full, comprehensive analysis. It is merely a snapshot of what is available in Maine, a way to test the waters, if you will, to identify certain things to improve or highlight. By ensuring that it is understood that my project has a very particular goal, I am trying to avoid taking on something that I am not prepared for.

Getting the ball rolling with this project was also a challenge, as I was inherently dependent on other people's schedules. There was only so much background research that I could use, and other than that I needed information from people around the state. So, a lot of the project was spent waiting for responses, and I had to work my personal work schedule around the responses that I received.

In this study, confidentiality is something that is very important, as I am asking schools about their perceived weaknesses within their buildings and within Maine.

Because of this, many individuals have explicitly requested confidentiality when reporting the findings in my report. Every individual that I have contacted, whether through email, on the phone, or in person, has been briefed on the project and what I plan to do with it, so they are clear that their answers will be analyzed and recorded. I am writing the report with the assumption that each individual wants their information to be confidential in order to avoid any possible problems. There are a few people, however, who I had extended conversations with and who stated that they would not be opposed to my using their actual information in the report. For these people, I will again contact them and confirm that it is okay before releasing their information. This way, I will have a record that states that they have indeed allowed me to use their name in the report.

VI.   RESEARCH QUESTION

This study examines the current state of music education for students in the state of Maine as presented by administrators, music educators and stakeholders in the field. Subtopics that will be examined include strengths and weaknesses of current offerings, and suggestions from individuals in the field.

VII.   PRESENTATION OF DATA

My main method of data collection was through the use of an email that I sent to 550 principals whose contact information was listed on the Department of Education website. The email included a couple open-ended, general questions about music opportunities at their individual schools and around Maine (Appendix A). In total, I received 101 responses from principals and music educators all over Maine. Upon receiving the data, as explained

earlier, I organized it with an Excel spreadsheet that separated the questions and included

logistical information about the schools. After I had received a significant amount of

information, I was able to start identifying trends in the responses of strengths and

weaknesses of music programs across the state. Once I identified these topics, (Funding,

Scheduling, Administrative Support, Opportunities Offered, Understanding Benefits,

Participation/Interest, Facility, Lack of Staff, State Policies/Attitudes and Continuity) I

coded each response and marked how many times these topics came up. From this, I was

able to analyze what the most important aspects of music programs were, and was able to

look further into the responses to glean information about what may be weakening and/or

strengthening music programs across Maine. The chart included below presents this

information by showing how many responses mentioned each of the identified topics, and

then out of that subset, how many were discussed positively, and how many were discussed

negatively. A full presentation of this data is included in Appendix C.

	Responses with the Theme Mentioned	Percent Negative	Percent Positive
Funding	64%	79.7%	20.3%
Scheduling	59.4%	93.3%	6.7%
Administrative Support	25%	24%	76%
Opportunities Available	44%	86.4%	13.6%
Benefits Understood or Not	18%	78%	22%
Participation/Interest	26.7%	55.6%	44.4%
Facilities	17.8%	83.3%	16.7%
Staffing	29.7%	100%	0%
Government Attitude	20.8%	100%	0%

| Continuity | 6.9% | 100% | 0% |

Finally, the question in the email that elicited the most creative and impassioned responses was the question asking for suggestions on how to strengthen music programming around Maine. For this reason, I decided to look further into this question and include a section presenting the ideas of music educators and administrators all over Maine, as well as examples of exceptionally strong music programs already in place around Maine.

Because Maine is such a large, spread out state with very individualized, localized situations, I think it is important to analyze the responses that I received. First of all, I mapped the responses that I got, included in Appendix B, which shows the distribution of the schools that responded. The map clearly shows that many more schools in the South responded that in the North, which is consistent with the distribution of population in Maine, but also represents a clear divide between the Southern and Northern parts of Maine. However, I did receive responses from schools at both extreme ends of Maine, so the distribution is not completely skewed.

Each school that I emailed also had the ages of the students in their school listed with their contact information. Because of this, I am able to look at responses with the lens of school year and age as well. However, it is difficult to definitively analyze by age, because many school districts split up their grades between schools differently. However, I did try breaking up the schools into categories; K-6, Middle School, High School, and then looked at the numbers within each of those categories. Of course this is not completely accurate, because many schools do not fit perfectly within these categories, but I think it is still worth noting. For the first category, K-6, (including schools that serve 1-3, 2-4, 3-5, 4-5, 4- 8, 4YO-1, 4YO-12, 4YO-2, 4YO-3, 4YO-4, 4YO-5, 4YO-6, 4YO-8, EK-6, K-12, K-2, K-4, K-5, K-6

and K-8) there were 51 responses. For the second category, Middle School, (5-6, 5-8, 6-8 and 7-8) there were 22 responses. For the last category, High School (6-12, 7-12, 8-9 and 9-12), there were 28 responses. Again, although it is impossible to get completely accurate data using these categories, I found it helpful to see these numbers, which reflect a rather equal distribution of responses over age-ranges.

Of the 101 responses, 97 were from public schools, one was from a Private 60% publicly funded school, two were from Private Sectarian schools, and one was from a Magnet school. This is both a reflection of the email addresses that I received from the Department of Education website, as many private schools did not have contact information listed, as well as a reflection of schools who are required to have a music program versus schools who might not be. The few non-public schools that I received information from included lots of very interesting insight, but unfortunately there is not enough information from non-public schools to make any overall generalizations. Of the 101 responses, two schools indicated that they did not have any music opportunities at their schools at all. One was a private school, one was public.

Another interesting distinction within the responses that I got is the position of the respondent. Although I sent the original email to principals, I stated that they may either answer the questions themselves or pass them along to music educators within their schools. Of the 101 responses, one responder was a Director of their school, two were Headmasters, 58 were Principals, and 43 were music teachers. Three schools had both principal and music teacher respond, which accounts for the discrepancy in numbers. In many instances, it was very interesting to look at the differences between responses from music teachers and responses from administrators, and the perspectives that each of these positions brought to the questions asked

and the project as a whole.

VII.   ANALYSIS OF DATA FINDINGS

As discussed in the methods section, the responses were coded to indicate mentions of the themes that I identified as particularly salient. From this, I was able to extract quantified information about the topics indicated, and could examine certain perspectives in depth. However, before going into the details of the strengths and weaknesses of programs in Maine, it is important to gain some understanding of what schools currently offer in terms of music opportunities. I asked each school what was available during the school day, and then what was offered outside of the normal school day. From these answers I was able to gain some understanding of what is available to students. Most schools from pre-K to around 5th grade have weekly music classes for all students, and from then on, most schools offer music, usually band and chorus as electives. From there, the music offerings are quite varied. Additional programs include jazz bands, show choirs, musicals, orchestras, ukulele bands, bluegrass bands, Music Theory courses and more. Regardless of what was officially offered at each school, the themes I identified still were relevant across the board, and are the main focus of this report, as they are what I have seen to be crucial to the strength of music programs across Maine.

Funding for music opportunities, mentioned in 64% of the responses, was by far the indicator that was most uniformly discussed. Of the 64% that mentioned it, 79.7% stated that lack of funding was detrimental to their ability to offer strong music opportunities. In total, this means that over half of the responses that I got stated that they had problems funding their music programs. These funding issues were identified as stemming from many things, including budget cuts, living in low socioeconomic areas, and money being funneled to other

school activities and away from the arts. One Middle School stated that although costs have been increasing quite steadily across the boards, their budget has not been changed for many years, which is forcing cuts in "non-essential" areas. This, along with the increase in focus on standardized testing in the government is channelling money away from their music programs.

Music programs, especially instrumental programs, are expensive, and many school budgets do not account for outside costs for students, which can harm music opportunities for students who are unable to provide the funds needed to cover costs.

On the other side, 12.9% of responses stated that stable financial situations were crucial to the success of their music programs. One such school stated that not having to worry about the funding being cut for their music programs allowed them to offer extensive opportunities for their students along with helping students with outside costs if necessary. The 2009 report on Arts in Maine also discussed funding inequalities, and offered the shocking statistic that individual budgets for music programs at schools range from $0-$18,000, further accentuating the differences between what is able to be offered at each school.

The second highest theme mentioned by schools was time management and scheduling issues. 59.4% of responses included something about scheduling music opportunities within the school day. Of the 60 responses included in this percentage, 93.3% stated that scheduling was a weakness of their music programs. Many schools stated that music opportunities were usually offered at the same time as other popular classes, or were all offered at the same time, so students had to choose between opportunities, rather than being able to do as much as they wanted. Other schools indicated that music opportunities were not

given scheduled time within the school days at all, and instead consisted of pull-out sessions from other academic classes, which both interrupted the other classes, and interrupted students' learning. Opportunities outside of school were also mentioned, but then added problems of transportation and funding came into play. The remaining 6.7% of the 60 stated that scheduling was a strength, in that they felt there was plenty of time and flexibility for music opportunities in their school, and that this was a major benefit for their musical offerings. Scheduling problems were apparent mostly in schools with Middle Schoolers and older, as this is when general music classes usually stopped and music as electives started. In this sense, once students were not required to attend music classes regularly, the classes offered started to conflict with other important opportunities for students.

Support, or lack of support, from administrators within the schools I contacted was an interesting theme that I identified from the responses. This was a delicate one, as about half of the responses were from administrators themselves, and I would imagine many music educators would feel uncomfortable responding to a rather informal email with anything that could potentially put them at odds with their administrators. That being said, 6.9% of responders stated that their music programs suffered because of a lack of administrative support. Although this is a very small percentage of responses, these people stated that this was a crucial weakness that could not be ignored. Also, all of the responses that referred to a lack of administrative support were music teachers. Many additional music educators that I spoke with also stated that they faced opposition from administrators when initially bringing new ideas to the table.

18.8% of responders, mostly music educators, stated that they had very supportive administrations, and indicated that this was a huge strength of their ability to provide quality

music opportunities. The administrative support that these individuals cited was not necessarily in terms of funding or resources, but more the confidence and the knowledge that they had individuals in the school who understood the circumstances and were willing to work with them. So, this is something that I have found to be an important indicator of relative strengths or weaknesses in music programs, and although the numbers are relatively small in comparison to some of the other more general themes, it is something that was noted as particularly important for the people who did mention it, and therefore important to my overall research.

Tied in with this issue of disconnects between music educators and administrators is the issue of understanding the benefits or music education. 13.9% of responders stated that one of the weaknesses of their music programs was the fact that people responsible for ensuring the continuation and support of these programs did not understand the benefits that music education offers students. This lack of understanding could come from the administration, students, school community, or the general feeling in the state of Maine. One of the questions that I asked in the email was for individuals to state their opinions about the benefits of music education, and I received many great answers, but also a lot of people saying that these benefits are not widely understood, and therefore not given much attention.

Many schools also indicated that a huge weakness of their music opportunities was just the fact that they were unable to offer as much as they would like to. Regardless of the reason behind this, 37.6% of responders stated that there was not enough offered in terms of music opportunities for their students and that this was something that they wish they could improve. 5.9% of schools stated that their strong music offerings had to do with their ability to offer a wide variety of opportunities. For example, the Mt. Blue Regional School District

self-assessed their music offerings as very strong, mostly due to the extensive amount of opportunities available to the students there.

One theme that showed up in 26.7% of responses that really interested me was mentioning the participation and interest of students in the music opportunities offered. 55.6% of these responses stated that there was a lack of interest or participation, which was a weakness of their programs, while the remaining 44.4% stated that there was a lot of participation and interest and that this was a strength of their program. It was interesting to me that there were such disparities in responses mentioning this, as with most of the themes there was a clear majority identifying it as a weakness or as a strength. Because of this, I think this theme must have other implications that were not visible from the data I collected. In order to understand why there is this split, I would need to look further into the musical opportunities offered at each school, as well as the ideas of the music educators and administrators as to what they attribute the level of participation and interest to.

The quality of the facilities offered for music opportunities was another theme that was mentioned in 17.8% of the responses. Of these responses, 83.3% indicated that there were not adequate facilities, and that this was a weakness of their ability to offer quality music opportunities. Inadequate facilities included schools that did not have dedicated rooms for music, meaning that music educators had to move around from room to room, or schools that had rooms of very poor quality that limited what they were able to do within them. Many schools indicated that they did not have adequate space to store instruments, and many stated that there were not places for performance within their schools, which limited exposure of the musical offerings they had. The other 16.7% indicated that they had adequate facilities, and that this was crucial to their music programs. This theme was one that had an interesting

connection to the study done in 2009, as facilities for arts programs was one of the strengths identified overall for the state of Maine in that report. However, this only further strengthens the fact that music educators who do not have a designated facility for their programs are at a significant disadvantage.

Thus far, the themes identified have had responses from both sides of the aisle. Some schools had identified these themes as strengths, some as weaknesses. However, there were three themes that only were identified as weaknesses or as detrimental to music opportunities. The first of these was lack of   staff. 29.7% of responders indicated that they were unable to offer the quality of music opportunities that they would like because they did not have the staff needed in order to do so. Of course this is inherently tied to funding, scheduling, and many other things, but it was a specific idea that people stated as a weakness. This lack of staff was reported across the board from schools that had music teachers who were expected to provide quality music instruction to entire districts with hundreds of students and not much time, schools who had specialized music teachers who were expected not only to teach their specialty but also to teach all the other music classes as well, and schools who would love to offer more, but would need to hire more staff in order to do so.

The second theme that was mentioned frequently as a solely negative aspect was the current atmosphere surrounding Music Education in the realm of education policy and government in Maine. 20.8% of responders indicated this as a weakness and stated that it was one of the reasons for a lack of attention and support for Maine music programs. Schools identified this general negative feeling by citing the current push for standardized testing in all aspects of education, and the related push in resources for subjects that are tested. Because music is not included in the standardized tests, many schools are channeling the resources they

have away from music programs and towards the subjects that they will be tested for. Another aspect of this is the pronounced focus of the Maine Government on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) rather than STEAM (adding the Arts). The lack of support for the arts at this level is an indicator of what is valued at the government level, and therefore representative of what is valued in individual schools.

The last theme that was emphasized by 6.9% of responders was an issue of the lack of continuity between schools within districts. Although this percentage is lower than the others, it was identified as a huge weakness for the schools that mentioned it. This lack of continuity in some schools was the result of very strong music opportunities at some levels, and then a lack of strong opportunities at other levels. Responders stated that this created problems for the overall quality for students interested in music, and also created problems with participation. Many promising music students who started off with strong programs would not continue if they did not have opportunities of equal value, and this was identified as a large weakness for schools. Similarly, one thing I noticed from the variety of the responses that I got was that there seems to be a lack of continuity between schools in general. Music educators and administrators are not aware of what is happening in other schools, and the realities of what is actually offered in schools vary greatly, even, as shown, between schools in the same district.

One of the reasons for this disconnect between schools may be due to the reliance on individual teachers who can make a huge difference within an individual school. One very encouraging thing from the responses I got was that many administrators made a point to note how dedicated and wonderful their music educators were. Also, in schools that either self-reported as having very strong music programs, or have been identified within the state

as having strong music programs, a lot of the credit was given to individual music teachers who spearhead efforts to ensure quality opportunities for students. This is great for the schools who have teachers who are willing and able to offer more opportunities than they need to, but this also means that schools without these teachers or without the ability to offer anything else lose out on quality music programming.

This reliance on individual teachers, which also is apparent in my experience as a music student as discussed at the beginning, can be connected to the general themes that I identified in the responses. Lack of funding, support, facilities, and time is indicative of a weak structure overall to support music programs. Of course strong teachers are important, and of course there will always be teachers who are more or less committed than others, but the lack of systemic support for all music educators means that Maine is lacking even a basic level of resources that could strengthen music programs all over the state.

Through my experience as a student in Maine, and through this project, I have had the privilege of working with or speaking with some of these incredibly dedicated individuals. I included my personal story with my bluegrass teacher, but there are other individuals who are well worth discussing. Steve Muise, the orchestra conductor in the Mt. Blue Regional School District is one of these incredibly dedicated, exceptionally talented individuals. When hired, although Mt. Blue already had a wealth of musical opportunities, he noticed that there were not many musical experiences for orchestra students outside of just orchestra. So, with the help of some invested students and parents, he started the Franklin County Fiddlers, a fiddle group that gave the string players in the school something else to do. This group has been incredibly successful, and is a very popular activity for musicians in the district. Mr. Muise mentioned that he is often asked why there are so many talented kids

at his schools, and that he responds by saying that his students are no different than any other students, but "they've been given the opportunities to find what they like" (S. Muise, personal communication, January 31, 2014). He also credited community support and eventually administrative and financial support as the program got going, comments that are well in-line with the overall findings I extracted.

I also spoke at length with David Stevenson, a music educator at Mount View who started the incredibly successful Mount View Chamber Singers, a select choir of students that performs on numerous occasions in the community and around the world. He highly stressed the importance of reputation and community support of music programs, as having a broad, strong base of invested individuals ensures that cuts will not be made. He leads his groups to achieve this level of support by focusing on community engaged performances and opportunities; bringing other musicians in, singing with outside groups, or performing for reasons that are not solely academic. He also mentioned, similarly to Mr. Muise, that all students are talented, you just have to find out what inspires them.

IX.   CONCLUSIONS REACHED

In all, analyzing the data I received tells me that although music opportunities are vastly varied and unequal between schools there are some identified key themes that are crucial for supporting music opportunities. The presence of these themes, such as adequate facilities, support both financially and politically, continuity, communication, adequate time, dedicated, passionate individuals and adequate staffing, help contribute to strong music programs, while the absence of these themes prove to be highly detrimental to even the best of intentions. All of the identified themes as well as personal narratives from any of the responders and the lack

of data collection point to an overall lack of systematic and administrative support for music educators and music programs in Maine. However, as this report was more of a collection of perspectives and a presentation of themes rather than my own analysis, the best way to present conclusions would be using the suggestions from the data I collected.

Although there were many negative perspectives of the current state of music education in Maine from the respondents, there was also an abundance of good, concrete, practical suggestions on how music opportunities can be strengthened around the state. These ideas were given in response to the broad question: "What do you think could be done to strengthen music programs at your school and around Maine?", and therefore were very localized and contextualized suggestions that cannot accurately be generalized to apply to all music programs in Maine. Because of this, I don't think analyzing this question as I did with the identified strengths and weaknesses would be accurate, so I would like to present the suggestions in a more informal manner with added specifics from my research.

Increased advocacy for music education was a suggestion offered across the board from administrators and music educators. This suggestion attempts to combat the unsupportive and disconnected atmosphere currently around music education, and asks to raise general awareness about the benefits of music education.   This suggestion has implications both for music educators who need to advocate strongly for their positions, as well as government stakeholders who have the ability to spread information and ensure support at the state-level. Increased advocacy for music education also will raise awareness about the realities of being a music educator, which could help music educators feel supported by their administrations and by the government. Understanding what is needed to provide a high quality music education as well as the rationale for providing it in the first place could

eliminate the disconnect many music educators feel with their administrations.

Another suggestion that was given by many responders was to increase connections and interactions with outside communities. This suggestion is also strengthened by schools who stated that community engagement was a crucial strength of their programs. Bringing community musicians in to perform or present to students was an important way to engage students beyond the walls of the school, and to allow them to experience and understand career options in music that they could continue after graduation. Other schools reported that connecting with the community ensured the longevity of their program, as having an entire community on your side supporting your program kept it in the public eye and kept it from even being an option when looking at budget cuts. This community connection also manifested in some schools by having school groups collaborate with outside community groups, either performing joint concerts or just attending different concerts. Some schools also cited that collaborations with universities in their areas were also very important. Having a college nearby gives students clear visions of how they could continue with music after graduating, provides more options for performances or presentations to attend, and also could be a great way to find interested individuals who could come work with the students.

Performing outside of the school setting also gives students a chance to feel more engaged with what they are doing in their musical opportunities. One music educator stated that community collaboration was the most important part of the music opportunities offered at their school because it gave the students a sense of purpose that was greater than just doing well in their music class. By doing community performances for various causes, the students feel a sense of importance and pride in what they do.

Similarly, another popular suggestion was to increase communication and

collaboration with other schools, both within individual districts and around the state of Maine. It seemed that many of the people who responded to my email indicated a sense of being unaware of what was being offered in other schools besides their own, and that feeling was strengthened by learning about the lack of public data about music opportunities in schools. Many individuals even indicated that they did not have much communication with schools within their own districts. Suggestions in this theme ranged from the very practical idea of having regular meetings with all of the music educators and administrators within districts to ensure continuity and communication, to larger suggestions about changing the structure of school music festivals to reflect more of the collaborative, fun, engaging aspect of making music together, rather than the current structure which promotes individual successes and competition. Another similar suggestion was to pair schools who have relatively few music opportunities with schools with robust music programs. This way, students would be able to access a wider range of opportunities while encouraging collaboration and communication between schools. This suggestion also would help to combat the realities of opportunities within schools with relatively low levels of funding versus schools with higher level of funding available. At the government level, there are attempts being made to include both administrators and music educators from all over Maine in discussions about music advocacy and benefits so that there is no disconnect of information being received, and so that music educators across Maine can get information and ideas from other people in similar situations.

The final group of suggestions that were included in many responses were pointed, and they were directed towards the government. Many suggested that the government offer more funding opportunities for music programs in the form of grants, overall budgetary support, and specific government initiatives focused on financially supporting music

opportunities. Even just on the ideological side of things, many responders suggested that the Maine government change their focus from solely STEM education to include the arts, known as STEAM education. Regardless of the actuality of how adding that A would be manifested in terms of real change, just the statement of support would be more helpful and supportive than the current atmosphere. The suggestion of having the government explicitly state their support for the arts would add legitimacy to the existence of music opportunities and would raise awareness and advocacy for music educators.

X. IMPLICATIONS

The data presented and the suggestions collected have huge implications for changes in practice around the State of Maine. By offering salient themes in music education and practical suggestions for strengthening existing practices, music advocates, educators, administrators and government officials can use the information presented to make changes or raise awareness in support of music education. The most important implication for practice going forward is the need for data collection. The lack of communication, transparency and collaboration that is the result of not having any formal means of collecting and assessing relevant data is a significant barrier to strengthening music in Maine. This report offers suggestions for interested individuals while also trying to combat this lack of data collection and information. My findings also indicate the need for increased structural support for music programs to reduce the reliance on individual stand-out teachers, and could increase overall advocacy and awareness for music programs.

XII.   OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

This project has been incredibly exciting and rewarding for me to do, and has given me the opportunity to explore music in Maine, something that I am intimately connected with, in much more depth than I ever would have imagined. After presenting the benefits of music for students, it is discouraging to see that music opportunities are not as strong as they potentially could be in Maine. This report offers an overview of those weaknesses as well as determining what factors are crucial to a strong music program. By presenting this data and then offering suggestions from music educators and administrators across the State, this report presents valuable information for individuals attempting to learn about, strengthen, or start music opportunities in Maine.

Underrepresented Minority Student Perceptions of STEM at Bates College

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Abstract

Globally, underrepresented minority (URM) students in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields struggle academically and socially in the classroom. Colleges provide resources to help increase the success for URM students in STEM. Bates College has addressed this issue with the Bates Summer Scholars Program (BSSP), an academic enrichment program. BSSP offers a small cohort of URM first-year students exposure to collegiate level science and math courses and mentorship, to address this preparedness gap. This study compares the retention rates of students who participated in the Bates Summer Scholars Program with the general population of URM students at Bates College to gauge the effectiveness of the program. Through examination of other models of preparatory programs for URM students in STEM and analyzing student perceptions from focus groups, suggestions regarding effective enrichment models and ways to strengthen support programs at Bates are made for future programming.

Underrepresented Minority Student Perceptions of STEM at Bates College Education, meant to produce skillful and competitive citizens, or a means for higher learning, symposium, knowledge and exploration? Education is a complex field, with a multifaceted definition, made of many intersecting disciplines, and affected by many variables such as class, gender, social norms, geography, and more. In the typical classroom, there is a hidden curricula, or implicit values, morals, and messages picked up by students on a day to day basis. There are also explicit lessons taught through curricula. Every individual has a different learning or teaching experience that is based on cultural and linguistic diversity, upbringing, genetics, and the environment. Having an affinity to learning through procedures or critical thinking also affects the way one would teach or learn. Not only is education as a field diverse, but practice, theory, learner style and teacher style are intricate as well.

Teachers must be mindful to appeal to many types of learners in order to effectively teach all of their students. This diversity of individuals also implicates the need for many different types of manipulatives for students and teachers to use in conjunction with the curricula. In high school, the resources provided to students were after school programs, teacher aids, and help from home. Students who needed extra assistance were in disadvantaged situations if they were unable to receive help at home, an after school program, via a tutor, or by any other means. This is one instance where disparities create opportunity gaps based on a lack of access or availability to resources.

These disadvantages exist for all students regardless of race, class, or gender; however, it is often exaggerated for students of color. Once students move on to higher education, some of the disparities should easily diminish due to the fact that it is a college's responsibility to provide adequate resources to all learners of various abilities. Universities

and colleges provide mentorship or networking opportunities, social, emotional, health, and academic resources to their students. When students transition from high school to college, they are all at different levels of intelligence and ability. Resources help to level the playing field (Abrams & Jernigan, 1984; Munley, Garvey, McConnell, 2010). As academic rigor increases from high school to college, it is necessary for students to be offered academic resources that go hand in hand with the curricula and faculty expertise. In order to ensure the college is meeting the needs of its students, it is important to offer a varied selection of resources.

Underrepresented minorities (URMs) in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) often face many issues pursuing a STEM major. The difficulty that URMs face during undergraduate usually occurs due to the lack of preparation entering college combined with the social, political, and mental hindrances they deal with (Kokkelenberg & Sinha, 2010; Museus, Palmer, Davis & Maramba, 2011). Many students lack a support system, and studies show that supportive educational environments are positively linked to persistence and retention for students of color in STEM majors (Grandy; Palmer, Maramba & Dancy, 2011). URMs in STEMs sometimes have trouble finding classmates to study with and research shows peers with the same goals of doing well and supporting each other in STEM fields, provide needed support for academic work and a positive social network (Palmer *et al.*, 2011). The lack of faculty and staff support decreases URM commitment to STEM (Kendricks, Nedunuri & Arment, 2013; Palmer *et al.,* 2011). Adequate and consistent mentorship of peers and faculty members positively correlate to good grades (Kendricks *et al.,* 2013). Also, the diversity in the race and gender of faculty effects commitment to STEM (Price, 2010). One study showed that Blacks persisted with a

minority professor, and females didn't persist as much with more female representation in the faculty than men (Price, 2010). This finding makes sense, because research also shows that stereotype threat greatly effects persistence in STEM (Beasley & Fischer, 2012). Confidence, grade point average (GPA), and cultural issues affect retention (White *et al.*, 2008). Universities and colleges have carefully crafted prep programs for URMs going into STEM in order to combat these debilitating factors.

Many of the preparatory programs that currently exist for underrepresented minorities (URMs) have similar goals to help students be successful in STEM through faculty relationships, academic interventions, tutoring, role modeling, and mentorship. What sets these programs a part from each other are *how* they entice their participants, and how they achieve the goals above.

The Meyerhoff Scholars Program (MSP) of the University of Maryland provides a learning community, academic advising, research opportunities, internships, conferences, and preparation for graduate school (MSP, 2014). MSP pushes its students to motivate each other through 'positive peer pressure'. MSP helps students to connect through its residential Summer Bridge program, and motivates its students to learn from each other through study groups and peer-to-peer support (MSP, 2014). MSP has proven to be successful, its alumni goes on to earn Ph.D.s and M.D.s. Although Meyerhoff invites highly qualified students to their program, regardless of their backgrounds, URMs in the program were 5.3 times more likely to continue into STEM education or careers than those who declined their MSP invitations (MSP, 2014).

The Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) Professors program is a research experience that provides mentorship and academic intervention to its students with the goal of

retention in the STEM fields (Wilson *et al.,* 2013). Similarly to HHMI, the pre-freshman

accelerated curriculum in engineering (PACE) program at Morgan State University strives to

prepare incoming students for collegiate level math, physics, and English (Drew, 2014).

PACE encourages its students to become role models by providing a network of mentors such

as graduate students for tutoring and faculty for mentorship (Drew, 2014). PACE leads to

membership in the Center of Advanced Microwave Research & Applications (CAMRA)

program, which partners with NASA to provide scholarship, applied learning, and a strong

network of faculty, peers, and professionals (Drew, 2014).

The Colby Achievement Program in the Sciences (CAPS) intends to help students of

color to become comfortable with scientific material, technique and equipment (Jacobs,

2010). CAPS prepare its students for the first year science courses. It strives to help students

become more comfortable with collegiate level sciences through close faculty mentorship,

computer programming training, and exposure to research and the lab environment (Jacobs,

2010; Lepkowski, 2014). Students enter in small cohort the previous summer before their

first year at Colby (Lepkowski, 2014). CAPS is a four year program of continuous reflection,

mentorship, and networking. Students receive a $4,000 stipend the three summers after to do

research either at Colby, or anywhere they choose (Jacobs, 2010). CAPS students may also

become students a part of the Colby Research Scholars (CRS) program where students serve

as a lab assistant for a professor during the academic year (Lepkowski, 2014; Jacobs, 2010).

There is ample research addressing why URM students are unsuccessful in STEM,

and what interventions seem to help. The breadth of information regarding retention in

STEM is impeccable. Even though there is sufficient research on issues facing STEM

students, there is still a need for more specific and concrete comparisons between program

types and institution sizes. Many of the studies are conducted at big universities, and there is a small amount of research depicting results for small colleges. Likewise, there are many existing STEM programs for URMs with many similarities, but it is hard to predict the transferability of programs across different institutions. There is also a need for more qualitative data (White, Altschuld & Lee, 2008). The complexity of this issue makes it hard for a simple universal model to exist, but research stating the most important factors to STEM retention is important for future research. Although every program is unique to its intended audience, there are factors such as mentorship and lab experience that seem to be absolutely necessary.

Bates College provides a number of academic resources to their students including: free Dean of Students (DOS) tutoring, a Math and Statistics workshop, Peer Assisted Learning for introductory science courses, writing specialists, and peer writers. Bates also has a selective, small cohort, summer residential program, the Bates Summer Scholars Program (BSSP) that intends to bridge the academic and social gaps for URMs entering their first year at Bates. Each year ten students are selected from the incoming pool of potential science majors to participate in two faculty taught courses, including a science and a math course. Students spend the first part of the day in class and the afternoon in lab where they are given exposure to lab equipment and experience working collaboratively. Within this program model students are able to form relationships with peers pursuing a similar goal, as well as increase their preparedness for entry- level science and math courses at Bates. Quite successful, the alumni of the Bates Summer Scholars Program have a 97% graduation rate from Bates College. Although this is true, preliminary perspectives on the program from faculty that teach the summer courses, alumni, and current students have shown flaws in its

structure. The program is not sustainable in its current organization, it is limited by funding, and an evaluation of its recruiting process is needed. This program in its current capacity can only serve a limited amount of students at Bates, so creating a more effective program is ideal. This study surveys the reasons why URM students at Bates and in BSSP who indicated interest in STEM, did not declare or remain a STEM major. The results from this study, along with previous research on program models, helped to create the suggestions and changes to BSSP as well as provide insight into student perceptions of STEM at Bates College.

Method

Bates College is currently focused and invested in improving resources for students from disadvantaged backgrounds pursuing STEM. The DOF office was interested in research that would help them understand what aspects of effective programming would be useful in improving the Bates Summer Scholars Program. Along with a representative of DOF, we crafted a project, to address these issues. The DOF was working with Institutional Research, so their expertise, along with our training in research methods within social science, helped to shape this project.

The Dean of Faculty's office collected institutional data and surveys regarding BSSP students, and underrepresented minority students in STEM at Bates. These documents survey student perceptions as well as quantitative data regarding student retention in STEM. The data represents Bates Summer Scholar Program participants as well as under represented minority students from the classes of 2010 to 2015. Although the definition of underrepresented minority students in the literature is inclusive of minorities on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, and nationality, within the survey administered by the Dean of Faculty the population solely encompassed ethnic and racial minority students, this is due to

the context of Bates College. Comparing those in the program to those not in the program, even though they are all classified as 'underrepresented minorities', allows for the effectiveness of BSSP to be perceived (Navarra- Madsen et al., 2010). Students declare their majors during the second semester of their sophomore year so the youngest surveyed were current juniors. All students surveyed were offered confidentiality. The student surveys used a Likert scale with responses ranging from 1(*not at all*) to 5 (*to a great extent*), which is appropriate for gaining the spectra of student perspectives (Kendricks et al., 2013; Griffith, 2013). In addition, utilizing institutional data and demographics allows all of the student responses to be contextualized (Ost, 2010; Oh & Lewis, 2011).

Faculty participants were chosen at random for interviews. Six STEM faculty received interview requests, and four responded. The interview questions were sent before the interview. In one case, the professor responded via email, as opposed to having an in person interview. All participants were offered confidentiality and will be referred to as a 'STEM faculty' member. Even though the participants were randomly selected, there was an even distribution across the STEM departments. Since all of the participants who were contacted did not respond, the results from the interview do not evenly span all STEM departments at Bates.

To better inform the suggestions offered, the literature review included details on the structures of various programs aimed to improve the retention of URMs in STEM fields. Furthermore, the transcript from a student focus group, which occurred during the 2012 through 2013 school year, was analyzed. Practices in community-based research outlined by Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker and Donohue were reviewed and informed the methods of data analysis conducted in the current study (2003). An Institutional Review Board

proposal was not needed, as the DOF collected the data, and were exempt due to the study being an internal review.

Concepts and themes that were consistently mentioned across all of the data are presented in the results. The literature is combined with faculty and student perspectives to be sure both stakeholders are represented when considering suggestions for new program models. In doing so, this project allows the perspectives of current and alumni students as well as faculty and staff to be voiced.

Results and Analysis

The first thing spoken about during the focus group was if the students in the room ever thought about leaving the sciences. All but one of the students that remained in the sciences agreed that they have thought about leaving the sciences and even in some cases still think about leaving the sciences. The reasoning behind this for one student was that some students feel uncomfortable asking for help because everyone else around them seemingly completely understands the material. Another student felt that it depended on which department and how open and supportive the professors were to the needs of the student.

We then moved on to whether some departments are move supportive than others at Bates. Positive reception was received for both the Education and Psychology departments with thoughts of the faculty members being more invested in the success of their students. The general impression I received from the discussion on this topic was that the science departments in general are cutthroat. Students felt that the departments were not very supportive, with a little exception for the Chemistry department. According to the focus group, faculty members in the Chemistry department are honest and realistic with the students but also optimistic about their success. In comparison to the Biology department at Bates,

students felt that the Chemistry department is more emotionally encouraging of their students, which is lacking within the Biology department. Students got the impression that the Biology department attempts to weed out the weak students prior to helping the students succeed.

Stereotype threat was another important topic discussed during the focus group. Many students find it helpful to work in groups at Bates, which is great because then students can work together in attempting to retain all the information from class. Unfortunately, for the URM students, forming these groups with majority students is oftentimes difficult. Based on prior experiences with URM students, majority students are very hesitant to work with them. What typically happens is that URM students will form groups amongst themselves to study, which does not always end in success. Students who are struggling in the course working together is not beneficial for any party involved.

Lab reports and lab partner dynamics were very robust and important themes that continued throughout the focus group heavily influenced by stereotype threat. Faculty members in the Chemistry department make assumptions that students are familiar with lab equipment and the structure of lab reports. Students who come from backgrounds where the science programs at their high schools were not as strong would of course struggle through the lab reports and completing the labs in a timely fashion. In terms of lab partner dynamics, students feel that when being paired with students who come from a stronger science background both in lecture and lab, they feel pressured to complete lab quickly. The more advanced lab partner gets frustrated with the less advanced student's progress in lab and typically just does the lab for them, further perpetuating the student's disadvantages in lab. Students also felt that in the choosing lab partner process, the URM group is picked last. Also noted, students were timid to ask questions of the lab instructors for fear that their lab partners

would judge them because they were not comfortable in lab.

In addition to the issues that URM students seem to be facing within lab at Bates, one student felt that there was a clear difference in communication between URM students and they ways in which they are tested for understanding of material. When entering college, there is an obvious transition between high school and college but for many URM students, this transition is a very large and difficult one. Many of these students come from schools that were largely focused on recall which is a very different way of thinking compared to what is expected of students in college. Whereas, the students who attending private boarding schools or even nicely funded public schools are trained to think in ways similar to what is expected of them in college. During college, students are expected to apply the information they learned to many different systems as well as compare and contrast between systems. This is on top of ensuring that you understand all the material and remember the information thoroughly. Being in class with students who are very successful at thinking in this way can be very intimidating for students.

Continuing with the differences in communication between URM students and the ways in which they are tested for understanding of the material, family background also came up within conversation. One student compared the differences between URM students and majority students family backgrounds prior to their entrance at Bates. Based on some speculation, a student began talking about how majority students eat dinners with their parents and talk about current events in the news along with how everyone's day went. In contrast, this student told about in their household, they did not eat meals together and the majority of their conversations were about bills and stress. Providing your children with information about current news allows your children to begin critically thinking about the

world and the people around them. On the other hand, focusing on your struggles to pay the bills is not quite as beneficial for the student as news conversations. Having your children thinking critically that early is very beneficial for their success in school since critical thinking is one of the major skill sets that aids in your success in college.

Another important theme that was raised within the focus group is the lack of peer mentoring. First-year URM students come to Bates and inform the upper-class URM students that they are interested in majoring in the sciences, the initial response is "Good luck" or "That is going to be hard". Many upper-class URM students at Bates have nothing but discouraging things to say about majoring in the sciences which can be very disheartening for first-year URM students whom are just getting acclimated to the campus. Students expressed an interest in having peer mentors in the sciences to help them through the classes through encouragement and guidance. I am a little apprehensive about this idea because we need to have students be successful in the completion of the sciences prior to implementing a peer mentoring program for science students. This was reflected within the focus group as well once I posed the question of whether they themselves would be willing to become mentors for younger students in the sciences and almost unanimously, the answer was no. The students were not confident enough in their science skills to aid someone else in succeeding. But if the students feel this way about becoming mentors, what pool of students do they expect us to choose from if not them? The mentors would have to be students who made it through those tough intro level classes but if the students who have made it through those classes are not comfortable with mentoring, what exactly can be done?

Students were also concerned about the relevancy and effectiveness of the BSSP program at Bates. Students reported that the courses taught during the summer, although

giving the students access to resources and lab equipment, were not relevant in aiding their success in the introductory level science classes. Students were also concerned about the ways in which the program had changed over the years. During the summers of 2010 and prior, students were allowed to apply from anywhere with no stipulations. In hopes of switching things up and attracting a different crowd, for the summer of 2011 cohort, students were chosen for the program. Discussions about this topic brought up topics about defining minority. Students felt that the Dean's office was expanding their ideas about what diversity means, which then includes first-generation college students. They were also concerned that in choosing students to attend the program, they were accepting students who did not necessarily need the program. The criteria they were using to select these students were something students were concerned about. Many of the students who were members of the cohort for that year are very intelligent people and came from pretty solid backgrounds. In using these criteria to choose the students, they were filtering out students who would greatly benefit from such a program.

<div align="center">CONCLUSION</div>

With the fall of the OIE and absence of "Swing Deans", URM students on Bates College campus are feeling ignored. Although a lot of the issues that affect URM students' success in STEM and even college in general happen prior to their attendance, it is still important to gather information about their experiences to create the diverse and accepting environment that Bates prides itself on possessing. Using this knowledge, the college could create effective support models that would foster a supportive environment for URM students' success, more specifically in STEM. This study aimed to gather those experiences of URM students within STEM fields at Bates College, a much-debated topic countrywide.

All of the findings from this study directly align with factors found throughout the literature that affect URM student's success and comfortability in STEM majors. As noted by Beasley and Fischer (2012), stereotype threat is one of the major issues that affect the retention of URM students in STEM. URM students are not only feeling uncomfortable interacting with majority students but also their majority professors as well. Both of these attributes, attending office hours and forming effective study groups, are important for succeeding in STEM. A way to combat this issue would be to implement a mentoring program to pair underclassmen with first-year students to help them in those introductory level science classes. In fact, a program is currently in the making at Bates to do just this. Stephanie Richards in the Biology department has been very interested in this topic for a very long time and after extensive research, she found that mentoring was the most beneficial for students (Wilson *et al* 2013*).* This program required students to apply during their freshmen year and will continue throughout their four years at Bates. In the first-year, students will be paired with a faculty member whom will have meetings with their fellow throughout the school year to review topics such as writing a lab report, studying for an exam and reading science literature. In addition to academic support, the fellowship will encourage students to apply for summer research opportunities, which could be very beneficial for students not only financially but also academically (Palmer *et al* 2011).

In addition to pairing students with faculty members in STEM fields, it would also be beneficial for Bates to work on hiring URM faculty members as well as bringing in URM STEM field professionals on campus (Palmer *et al* 2011). It is difficult for Bates to contact most URM students after they graduate due to their disconnect with campus while attending. What Bates could do instead is look for URM professionals that did not necessarily attend

Bates but are in the general area. This would still give students insight into what the future has in store for URM students' if they decide to remain in STEM. It is important to remind students that there is an end to all of the hard work that they are enduring at Bates. This is something that a lot of students have a difficult time dealing with. It is also very difficult to gain perspective on the practicality of what students are doing in lab and class since the majority of the material is general and base knowledge. Providing the students with practical applications for what they are learning is important.

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Girls' Empowerment Book Club
Lewiston High School 21st Century After School Program

Kelley Brown
Professor Patti Buck
Educational Studies Seminar
April 2014

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Many pre-‑‑teen and teenage girls, specifically minority girls, go though periods of self-‑‑doubt, self-‑‑loathing and lack of self-‑‑respect. Why is this so? Is it because of the image of women in the media and text that is constantly present in our society? Is it because they lack programs that uplift them as first, people and secondly, women? How can young girls be assured of their worthiness and importance to our society? This capstone project sought to addresses these questions by offering a safe space and environment for productive, impactful discussions.

NATURE OF STUDY

The initial nature of the study was to facilitate and lead the book club while examining how effective reading and discussing different stories encourages the girls to make changes in their own lives. However, after examining the program and noting its weaknesses, the nature of the program developed to researching and developing methods that would encourage engagement and participation in empowerment discussions. I sought to inspire the young women to observe the importance of female empowerment and female autonomy. This was lacking as the focal point of the club, which was expressed in the girls' unawareness of the mission and goals of book club.

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY/HOW THE STUDY ADDRESSES THE IDENTIFIED PROBLEM

This study was a participatory observation research. In order to empower young females and to understand the effectiveness of different engagement methods it was imperative that I perform on---the---ground work, in which I am participating and working with the group I hope to learn more about. By facilitating the book club, I was in a position to mentor and provide assistance for the young women. The issues stated in the problem statement were addressed through the different activities completed during the book club.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Young females' adolescent years are proven to be years of great potential for empowerment; however on the same token it is also a time of vulnerability for young girls to participate in degrading activities. According to statistics from the National Institute of Mental Health, one in five adolescents have a diagnosable mental illness, and are prone to suicide, which is the third leading cause of death among teens (Williams and Ferber, 2008). These problems are more prevalent in adolescent girls than boys. Thus, it is imperative of those who are wiser and older to take a serious interest in young female lives in order to inspire and galvanize them to sustain and thrive. The methods of empowerment are different depending upon many factors; including but not limited to, the organization or institution that is mobilizing the empowerment and the needs and desires of the group involved in the empowerment. My research on how to engage youth in discussion around female empowerment, has been informed by 3 female empowerment groups: Youth Empowerment Strategies (YES!), Youth ReAct, and Smart---Girl, and their methods of engagement: Participatory Action Research, Photovoice, and Feminist Pedagogical Techniques.

Empowerment Programs

Youth Empowerment Strategies (YES!) is a 3---year after school empowerment project funded by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in West Contra Costa County, California (Wilson et al, 2007; Wilson et al, 2008). The program is designed to promote problem---solving skills, social action and civic participation among underserved elementary and middle school youth. Their empowerment models are influenced by earlier empowerment intervention programs such as ASAP (Adolescent Social Action Programs) in Albuquerque, New Mexico. YES! utilizes two main empowerment models: Strength---based approaches and Photovoice. The program operates on a pre---intervention model in which they "focus on building youths' capacities and strengths as means of ultimately decreasing rates of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use and other risky behaviors." (Wilson et al, 397)

Youth ReAct (Research Actualizing Critical Thought) for Social Change is a youth empowerment group started in a Midwestern city that was in the "midst of a broad scale community building initiative" (Foster---Fisherman et al, 68). It was founded by a community---engaged partnership that built upon the Participatory Action Research of YES! (Foster---Fisherman et al, 2010). The program is designed to promote youth engagement in the community with a goal of educating residents of the structural inequalities that existed with their community.

Smart---Girl is a non---profit organization as well as a program implemented on different campuses within Colorado. It is an innovative program developed in collaboration among feminist scholars, educators and businesswomen concerned with intervening in and improving the lives of adolescent girls in their community (Williams and Ferber, 2008). The goal of Smart---Girl is to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills for adolescent

girls. Smart---Girl operates under the methodology of feminist pedagogy. Their program incorporates four components of feminist research and pedagogy: reflexivity, action orientation, attention to affective components and use of the situation at hand (Williams and Ferber, 47).

What should empowerment programs include?

Based upon the research from the three empowerment programs, I've developed a tentative list of things an empowerment program should include:

1. Opportunity to build positive youth development skills: competence, confidence, connection, character, caring/empathy

2. Participatory activities where youth identify their issues, and plan and engage in making change to the issues

3. Combat the notions of powerlessness and unworthiness

4. Promote individual and social change and action

Methods of Engagement

During the adolescent years of females, there is an increased demand for the appreciation of youth as critical thinkers and problems solvers (Wilson et al, 397). Scholars advise programs to engage its students in using problem posing as a way of actively engaging youth to work on issues that they themselves have identified. Wilson, Minkler, Dasho, Wallerstein and Martin, argue that students must be involved in participatory approaches to social action and be included in the critical reflection on the actions taken. They believe that through this involvement students will "develop a stronger future orientation, while helping to create a sense of cohesion, efficacy, and perceived influence over their world…having a sense of future will promote healthy behaviors and

increase children's awareness of some behaviors as healthy or as risky" (Wilson et al, 395). The empowerment programs that influenced this research utilized three distinct methods of empowerment: Participatory Action Research (PAR), Photovoice and Feminist Pedagogical Techniques; each method promoting youth development skills, engagement in identification of problems, ignition of change and encouraging self---worthiness. YES! and Youth ReAct utilized the methods of PAR and Photovoice, while Girl---Power functioned under feminist pedagogical techniques.

PAR short for Participatory Action Research, also known as Social Action Research, is an empowerment methodology based on Freier's critical pedagogy and feminist theory (Warner, Snyder, and Gadlin, 2002). PAR develops projects around issues presented that the students identify. Students identify an issue and the root cause(s) of the chosen issue in order to design an appropriate strategy for practical action. It also fosters dialogue in order to promote action. Foster---Fisherman (2010) argues that PAR is the most efficient and popular method of initiating youth engagement. Youth PAR gives agency and voice to adolescents and provides strategies to meet the needs of the students and the community. Referring to the works of Gaventa and Cornwall (2001), Foster---Fisherman illustrate that YPAR projects can "provide participants with opportunities to (a): expand their knowledge and contribute to local knowledge production processes; (b) develop their critical thinking and experience consciousness rising; and (c) inspire and/or pursue action." (Foster---Fisherman et al, 67)

Photovoice, according to Wilson (2008), is a method that uses photography for people to identify, represent and enhance their community. Photovoice is a specific PAR technique that is very popular within empowerment programs. It uses photos as a starting point for personal writing (free write) and discussion that leads to action. Based upon the pictures taken

by the students, questions are posed that formulate critical and powerful conversations. The most typical questions that are used to initiate dialogue are:

1. What do we see in this picture?

2. What's really happening?

3. How does this relate to our lives?

4. Why does it exist?

5. What can we do about it?

Photovoice projects are impactful and powerful because it uses photos and the education of photography as an incentive for students to identify issues within their lives and communities and actively discuss and change the problems present.

The last method of engagement, utilized by Girl---Power, is the use of Feminist Pedagogical techniques. These techniques aren't as specific as Photovoice. They are very broad techniques that are meant to develop and enhance character building and problem solving skills. Williams and Ferber (2008) suggest that empowerment programs should provide students with "consciousness---raising groups" where a safe space is provided where girls can learn from each other and confide in each other. In these groups, both the facilitators and participants work together in collaboration rather than competition. The environment is non---hierarchical which allows for participants and facilitators/mentors to learn from each other through the sharing of experiences. Similar to the methodology of PAR, feminist pedagogical techniques aim to identify and examine specific issues most pertinent to adolescent girls' lives.

These three methodologies presented by these successful female empowerment groups serve as a guide to further critical discussion with adolescent girls. The techniques of PAR,

Photovoice, and feminist pedagogy encourage the development of problem---identification and solving skills, character building, and mentor---mentee relationships. In conclusion, these programs and their specific methodologies have helped in the development of empowering curriculum for the Girls' Book Club.

METHODS

The methodology that I have utilized in this research is participatory observation, which "includes the explicit use in behavioral analysis and recording of the information gained from participating and observing" (Dewalt et al, 259). My participation with the group, according to Dewalt et al (1998), would be classified as "Moderate Participation" where rather than participating in the everyday lives of my participants, I only participated in one activity of their daily lives: the Girl's Book Club. By utilizing observational participation, I was able to simultaneously collect and analyze data.

The book club catered to a fluctuating group of 4---8 girls every Tuesday. The majority of the participants were of Black race---Somali culture, and one white participant who attended every meeting except for the last three. The students ranged in grade levels from freshmen to juniors. In the first weeks of the book club, my co---facilitator Kaitlin McDonald and I were becoming acquainted with the group and the task of leading without much guidance. The first three sessions were unpleasing and problematic in the sense that Kaitlin and I believed the book club wasn't meeting the goals of mentorship that we desired. The girls were unenthusiastic about participating in any discussion outside or in reference to the book we were reading; also, they were incapable of articulating what they believed the mission of the book club to be. After discussing my concerns with my advisor, I changed my original research of analyzing the importance of literacy empowerment groups and its impact on teenage girls, to finding methods

that encourage, initiates and fosters discussion around empowerment with adolescent girls. As a result of this research, I adopted successful approaches of engagement from other girl empowerment groups. I began creating weekly curriculum and activities for our book meetings. Currently implementing the curriculum, I have resumed my participatory observation of observing and analyzing how effective the book club is on the participants. I do this based upon their participation and comparing and contrasting their original attitudes to the book club vs. their attitudes at the conclusion of the book club. At the completion of the book club, I will invite the girls to participate in an anonymous survey analyzing their reactions of the book club and how it benefited them.

At the beginning of the book club, Kaitlin and I established confidentiality with the girls by requesting that they agree to the space being a "safe space" of where everyone was welcome to participate without judgment. We also instructed the girls to keep the personal discussions and activities that we complete while in the book meeting between only book club members, Kaitlin and myself. Our motto is "What happens at book club stays between book club members." No formal written contracts were employed because we believed it defeated the idea of willfully trusting each other. However, we did receive consent from the director of the 21st Century After School program in order to have these discussions with the girls. We acknowledge this is a possible ethical concern because with no formal contract signed by the girls technically frees them to discuss any and everything of the book club. However, again, we trust that the girls will hold firm to their vocalized agreement of confidentiality. Another concern of Kaitlin and I was the possibility of the girls sharing personal stories outside of school, such as physical abuse or something of that nature, that will put us in an awkward position of mandating, which we didn't desire to be apart. To combat this issue, we asked the

girls to keep discussions focused only around their school experiences.

Due to initial difficulties with placements and the alteration of focus in the middle of the project, the limited timeframe I've spent with the project has had a great impact on my ability to develop substantial findings. I am unable to support any argument with the limited conclusive evidence I have developed at the current moment.

Activities Implemented

After completing the research on methods to engage the girls in productive empowerment discussion, Kaitlin and I created activities that we implemented into the program. Borrowing from the Photovoice and PAR methodology, we created worksheets that sought to promote in the girls problem identification and solving skills and build self---esteem and self---worthiness. The following are the worksheets used during the last three sessions of book club.

Worksheet 1: Identifying Problems

Instructions: We're going to take a step outside of ourselves in order to take a 3rd person view of our world. Its almost as if we're imaging being asleep and our soul takes a step outside of our body to explore the things that we are too close to notice or try hard to compress and ignore. Think about a place in your life (i.e. school, home, park near home, friend's home) where you spend the majority of your time. Be as specific as possible in the following descriptions.

Goal of Activity: To identify the problems we face within the spaces where we reside most (personal or social) person.

• Describe what you see: Where are you? Who is there? Time/Date?

• What is happening?

• How do you feel in that moment?

• What is the problem that exists?

• Why does this problem exist?

Worksheet 2: Action Planning

Instructions: This week we will review the problems we identified last session. Choosing the most significant issue, fill out the action plan chart below. Complete the first three sections of the worksheet. The last two sections should be completed this week outside of book club session in ordered to be discussed next section.

Goal of Activity: To create a plausible plan that can be executed in order to combat the issues we have identified within our lives. This plan is meant to encourage you to make a change to the situations around you.

Identify problem/ define problem	

Managing Problem
   1. What can be addressed/changed?
   2. Brainstorm options to combat problem.
   3. Are these options feasible and possible?	

Decision Making/Formulating Plan
 	
  1. Choose 1 option from previous section
  2. Decide when action will take place
  3. Steps to take action	

Resolving Problem
(This action you do on your own before next meeting)
 	
  1. Implement Action
  2. Record your reactions (include reactions of others if applicable)	

Examining Results
 	
   1. Was the problem resolved?
   2. What were the challenges?
   3. What were the strengths or benefits?
   4. Who benefited from the action?	

Worksheet 3: Identity Building

Instructions: This week our focus is ourselves. The task today is to complete the questions presented in this worksheet about yourself.

Goal: To identify positive things about ourselves.

Last week we talked a lot about the importance of creating positive energy and optimism. What are three characteristics that you like about yourself?
    1.
    2.
    3.

What is one thing that you do for yourself?
I choose to

What is one thing that you have always wanted to do or haven't had the opportunity to do? How can you reach this goal?

How do you feel about this exercise? What is

the themes song of your life?

What is one thing that you are passionate about? What is a

quote you live by?

What is something that you achieved that you are proud of?

RESEARCH QUESTION

Initial Research Questions:

How can after school programs provide space for empowerment? What is the

importance of female empowerment?

How can literacy assist in empowering young females?

Final Research Questions:

What are effective methods to encourage discussions about empowerment?

BACKGROUND/CONTEXTUAL   DESCRIPTION

The 21st Century Female Empowerment Book began last school year with Libby

Egan, a Sociology Major and Educational Studies Minor, as the founder and facilitator. She

began the book club as a participatory method for her senior thesis. Her hopes and goals for

the club were to foster female empowerment through literacy and community. Her

researched focused on evaluating how literacy assisted in empowering females. This year the

book club was lead by Malia (Mia) Taggart. The mission and goals of the program remained

the same.

For our Capstone Project, Kaitlin and I wished to be apart of a group that focused on

teenage female empowerment. We anticipated working with youth as mentors and providing girls with inspiring tools to help them succeed. We believed that the book club would offer this opportunity to lead while also learning more about the girls, the empowerment tools, and ourselves. When we agreed to annex the program, the book club catered to on average six---eight girls, all of Somali origins except for one girl who is White. The attendance during the program, however, fluctuated weekly with attendance being at the max of eight girls to the minimal of three. The book selection for this semester was <u>After Tupac and D Foster</u> by Jacqueline Woodson. It addressed topics such as the meaning and value of Black life, friendship, and differentiation of perspectives. This work of fiction was pre---selected by the girls under the leadership of Mia. When selecting the texts for the book club, Mia expressed that the books must have a strong, female protagonist, be culturally and racially diverse, and have a relatability factor to the girls' lives. This book met these requirements by having 2 Black female protagonist and a third racially ambiguous female character. Focusing on the issue of friendship was the relatable factor for the girls; and although it didn't pertain to Somali culture, the participants were able to connect with other cultural and gendered similarities between themselves and the text.

Our initial plan at the beginning of the semester was to follow suit from Libby's and Mia's lead assuming that the mission of empowerment was actively being met. However, after facilitating the book sessions for the first three weeks, we observed the goal of empowerment for the book club was not being met. In the following section, I will expand on our findings after the revamping of our program.

PRESENTATION OF DATA & ANALYSIS

Due to the altering of research, time constraints, and the inconsistency of attendance

before and after the implementation of change, collecting data evaluating the effectiveness

of the change and the program, as a whole, hasn't been possible. Thus, the data collection

and analysis presented here is relative and based upon the activities completed. The data

presents the findings from the three activities referred to earlier in the methods sections. The

findings for the problem identification and solving activities are skewed due to the

inconsistency of the attendees from one activity to the next. Each activity represents a

different set of girls with a few participants who attended all three sessions and completed

the activities.

Activity 1: Identifying Problems

This session there were five girls in attendance; 3 were participants from past sessions

and 2 were new comers. We began the session with an icebreaker stating our highs and lows

of the past week. As in previous sessions, the energy to participate was low by the girls who

had been faithful members of the book club. The two new girls, however, were excited to tell

about themselves and about their weeks, offering more than one-‑sentence answers and

encouraging the other three to remember and share what they did for the weekend. After

completing the icebreaker, we introduced the change in planning for the book club. We

inquired from the girls the purpose of the book club. No one expressed or mentioned the

purpose of girl empowerment, mentorship or safe space to express themselves. Kaitlin and I

then reviewed and reiterated the goal of female empowerment and introduced the inclusion

of activities to the group.

From the worksheets, we found three problem themes that the girls see while in

school: bullying (or being bullied), lack of confidence in classes, and feelings of loneliness. Two of the girls expressed that they witnessed bullying of fellow classmates by others. One girl was uncomfortable with speaking in class because she was afraid of making a mistake. Two other girls expressed feelings of loneliness. One girl expressed how although she had friends and she's liked by a lot of people, she feels lonely while in school. The last girl expressed in her writing that she felt so lonely that she contemplated running away. We invited each girl to share their problems with the group, 3/5 of the girls shared while the other two expressed that they rather not share.

Analysis:

This activity with the girls brought fourth many things that we did not know about the girls. Completing this activity was the girls' first opportunity in book club to critically think about their lives and the lives around them. For a couple of the girls it was easiest to identify problems outside of themselves. This allowed us to see that these girls operated in a more advocate/leadership role that both the girls and ourselves didn't notice. Noticing this characteristic about the girls and expressing   this with them was a moment of encouragement and uplift for the girls. For the other girls who identified personal issues this was a moment of encouragement for them also because they were given the space to acknowledge and share these shortcomings. This session was a successful session of empowerment and the girls expressed their appreciation. One girl stated, "I like this activity because it makes us think outside of school. You know, outside of just reading and math." This was comforting because we finally was meeting the goals of the book club.

Activity 2: Action Plan

This session the attendance was the same as the last session; however, there was one

girl, whose worksheet expressed her desire to run away, from the last session missing and a new attendee had replaced her. The action plan activity was the part 2 of the problem identification and solving activity of the previous week. We began the session by recapping the issues we discussed in the last session. We then introduced the activity to the girls and instructed them to complete the worksheet. The girls then shared their action plans with the group.

Pertaining to the issues of bullying, we as a group encouraged each other to stand up to bullies, and if we are being bullied that we should seek help. The action plan created by the two girls who witnessed the bullying happened, stated that they would include the person who they witnessed being bullied in their social activities, such as sitting together for lunch. The student addressed the issue of self-‐‑confidence by planning to seek out assistance from her teacher and also practicing at home speaking in order to be more confident in class. The issue of loneliness was addressed by planning to find pleasure in being alone and not in drama. After the sharing of the plans, the girls were encouraged to execute the plans for review in the coming session.

Analysis:

This session was another productive session. This week all the girls were more susceptible to sharing their action plans. This was surprising to me for the two girls who normally don't like to share. It was another display of their leadership skills because they were willing to accept suggestions from the group on what they could do to help bullying. This session showed me how we were becoming more of a community and a group where we were able to get to know each other. The activities were proving to work in assisting with facilitating discussions.

Activity 3: Identity Building

This session only four girls attended the session; two were girls who had attended last week's session and two were girls who had attended book club earlier in the semester before the implementation of the activities. We began the group by inquiring about the progress of the action plans. The two girls who were present were the girls who were combating the issue of bullying. They expressed that they weren't able to complete their action plans because they forgot. We then discussed bullying again and what our role as advocates and representations of change entails. We shared a YouTube video where bullying and the consequences of bullying were discussed. After watching the video, we moved on to begin the activity for the week.

It was difficult getting the girls to begin the assignment. We constantly had to repeat the instructions and give further details for each question. We offered examples and encouraged them that they all could answer each question if they took the time to be positive. After about 10 minutes of coercing the girls to complete the worksheet, we opened the floor up for sharing. This again showed to be an obstacle for two of the girls (the regulars at book club) and the refused to share until the other two girls continuously encouraged them. From the activity, we found out many amazing things about the girls and their accomplishments. Many of the girls expressed qualities such as being a good friend, listener, daughters and commitments to their culture and religion.

Analysis:

This week I was disappointed in the inconsistency with attendance and then the girls' pause with sharing. I thought we were making progress on participation and using our voices and the space to express ourselves. It was during this session that I notice empowerment

discussion took place when there were extroverted girls present who could encourage the other girls to participate. It dawn on me the aspect of community and friendship that is needed in female empowerment. While we wished to inspire every girl to have personal agency, for some they weren't able to express this agency without their friends present. In retrospect, I did enjoy the discussion we had after pushing the girls to participate because their were many things we learned about them and many things as facilitators that we were able to encourage them in.

CONCLUSIONS REACHED

Although the attendance fluctuated and was inconsistent after the inclusion of activities in the book club, looking at each session separately, the methods of engagement proved to be successful. Creating a goal and plan for each session gave the girls a structured platform in which they could join in on discussion. Whereas, in the beginning of the semester, the sessions were unstructured and depended upon the literature to foster the discussion. I noticed that I was looking to the consistent participants of book club to be my indicators of success. I've noticed that this was both wrong and ineffective because each girl's personality and character is different regardless of their attendance at book club. I also noticed that although the girls were hesitant to participate, they still benefited from and added to book club. In conclusion, although I thought book club was unsuccessful because Kaitlin and I's exact desires and goals of enthusiastic participation wasn't met, book club was successful in its impact on each individual person who participated through the activities.

 OVERALL CONCLUSION

This semester has been a constantly changing semester. From having to change my

original project and placement, to the constant changes within my placement with the Book Club, I have become very accustom to change. Although there has been inconsistency with the partnership, I have found change to be important. With constant change, the book club has taught me flexibility, patience, and open---mindness. It has also taught me the importance of research and reflection. I enjoyed facilitating the book club and am extremely appreciative of having the opportunity to get to know and mentor the girls, as well as getting to know my co-facilitator Kaitlin McDonald.

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The Classroom Experience in a Wheelchair: Challenges to
Learning for Students with Disabilities

Lindsey Loy

I. Problem Statement

Students that are in wheelchairs experience a uniquely challenging environment in the classroom. The challenge is not based on decreased cognitive abilities or intelligence, but in the physical limitation of being in a wheelchair that consequently causes profound barriers to their well-being. Having a compromised well-being negatively impacts other aspects of functioning, including social, academic, and emotional areas. Accordingly, as children in wheelchairs enter the classroom, they are affected by many factors that impede their ability to be students.

Inherent in the mission of education is that all students be empowered. As stated, education should promote student achievement by fostering educational excellence and ensuring equal access (US Department of Education, 2011). Thus, it is unjust that students in wheelchairs experience a nuanced, challenging classroom environment as a result of something beyond their control. A disability should not have bearing on one's right to a great education. Students in wheelchairs should be made to feel as though they are equal members of the classroom and have something important to contribute to the world.

II. Nature of Study

In this study, I interviewed students in wheelchairs about their experience in the classroom and how physical disability impacts their learning. Additionally, I conducted interviews with educators and professionals that work with students in wheelchairs to explore how to best educate them. This augmented my extensive review of the existing literature that highlighted the key scholarly findings of the topic.

III. Rationale for this Study

My study addresses the gap in the literature, as to identify the nuances of the educational experiences of students in wheelchairs. I hope to add to the understanding of how to best empower students in wheelchairs in the classroom and beyond. From my study, I aim to create a set of recommendations to help students in wheelchairs thrive as students and fulfill their potentials as individuals.

IV. Literature Review

The current research discusses the various aspects of experiencing life in a wheelchair. Primarily, the literature indicates that there are numerous complications of being in a wheelchair to individual well-being. Wheelchair users report a high amount of major activity limitation, meaning that they experience limitations in participating daily life activities (Disability Statistics Center). In addition, wheelchair users experience secondary physical conditions. This includes experiencing chronic pain, limited upper body dexterity, and bladder control management (Disability Statistics Center). Individuals in wheelchairs also experience intense negative self-feelings, including frustration and low self-efficacy and self-esteem (Birenbaum, 2010). While are they typically prone to such negative self feelings, people in wheelchairs are bounded by pervasive social expectations. Society generally expects people in wheelchairs to have positive dispositions and be light-hearted (Paul, 1999). Additionally, wheelchair users draw a lot of public attention, with the wheelchair so visible and tangible (Cahill & Eggleston, 1994). Lastly, the literature contends that individuals in wheelchairs experience habitual dependence, even in spontaneous situations needing help from strangers. Presumably, all of these caveats of wheelchair users' everyday experiences would impact their psyche and thus, ability to feel efficacious.

Pertaining to the experience in school, the research discusses the factors that affect the education of children in wheelchairs. In regards to social interactions and perceptions, the research contends that children generally have positive attitudes towards their classmates in wheelchairs (Nikolaraizi & de Reybekiel, 2001). However, these feelings are limited to sympathy and emotional concern, not an actual intent to befriend. In relation to teachers, literature ascertains that teachers feel uncomfortable with students in wheelchairs in their classrooms. Teachers often misinterpret their behavior and handle situations inappropriately (Sauer, 2006). This materializes in two ways: either teachers feel sympathetic and never punish their students in wheelchairs, or they miscategorize their behavior and punish them wrongly (Nisbett, 1996). Presumably, the former situation occurs more frequently, as teachers often make excuses for the bad behavior of students in wheelchairs.

Moreover, scholars highlight techniques used in educating students in wheelchairs. Much of the research claims that integrating students in wheelchairs with nondisabled students in classrooms is beneficial (Tamm & Prellwitz, 2001). Even though students in wheelchairs can experience problems with peer relations, it is still important for them to experience a robust and stimulating classroom environment – which includes the presence of peers. This is advantageous as students are able to feel normal, and not feel alienated by their disability (Giangreco, Edelman, Broer, & Doyle, 2001). Another important technique to educate students in wheelchairs is to make the classroom fully physically accessible. The first thing that teachers can do for their students in wheelchairs is making the classroom easily navigatable for all possible classroom activities. Although this seems like an issue that should already be addressed, it is important for these students to have an equally accessible school environment, as do their non-disabled peers. This is important in promoting equality to

ultimately allow for unhindered learning (Curtin & Clarke, 2005; Paul, 1999).

It is also recommended to incorporate inclusive physical education in the classroom. Inclusive physical education provides an accessible avenue for children with physical disabilities to participate in outdoor activities with their classmates, undoubtedly an invaluable educational tool for students in wheelchairs (Goodwin & Watkinson, 2000). With the objective of fostering a sense of belonging, by providing an equal opportunity to participate and be a part of a team, students in wheelchairs feel empowered by these activities. Inclusive physical education is an effective way to reduce the dichotomy between physically disabled and non-disabled students (Goodwin & Watkinson, 2000). Another technique is educating students to respect physical disabilities and have a positive attitude about differences (Tamm & Prellwitz, 2001). Presumably, creating this environment has positive benefits for the classroom and students.

The classroom should be a place of equal and unbounded opportunity. Children with wheelchairs experience physical limitations that should not expand to limit their educational, social, and psychological outcomes. It is imperative to know the experiences of children in wheelchairs and see the classroom challenges from their perspective. Even though society is continually becoming more accepting and progressive, children in wheelchairs are still educated in a world in which they are different. More information on children in wheelchairs' experience in the classroom must be explored to enhance their education and potentials as students. Understanding the perspectives of these students and their educators will be pivotal to conceptualizing the impacts on learning that being in a wheelchair elicits. Thus, it is vital to study both the barriers to their learning and the elements that facilitate their learning to conclude how to best empower students in wheelchairs.

V. Methods

My data collection process has utilized qualitative research methods. I used the *Qualitative Data Analysis* methodology handbook as a guideline for my research practices (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014). It was clear to utilize qualitative methods, as I am "seeking to understand a research problem or topic from the perspectives of the population it involves" (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014). I wanted to gain perspective from the "human" side of the issue, including the often contradictory opinions, beliefs, experiences, and relationships of individuals. Systematically analyzing these perspectives results in factors that help us better interpret and understand the reality of an issue.

The specific method of qualitative data analysis I used was in-depth interviews. I thought that conducting interviews was best for posing specific questions pertinent to my research, having the capacity for flexibility in my research framework, and for eliciting narratives about the phenomenon. This allowed me to elicit unanticipated findings, evoke responses that are meaningful and culturally salient to the participants, and to have research that is rich in nature (Miles, Huberman & Saldana, 2014). For a research topic that is rather neglected and inherently narrow in scope, this was the best route.

I conducted interviews with three subgroups. The first subgroup was students that are in wheelchairs. I found these participants through acquaintances and referrals in the Lewiston public schools. Secondly, I interviewed educators that teach students in wheelchairs. Again, I found these teachers through acquaintenences and referrals in Lewiston. One teacher was in a wheelchair herself. My last subgroup was professionals that work with students in wheelchairs. I interviewed a Child Life Specialist who helps children transition back to their normal lives after experiencing a life-altering medical situation. In addition, I interviewed the director of the

Challenged Athletes Foundation, a national organization that helps kids in wheelchairs participate in sports. All but three of my interviews were conducted in person, the others over the phone. Only two of my interviews were conducted in the Lewiston/Auburn area, the rest in my hometown or nation-wide.

Upon conducting the interviews, I started the process of analysis. I coded the data from all eight of my interviews, using *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. I found the need to code the breadth of information from the interviews to break down the content. As Saldana defines codes as "summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based data," I created codes that emerged from my interviews (2013). To accomplish this, I reviewed my transcripts with a "filter" to find similarity, difference, frequency, and correspondence (Saldana, 2013). This was, simply, a search for patterns. Then, I merged the codes into general themes that were shared across the interviews. By this systematic categorization, I could begin to explain my qualitative data.

Before I began my data collection and analysis, it was essential to get IRB approval. This was necessary as I used human subjects who were considered to be a vulnerable population. My IRB proposal was a lengthy process, as I had to provide examples of interview items. Since I was interviewing three subgroups of participants, I had to draft three interviews for the proposal. Also, I had to create signed consent forms for all of the participants (or their parents) to sign. This was to ensure that all participants knew the purpose of the study and the potential risks. I distributed a debriefing page following the interviewing. In regards to ethical concerns, my respect for confidentiality is strong. I used codenames for all of my participants in my notes, transcriptions, and coding, and do not identify them in my final presentation or report.

VI. Research Question

The many questions that I had are, as following: 1.) What are the non-physical barriers for students in wheelchairs in school? 2.) How does the every day experience of being in a wheelchair (or having a physical disability) affect ability to be a student? 3.) What are the social perceptions and interactions of teachers/ classmates towards students in wheelchairs? These questions, and my own personal interest in the matter, informed my research. The central line of injury I am aiming to explore is, *how can students in wheelchairs be best educated and empowered in the classroom?*

VII. Background Contextual Description

I aimed to study the phenomenon of students in wheelchairs without cognitive impairments. Thus, I looked at a population of children that are paralyzed, have been in major accidents, and have degenerative diseases that debilitate body functioning. This was a population I was interested in, as their experience in school is impacted by the effects of their physical disability. Moreover, they do not have decreased cognitive or intellectual capacity; their only "disability" is their inability to use their legs. I only researched the experience of these children and did not investigate issues of special education. Often, children with major cognitive impairment are in wheelchairs from a consequential inability to control the body. While this is undoubtedly an important issue to address and advocate for these children, I limited my research scope to just exploring the experience of being in wheelchair without cognitive impairment.

This research was inspired by wanting to understand what my little brother would be facing as he progressed through his education in a wheelchair. During 2013, my brother lost both of his legs due to meningitis. He navigates his life in wheelchair, as it is still unclear

whether he will be able to ever get prosthetic legs or not. Thus, I became deeply interested in the experiences of these children who are physically disabled, but without cognitive impairments. I want to make the world a more accepting place for them, and I am starting with school and their education.

VIII. Presentation of Data

- Subgroup #1: Students in wheelchairs
    - Three male students, all different school levels
    - Common themes that emerged dominantly:
        - They have a strong desire to be included, in whatever way they can
        - They don't mind that they are different, they want everyone "to get over it [their disability]" and know them for who they are
        - They feel constantly judged to be incompetent and unable, from people seeing them in a wheelchair
- Subgroup #2: Educators of students in wheelchairs
    - Three elementary educators, one speech therapist (who is in a wheelchair) Differing themes that emerged, all different theories on how to best teach students in wheelchairs:
        - Students should all be supported to feel special and unique; thus when there is a student with a disability in the class, they are just part of the group of differences
        - It is essential to create specific roles for them, to find ways in which they can participate as a member of the class
        - Educating students with physical disabilities is all about the

balance between knowing when to push and when to protect;

immersion with non-disabled peers is important

- Subgroup #3: Professionals that work with students in wheelchairs

  - A child life specialist, from a medical center

  - A director of a non profit that helps children in wheelchairs play sports

    again/ learn to play sports (Challenged Athletes Foundation)

  - Common themes that emerged dominantly:

    - Don't set or articulate limits to children in wheelchairs – let them rise

      to the challenge

    - Provide accommodations for them, but do not make excuses for bad

      behavior or attitudes

    - Surround them with appropriate supporters and role models to

      inspire the best confidence and determination

IX. Analysis of Data Findings

Students

The students in wheelchairs themselves seemed to be the most frank in discussing the implications of being in a wheelchair. They dominantly maintained that it didn't bother them that they were different. They were almost proud of it, and had a lot to say. What seemed to me to be the complication was the way in which they had to navigate a non-wheelchair world. Undoubtedly, part of this challenge lies in their physical limitations and the consequential psychology that that entails. Yet mostly the challenge pertains to their relationships and social identity. Where it seemed as though the students were funny, kind-hearted, honest, and smart, the world solely regards them by their wheelchair – that they are "disabled." It was apparent

that this was more hurtful and difficult than not being able to move freely.

As the students articulated their lack of concern over their difference, they did want to be accepted. They saw being in a wheelchair as "no big deal," and wanted others to feel the same way. They noted that they could handle a lot of instances and experiences that highlighted their "disability," but they hate when that also goes on to cause people to treat them differently. Being able to discuss such a touchy subject and being so cognizant of differences portrayed these students as having high emotional intelligence. Their desire to fit in is a hallmark of being in the adolescent developmental period in which peer relations are important.

Aligning with research findings, the students claimed that in general, their peers are nice and friendly to them, yet do not present a genuine intent to be friends. They stated that while kids were "plenty nice" to them in school, they felt they missed out the bonding that occurs outside of the classroom. They can't play sports, they can't go to the pool, they can't play games on the playground. Even when they are invited to birthday parties, the active nature of the games automatically excludes kids in wheelchairs and they are stuck sitting with the parents.

Accordingly, the students noted that what was most paramount to them was being included in various activities, in whatever way they can. The students described some experiences in different situations. One student mentioned that in class activities that his teacher does, of which are often very physically active, he is often given the role of "the judge" or "the coach" (that is, of course, if he cannot participate whatsoever). He noted that he enjoys being given such roles because that way, he is able to participate and get excited about the activity. Another student said that his former lacrosse coach (before he became

wheelchair bound) now has given him a role on the team as the "Special Play Strategist." This role allows him to sit in on the coaches' meetings, give feedback to the strategizing, and has to research and proposal new plays that the team can use. He commented on how good being involved on the team makes him feel, giving him an opportunity to participate in an activity that he otherwise would not be able to. As he said, "It makes me feel important."

In regards to their teachers, the students had a lot to say. They noted that with some teachers, they were able to get away with bad behavior as the teachers would either be sympathetic or not want to punish them. One student said, "Teachers don't want to seem like they're being mean to a kid in a wheelchair." While the students noted that they liked such lackadaisical teachers, they also described having teachers that would punish them frequently. This was definitely not as strong of a pattern as the non-disciplinary approach, but they spoke about teachers that would frequently yell or blame them for occurrences that were not their fault. It is evident that this resonates with the literature, which describes teachers frequently misinterpreting students' (in wheelchairs) behaviors. The research noted that this was due to teachers feeling uncomfortable having students in wheelchairs in their classrooms. Students hit on this phenomenon when one said that he's had teachers that didn't seem to know what to do with him. As a result, he was often not given enough work or task and consequently would misbehave out of boredom.

While students noted negative teacher experiences, they also had a lot to say about the importance of good teachers. Across all of the students, it seemed apparent that a good role model or person of support/ inspiration was of tremendous value. All three students recollected incredible teachers they've had who have been important people in their lives. Presumably, having teachers that took the time and effort to get to know their students in

wheelchairs was important experience to the students. They remembered noteworthy instances in which their teachers made them feel important, including staying in the classroom during lunch with a student who couldn't maneuver his wheelchair in the rain and recommending books in which the protagonists are in wheelchairs. One student even said that his teacher created a class activity in which they had to follow the Paralympics and work with the event times to practice math. It was clear that when these students were made to feel important in the classroom, it helped them thrive both academically and socially.

Teachers

The teachers all had different "theories" about how to best teach students in wheelchairs. One of the teachers I interviewed had taught many students with disabilities before and is in a wheelchair herself. She spoke of the power of "balancing both protecting and pushing," in regards to all students of disability. She said, specifically of students in wheelchairs, that it is important that they have time to be around other students in wheelchairs and feel in a safe zone in which they can feel comfortable, understood, and can be themselves. Although, "pushing" them is of paramount importance. She noted that students in wheelchairs should be mainstreamed and habitually situated with non-disabled peers. This is valuable to combat feelings that they are unequivocally "disabled" and extremely dissimilar from their classmates.

While she was the perspective of someone who grew up in a wheelchair, her thoughts are profoundly insightful. She described the worst part of being in a wheelchair is the social isolation and alienation that it engenders. As she noted, "People are just afraid of me, they don't want to come up to me." She claims that students in wheelchairs can handle challenges and hard situations, but what disheartens and defeats them completely is to be outcasted from

others. Thus, she strongly asserted that the most important aspect of educating students in wheelchairs was to get them comfortable working, collaborating, and bonding with their peers.

Another teacher mirrored this concept in her thoughts. She claimed that teaching students in wheelchairs was all about finding them specific roles in which they can participate in the class. This aligns with the notion that thoroughly mainstreaming students in wheelchairs to get them comfortable and to empower them in a non-disabled environment is detrimental. She attests that the best way to achieve this is to create roles for students in wheelchairs, so that they can truly participate comprehensively in the class. It is interesting that the students also mentioned this as an important factor of a positive classroom experience; students noted that they "wanted to be able to participate in any way they can." It is clear that enabling and empowering students is more powerful than creating accommodations for them. Students in wheelchairs don't want special treatment, they don't want to be alleviated of normal expectations. Evidently, they want an equal chance to participate. They know that they are capable, their physical disability is the only dimension of their "inability," and want to have the experiences that their classmates have.

A differing concept arose in the discussion with the final teacher. She noted that there should technically not have to way to adapt to teaching students in wheelchairs. "They are competent and not pervasively disabled, so they shouldn't have to be treated in any different way. Even if they are disabled, if they have low cognitive functioning, that doesn't mean that I 'water down' the way in which I teach," she claimed. She stated that simply, every student should already be made to feel special and important for their uniqueness. Thus, when there is a student in a wheelchair (or with a disability), they just blend into the culture of uniqueness

and celebration of difference. It is apparent that she believes that a universal environment of respect is pivotal in creating any classroom culture. When there is a student with profound differences, the class can draw upon the structure of respect that was cultivated.

While the teachers all spoke of different experiences and theories, they provided insightful reflection on how to best teach children in wheelchairs. It is evident that the teachers all spoke of aspects, that they believed best achieved teaching students in wheelchairs, that pertaining to elements of well-being. The concepts of making students feel equal, special, and capable are undoubtedly elements that enhance psychological feeling. When one feels equal, special, and capable, they are more likely to feel efficacious, self-confident, and have higher self-esteem. Presumably, this satisfies the basic human needs (feeling comfortable) and can consequently facilitate achieving goals of self-actualization. This means that having confident, self-assured self feelings sets the foundation for being able to push oneself and really achieve thing to the best of one's ability. It is clear that the teachers see that empowering students psychologically is beneficial to their growth and well-being as individuals.

Professionals

The professionals that I interviewed gave me a different, unique perspective on the experience of being in a wheelchair and the implications. This data both differed and was similar to the discussions with students in teachers. It is important to note first off that these professionals do not explicitly work with students in the classrooms. One works with children adapt back to their normal lives when they leave the hospital, often leaving in wheelchair. The other directed a foundation to help children learn how to play sports in wheelchairs. While they both do not teach children in classrooms, they offer implicit

education through modeling and mentoring.

Throughout the interviews, three dominant themes emerged. Predominantly, both professionals stressed that people should refrain from setting limits on children in wheelchairs. They both noted that this is a common occurrence for children in wheelchairs, as they are in rehabilitation centers (and other programs) that set low expectations on their activity, achievements, and exercises. This happens in the school setting when teachers have low expectations of their students in wheelchairs, usually stemming from feelings of sympathy. One professional noted that, "No teacher wants to outright fail a student in wheelchair, or tell them that that wasn't good enough." Seemingly, students in wheelchairs have low standards set for them by society. This is a toxic phenomenon, they claimed. Knowing that people don't expect much of them, students in wheelchairs are often not intrinsically motivated to try their best or think highly of themselves. Therefore, an important element of educating them lies in the principle of pushing them to do their best.

Similarly, the professionals also noted that students in wheelchairs should only be given the most minimal accommodations. This is not to say that they should not be accommodated to access physical spaces only minimally, but that they should not be given extensive accommodations in terms of lessened responsibilities. They noted that students should be accommodated for only what they actually need. Otherwise, there is no reason to make excuses for bad attitudes and behavior. It is apparent that this is important for "pushing" a student and ensuring that one does not coddle them in attempts to support them. This idea of "pushing" is a catalyst for students to be able to feel empowered; without being given high expectations, students cannot achieve great things. Clearly, there is a palpable link between high expectations and high sense of empowerment that should not be dismissed in educating

students in wheelchairs.

X. Conclusions

Upon my data analysis, it seemed that some findings were most significant to understanding the topic at hand, and creating change. Out of the collected data and coded themes, there were several key concepts that materialized in regards to being the best ways to educate students in wheelchairs. The key concepts include: (a) encourage students, versus having hesitations about their abilities; (b) cultivate respect in the classroom to appreciate difference; (c) find roles to facilitate student participation; (d) support individually but only sufficiently.

I believe that these are the factors that best mitigate positive experiences in the classroom for students in wheelchairs. All of the factors accomplish a goal of empowerment, by creating a platform of support from which students can achieve and thrive. These are instrumental as they incorporate a sense of psychological well-being, and aim to promote best individual functioning.

XI. Implications

While a lot of the challenges associated with being in a wheel chair are related to social and psychological well-being, it is imperative to incorporate the recommendations in a comprehensive way. Needless to say, the recommendations should be intertwined in the student-teacher relationship, the classroom, and outside the classroom. Teachers can implement the key concepts of successfully educating students in wheelchairs in how they interact with their students and within their classroom activities. They should also foster the key concepts in the environment and culture of their classroom and school in order for their efforts to be effective.

Yet, it is undeniable that the recommendations pertain to experiences outside of the classroom as well. I think that as teachers, two things could be done. First of all, teachers could help implement playground activities that include roles for students in wheelchairs. Teachers could also adapt school-wide activities that physically exclude students in wheelchairs. Secondly, teachers could work hard to internalize a universal attitude of respect within peers, so that they are mindful. Thus, they could be expected to act thoughtfully out of the classroom. Teachers could strive to celebrate the uniqueness, yet normalcy, of students in wheelchairs so that students could genuinely appreciate all of their peers. Both of these examples inevitably have limitations, but are noteworthy ways in which to address situations outside of classroom.

Furthermore, it is clear that not all of the powerful, impactful education for students in wheelchairs happens in the classroom. The limitations of the public school system cannot necessarily address the specific needs and lessons that are pertinent to students in wheelchairs. With numerous organizations that strive to help children in wheelchairs (teach wheelchair athletics, offer summer camps, etc.), I think that there is tremendous value in these experiences. All children in wheelchairs should take advantage of these experiences. Perhaps, teachers could be aware of their students' involvement in such activities and find a way to incorporate the experiences into the classroom (i.e. students could share their experiences in their classes, etc.).

XII. Overall Conclusion

From my research, I discovered that students in wheelchairs experience many nuances in their experience in the classroom, which inevitably affects their ability to learn wholeheartedly. Upon conducting research and interviews with students and educators alike, I

concluded that there are several steps that could be taken to best empower students in wheelchairs to facilitate social and psychological well-being, ultimately to enhance their educational experience. The recommendations that I devised are, as follows: (a) encourage students, versus having hesitations about their abilities; (b) cultivate respect in the classroom to appreciate difference; (c) find roles to facilitate student participation; (d) support individually but only sufficiently.

This research offered an insightful window into the perspectives of students in wheelchairs and their educators. The findings are significant, as it was a key step in understanding a phenomenon that is only lightly researched and addressed. Students with physical disabilities, that do not have cognitive dysfunction, face a uniquely challenging situation in which they are automatically labeled to be "disabled" and thus, incompetent. The challenges they face stem from their physical limitation, but are mostly characterized by the social and psychological impacts that occur consequently.

For future research, I think it would be valuable to create lesson plans that incorporate some aspect of disability awareness. For example, highlighting disability in a lesson about a novel could be a powerful learning opportunity. The whole inspiration for this research project was initiated when my little brother, who lost his legs, read *The Hunger Games* and was dumbfounded when he read that Peeta too had lost his legs. It became clear to me that there was unfounded opportunity in exploring this moment. What did this mean in light of the plot? How does this impact his character development?
Evidently, students can explore such poignant moments of learning under the structure and guidance of the classroom to learn about difference.

Returning to the mission education in the US, education is about equal opportunity

(US Department of Education, 2011). It is imperative that all students be afforded the chance to a thorough, thought-provoking education, no matter their difference or needs. As we all aim to impact the education system in some way, it is important to remember that all students should be empowered. Education is the best platform for empowerment and as a society, we should strive to resurrect this pillar more diligently.

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The Relationship Between Funding and
Measures of Student Achievement

Bates College
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Introduction

Funding for education is complicated; there is no black and white method for policy or pedagogy. Of course, across the United States, schools and policymakers have similar goals for funding. Howell and Miller (1997) argue that finance mechanisms for schools are developed to meet the equality, adequacy, and efficiency goals set by each state. To meet these goals, however, has proven difficult, as the funding system is extremely complex. Funding for public education comes from three main sources: federal, state, and local. These sources all come in at varying levels, and local sources are the largest form of support. (Wong and Casing 2010) One of the major issues with funding is that it is often unequal within states, and thus inadequate. Funding inefficiency is a debated cause of educational inequality. However, some argue that funding does not have that large of an impact on educational outcomes. Hanushek (1986) and Coleman (1966) argue that funding is not the most important variable in educational achievement, and many others continue their research in hopes of proving or disproving these conclusions.

In order to contribute to the debate of whether or not funding matters, this project asks how significant is the relationship between funding and student achievement by compiling past research and conclusions. Once a historical context has been provided, I ask which components of funding have the most significant effect on educational achievement. By examining categorical funding, I am able to answer if funding has any impact at all on educational funding, and if so, which variables of education should receive more attention. My project addresses the debate of whether or not money matters for educational achievement by looking at national funding data, test scores, and cohort rates. Specifically, I develop an equation that accounts for the different states and class sizes and closely examines state

categorical funding for public education. By exploring education funding on a larger scale than most of the previous research, I hope to gain a better understanding of the efficiencies and inefficiencies of the institution and share my findings with the larger community.

Literature Review

Whether or not funding is a significant factor of student achievement is an ongoing debate among education researchers and policymakers. Many researchers argue that school productivity, including student achievement is a reflection of local property taxes allocated to a school. These researchers often cite examples of educational inequality and blame it on poor funding strategy. (The JBHE Foundation, 1997) Others agree with Hanushek, an educational economist, and argue that it is how the funding is spent that matters, rather than how much money is spent. (Verstegen and King, 1998) Researchers on this side suggest that more money does not necessarily result in higher achievement, but investment in specific variables of education have a significant impact on education. Considering both viewpoints, this project seeks to contribute to one side or the other by further testing the relationship between funding and student achievement.

Since the publication of the "Coleman Report" in 1966 by educational sociologist James Coleman, which argued that school funding has little effect on student achievement, numerous case studies and investigations have been carried out in the hopes of further proving or disproving the theory. Eric Hanushek, an educational economist introduced a form of measurement of education efficiency, an education production function that considers the inputs of education (family, teachers, neighborhoods) and relates them to the outputs generally measured by student achievement. There was a great deal of backlash after Hanushek concluded: "differences in (school) quality do not seem to reflect variations in

expenditures, class sizes, or other commonly measured attributes of schools and teachers." (Hanushek 1986, pg. 2) Rather, Hanushek argues that teacher effectiveness is the most important variable in a student's educational achievement and education quality. (Hanushek, 1986) Policymakers and researchers continue to research this debate, however, and many have found validity in Hanushek's conclusion. Much of the findings consistent with his argument conclude that it is not funding that is irrelevant, but rather it is how funds are allocated that is important. In a case study that looked at the California education system, researchers found "class size, poverty, student ethnicity, and teacher characteristics to be important indicators of student achievement." (Tow 2006, pg. 27) and that "additional funding should go specifically towards the programs that are more effective." (Tow 2006, pg. 27)

This project therefore, examines funding in the state categorical form and tests the relationship between funding and student achievement by looking at which components of funding have the greatest impact on measures of student achievement. To test this relationship, I again look to past research in order to develop an economic model. As previously mentioned, Hanushek was the first to develop a production function that is used to look at educational inputs and how they relate to various outputs. Many researchers duplicate Hanushek's production function and develop unique models for a specific case study. Production functions have been used to find positive linkages between school resources and student outcomes in Texas, between instructional expenditures and educational achievement in Ohio and Missouri, and the benefits of small class sizes in Tennessee. (Verstegen and King, 1998) In doing so, this project expands on past research, and contributes policy reform for the educational community. Perhaps the most relevant production functions used are from Godfrey's (2012) study on the economics of student achievement and Archibald's (2006)

study on the resources that do affect student achievement. Archibald (2006) divides funding into multiple categories and multiple production functions to test the relationship between test scores and different funds in a West Virginia school district. This project, however, uses a different method similar to Tow's (Tow 2006). Because this project looks at all 50 states' categorical aid, a production function is insufficient. Rather than examine productivity levels as an output of various educational inputs, this project tests for significance levels in different relationships between funding and measurements of student achievement. These methods are discussed in the following section.

Methods

As an economics major and educational studies minor, my understanding of educational systems has developed over time. Part of what has drawn me towards the two subjects is the complexity of the two. Before this project, education funding was a daunting topic to me and I wanted to conduct research in order to better grasp the intricacies of the subject. Having completed field-based research while abroad, I was familiar with community-based research concepts such as collecting and analyzing interviews, data, and research at the start of this project. However, this was my first strictly research-based project where all of the numeric evidence comes from online data sites, and the concepts behind the research question come from previously conducted research from various economists and policymakers.

Initially, I proposed to research funding inequality on a global scale. Unfortunately, there were many issues with the exhaustive size of that project, and many countries that face education inequality lacked organized data. When I moved the project's focus to the United States, I continued to face difficulty with data. It would have been interesting to examine the shift in the

US from public to private education, however, there is a lack of national data on the subject, and even states that are originators of the voucher system have not published data on the information of their voucher systems. I also considered changing my research to look at after-school programs such as 21st Century. Much like many other education- related topics of interest, though, there was a lack of data regarding student achievement, and sufficient number of years of data recorded. Thus, I proceeded to look at funding as a national topic, where there seemed to be the most federal information available. With this method of collecting federally reported data and testing the relationship statistically, I hoped to determine if a significant relationship exists between national test scores, cohort rates and funding. It seems absurd that I did not attempt to understand education funding on a small scale by conducting a case study similar to those in the literature review. I chose to approach funding at its full-scale because the education system in the United States is increasingly being analyzed and controlled on a national scale. Of course, by choosing to conduct research on such a large scale as opposed to focusing on one school, district, or program, it was inevitable that I faced issues when it came to researching, testing, and reporting this topic in a limited amount of time.

Despite the issues of lack of access to and overall lack of educational data, in the limited time available, I did find sufficient information to be able to test the relationship between categories of funding and student achievement. The data used is thoroughly described in the data description subsection.

i. Data Description

The majority of education-related data comes from the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES). The NCES is a division of the United States Department of Education. It collects and analyzes data on education in order to provide information to the public. At the

elementary and secondary level of education, employees of the NCES work with state and local representatives to conduct surveys regarding education statistics. At the post-secondary and adult level, education- related data is collected by sample surveys on student financial aid and student access, persistence, completion, and outcomes of postsecondary education; and on the education and training that youth and adults need to prepare for work. (NCES, nces.org) The component of the NCES that collects fiscal and non-fiscal data about all public schools, public school districts and state education agencies in the United States is the Common Core of Data (CCD).

The data collected by the CCD is supplied by state education agency officials and describes schools and school districts, students and staff, including demographics; the CCD also collects fiscal data, including revenues and current expenditures. The funding data for this research comes from State Fiscal Reports, which are published by the CCD. State Fiscal Reports contain state totals of revenues and expenditures. This includes revenues by source and expenditures by function and object, including current expenditures per pupil and instructional expenditures. (www.nces.ed.gov) These reports contained funding information for each state in the US, which allowed this research to compile the data and look at funding trends of the nation. These reports were published from 1992 until 2011, but because testing data was only available from 1998-2013, only the data from 1998-2011 is used. From 2005 until 2011, the State Fiscal Reports are detailed and measure variables such student support and administration costs, whereas from 1998-2004, the reports are less thorough and only have the basic funding categories. The variables used in this research are a combination of both the earlier and later years of data.

The independent variables, which are defined as variables whose variation does not depend on that of another variable, are instructional expenditure (InsExp), total support

service expenditure (TotSupExp), student support service expenditure (StuSupExp), instructional staff support expenditure (StaffSupExp), operations and maintenance expenditures (OpMain), student transportation (TransExp), and total expenditure (TotExp). The final independent variable is a control variable, TSRatio. This is the teacher/student ratio. This variable also comes from NCES State Fiscal Reports, and is available from 1998-2011. This is the only control variable used because of availability. It is used so that the regressions account for class size when testing the impact of funding on student achievement. The NCES defines instructional expenditure as expenditures for activities between teachers and student, including salaries and benefits of teachers, textbooks, supplies, purchased services, and extracurricular activities. (NCES 2006) Support service expenditure is divided into sub-functions including instructional staff support, general administration, school administration, operations and maintenance, student transportation, and student support. Student support service includes social work, guidance, health, and psychological services. Instructional staff support services include staff training, and educational media. (NCES 2006) Operations expenditures is expenditure for operations and maintenance, student transportation, food services, and enterprise operations (NCES 2006) Student transportation expenditure is expenditure for vehicle operations, monitoring, servicing, and maintenance. (NCES 2006) Total expenditure encompasses all current expenditures, non-academic expenditures, and capital outlays. (NCES 2006)

The dependent variables, which are variables whose variation depends on that of another variable, used in this research are test scores and cohort rates. Test scores are also obtained from NCES. Under each state it is possible to select a state, year, grade level, and subject for a level of achievement. All test scores reported are averaged for the state on a

scale of 0 to 300, and come from the National Assessment for Educational Progress (NAEP), a subsection of the NCES. According to its official website, "NAEP assessments are administered uniformly using the same sets of test booklets across the nation, NAEP results serve as a common metric for all states and selected urban districts. The assessment stays essentially the same from year to year, with only carefully documented changes." (NCES.org) NAEP results are based on samples of students at grades 4, 8, and 12 for the main assessments. Those grades and ages are chosen because they represent critical stages in academic achievement. (NCES.org) The NAEP tests in a variety of subjects from economics to the arts, but for this research data will be drawn from assessments for math and reading. The NAEP has a component titled, "The Nation's Report Card", in which the public can access test scores for each state and examine changes in scores from 1999-2013 for every other year. The gaps in every other year make the data less sufficient, but still express overall changes in student achievement for each state.

For this research, test scores are reported from 1999, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009, and 2011. By regressing the funding variables on the test scores, it is possible to examine the significance between various funding categories and standardized test scores. The other success indicator for this research is cohort rates. Cohort rate measures the number of freshmen students in a class that completed all four years of high school. This measures not only a school's success in graduating its students, but also measures student satisfaction with the state's education system as well.

Cohort rates were collected from higheredinfo.org, an educational data portal created by the National Information Center for Higher Education Policymaking and Analysis, a smaller information center that collects and analyzes data for the use of researchers and

policymakers. Cohort rates were available for all states in all years, except for a gap in 2007. Because the data for this research comes in different measures and scales, adjustments are made to the data that are discussed in-depth in the data analysis section of this paper.

ii. Data Analysis

In order to test if there is a significant relationship between an independent variable (funding category) and the dependent variable (test score), I implemented this data collected into "STATA", a statistical software program that provides everything for data analysis, data management, and graphics. In STATA, this project runs "regressions", which are a statistical method for measuring the relation between the mean value of one variable and corresponding values of other variables. In this case, I regressed funding categories on success indicators, meaning I tested the relationship between the two. With this method of research I hoped to become familiar with quantitative analysis as well as the procedure for finding and organizing relevant data.

As discussed in the Data Description section of this paper, almost all data used was published in PDF reports and was therefore manually compiled and entered into an Excel spreadsheet. In the spreadsheet, each column listed a different variable, and the rows were organized by state. The data was sorted alphabetically by state followed by year. The spreadsheet organized on Excel was then loaded into STATA for regressions. Figure 1 displays the descriptive statistics of all independent variables used in the regressions. Descriptive statistics are defined as numbers that describe and summarize the data used. The first column lists the variables, which are adjusted as a result of the large dollar amounts of funding. By adjusting these variables it makes the values fit to the model more accurately. This means that because the dollar amounts for funding are so large, they must be reduced to

a smaller scale in order to more accurately test against the test scores and cohort rates. The first row lists the statistics summarized. "N. Obs" is the number of valid observations (not missing) in the data set. "Mean" is the mean, or average of the variable. "St. Dev" is the standard deviation of the variable, which is a quantity calculated to indicate the extent of deviation for a group as a whole.

Figure 1: Descriptive Statistics of Independent Variables

Variable	N. Obs	Mean	St. Dev
Instruction Expenditure (lninsexp)	652	14.90	1.05
Operation/Maintenance (lnopmain)	397	13.25	1.04
Staff Support Exp. (lnstaffsupexp)	346	12.43	1.14
Student Support Exp. (lnstusupexp)	397	12.61	1.03
Total Expenditure (lntotexp)	652	15.40	1.05
Total Support Exp. (lntotsupexp)	601	14.34	1.04
Transportation Expenditure (lntransexp)	346	12.39	1.06
Teacher/Student Ratio (lntsratio)	663	2.72	.15

Source: NCES, State Fiscal Reports 1999-2011

Figure 2 displays the descriptive statistics for the dependent variables. The dependent variables are also adjusted because of their various forms of measurement. When originally collected, test scores were measured on a scale from 0-300, and cohort rates were reported as percentages. After adjusting the values, the scores and rates are listed as smaller and more condensed. By adjusting the dependent and independent variables to fit on the same scale, the results of the regressions are more accurate.

Figure 2: Descriptive Statistics of Dependent Variables

Variable	N. Obs	Mean	St. Dev
Math- 4th Grade (z1Math4)	296	8.42	1
Math- 8th Grade (z1Math8)	295	9.51	1
Read- 4th Grade (z1Read4)	299	7.34	1
Read- 8th Grade (z1Read8)	297	6.79	1
Cohort (z1cohort)	500	8.94	1

Source: NAEP, highered.org

Once the data had been adjusted accordingly, I used a simple linear equation unlike the production function used in much of the past research. I modeled an equation after that of Tow's (Tow 2006) that tests for significant relationships between various funding categories and measures of student achievement, while controlling for differences across states and class size.

i.   *Equation*

Much of the past research on the relationship between funding and student achievement is conducted in case-study format. This means that the research sampled states or districts, often looking at one district or school alone. Because this research asks a similar research question to that of Neymotin's (2010) and Godfrey's (2012) the regression equation used in this research is modeled after the equations used in their research. However, the data used in this research is averaged per state as well as the success indicators, and so adjustments are made to the original equation.

To test which categories of funding have the most significant impact on student achievement, this research uses a fixed effects model. Fixed effects is an econometric model that controls for heterogeneity. Heterogeneity is when there are differences in variables

being studied. In this case, the differences are by state. By taking the fixed effects of the data, I control for differences in state data and make the results more accurate. Without listing all of the variables, the basic equation with fixed effects would look like *Equation 1*.

$$y = \alpha + \beta_0(X) + \beta_1 \ldots + FE \qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad\qquad \textit{Equation 1}$$

Where y is the dependent variable, in this case student test scores or cohort rates, X denotes the independent variables (various funding categories). Alpha, α, is the y-intercept, but also gives the value for y when α =0. Beta, β, is the coefficient that indicates the nature of the relationship between y and X, most importantly it denotes the slope of the relationship. This means that if the coefficient is negative, then an increase in the funding variable results in a decrease in student achievement, or vice versa. *FE* stands for Fixed Effects. As previously discussed, fixed effects is important because the model tests the relationship between funding and achievement using all 50 states. Each state, though under the same federal ruling, differs from one another in size, demographics, and state policies.

Before running the regressions as fixed effects, adjustments are made to the independent and dependent variables. In order to make the dollar amounts of the various funding variables fit more accordingly to the model, it is helpful to take the natural log of each independent variable. For the dependent variables, the values must be standardized because the test scores and cohort rates are on very different scales than the dollar amounts measured for the funding variables.

With the independent variables and dependent variables adjusted, the final equation for the fixed effects model looks like:

$$y = \alpha + \beta_0 \ln(InsExp) + \beta_1 \ln(OpMain) + \beta_2 \ln(StaffSupExp)$$
$$+ \beta_3 \ln(StuSupExp) + \beta_4 \ln(TotExp) + \beta_5 \ln(TotSupExp)$$
$$+ \beta_6 \ln(TransExp) + \beta_7 \ln(TSRatio) + FE$$

Equation 2

This equation is entered into STATA as five different regressions, each with a different dependent variable. In addition to fixed effects, this project uses another variable on the equation that tests for robustness, which helps to account for any outliers or influential observations. With this equation it is possible to test which components of funding have the most significant effects on student achievement, holding teacher/student ratios constant.

Results

Table 1 summarizes the results from estimating Equation 2 for the effect of funding on student achievement. The variables for different categories of funding are listed in the first column, and the remaining columns list the fixed effects estimated coefficients for the dependent variables, Math 4, Math 8, Read 4, Read 8, and Cohort. Whether the coefficient is negative or positive indicates if there is a negative or positive relationship between the two variables. For example, instructional expenditure tested a 0.0001 coefficient with test scores for fourth- grade math. This means that for every 1% increase in funding, there is a 0.0001 increase in Math scores. The numbers listed under the coefficient in parentheses are the p-value, which must be below 0.05 to be considered significant. So, because the p-value reported for instructional expenditure and Math 4 is 0.185, that means the relationship between the two is insignificant.

Table 1: Fixed Effects Estimates

Funding Variable	Math 4	Math8	Read 4	Read 8	Cohort
Instructional Expenditure	0.0001 (0.185)	-0.0066 (0.124)	0.0001 (0.318)	-0.0003 (0.334)	-0.0001 (0.786)
Operation and Maintenance	-0.0000 (0.378)	0.0003 (0.785)	-0.0000 (0.444)	0.0002 (0.324)	-0.0000 (0.764)
Staff Support Expenditure	-0.0000 (0.402)	0.0003 (0.583)	0.0000 (0.100)	-0.0001 (0.307)	0.0000 (0.856)
Student Support Expenditure	0.0000 (0.423)	0.0000 (0.568)	0.0000 (0.599)	0.0000 (0.980)	-0.0000 (0.453)
Total Expenditure	-0.0002 (0.162)	0.0083 (0.127)	-0.0002 (0.263)	0.0002 (0.416)	-0.0000 (0.926)
Total Support Expenditure	0.0000 (0.320)	-0.0003 (0.221)	**0.0000** **(0.031)**	**-0.0000** **(0.001)**	0.0001 (0.795)
Transportation Expenditure	0.0000 (0.121)	-0.0015 (0.337)	-0.0000 (0.871)	0.0000 (0.648)	0.0000 (0.341)
Teacher/ Student Ratio	-0.0000 (0.419)	0.0005 (0.450)	-0.0000 (0.967)	0.0000 (0.576)	0.0000 (0.745)
Number of Observations	193	193	193	193	190

Bold = significant, using robust standard errors
P-values in parentheses

With fourth grade math scores as the dependent variable, the results suggest that operation and maintenance, staff support, and total expenditure are all negatively correlated with Math-4 scores, but there is an insignificant relationship between all categories of funding and math NAEP scores. This means that an increase or decrease in funding would have no significant effect on the scores. With eighth grade math scores as the dependent variable, instructional expenditure, total support, and transportation are negatively correlated with the test scores, but there is also an insignificant relationship between all categories of funding and the test scores. The results change slightly for reading scores. The results show that total support expenditure is positively correlated with fourth grade reading scores at a significant level. Similarly, total support expenditure has a significant effect on eighth grade reading scores, but is negatively correlated. This suggests that increasing support funding has a positive effect on reading scores for fourth graders, and slight

negative effect for eighth grade scores. Finally, the results suggest that funding does not have any significant effect on cohort rates.

Discussion

To summarize the previous section, the only significant results found in this study were from the relationship between total support expenditure and reading scores for both fourth and eighth grade students. All other tests displayed insignificant results, despite varying positive and negative correlations. The results indicate that for a 1% increase in total support spending, there is a .00000 increase in reading scores for math as indicated by the positive coefficient (0.0000), and a decrease of .00000 in reading scores for eighth graders as indicated by the negative coefficient (-0.0000). An explanation for these results can be that reading is a subject for which students need more support. In the classroom students become better readers with practice, but also with personal attention and guidance. Much of my experience as a student-helper in the Lewiston public schools was helping students with reading. Students showed a great deal of improvement when they had the support behind them and continuous encouragement. Outside of the classroom, students need psychological guidance and health support especially if they live in impoverished areas or experience difficult lives at home. It is possible that math scores did not test for the same significance as reading because of the differences between the two subjects. Furthermore, it is possible that the results, though accurately executed, do not wholly describe the relationship between funding and achievement as a result of insufficient data.

Hanushek touches on the matter of poor data saying: "existing measures of effectiveness of teachers and schools are seriously flawed, and thus are poor indicators of the true effects of schools." (Hanushek 1986, pg. 1199) While there was enough data available to

conduct this project, I faced a great amount of difficulty when accessing the information used, and the final project is significantly different from the initial proposal as a result of poor data. The lack of information regarding teacher quality, school quality (test scores seemed to be the only measure, and even that is only available every other year for four separate grade levels), and overall education effectiveness was surprising considering that districts and schools continue to receive Federal and State funding based on those poor measurements.

Whether I argue that my results are inaccurate because of poor data, or my results are accurate, both are troublesome. If I argue the former, then there is an issue of a vicious cycle prevalent in the current United States education system. Poor measurements of school quality can only lead to poor policymaking as a result of est scores based on those poor measurements. Every state, district, school, and student is different, and if they continue to be grouped together and measured on the same, inefficient scale, education inequality will grow and the issue will not subside. If I argue the latter, then my assessment of the relationship between funding and student achievement is correct in saying that funding is an insignificant variable, with the exception of support services for reading scores. With those results it may be useful to suggest, along with researchers such as Hanushek, Tow, and Coleman, that policy should focus on the specific variables found to affect educational outcomes, and funding should be focused on improving the effectiveness of teachers and overall school quality.

Conclusion

Education funding is a complicated subject. Because there is no clear definition of adequacy or efficiency, a matter such as funding that would appear simple is in fact the opposite. Funding comes from three main sources: Federal, State, and local. Federal funding

makes up the smallest percentage of a school's overall budget, and local provides the most. Many researchers argue that because of education's dependence on local funds, education faces a great deal of inequality. Others argue that funding does not have that significant of an impact on educational outcomes, and other variables such as teacher effectiveness are more important in a child's education. This project aimed to answer these questions and find results that would add to the debate of whether or not funding matters.

In this project I explored the relationship between funding and student achievement by testing for significance between various categories of funding and test scores/ graduation rates. Using data from the NCES, NAEP, and other national data sites that provided information on state categorical funds and achievement measurements, I compiled a spreadsheet in excel that I loaded into the statistical software program STATA. Once all of the data was organized into STATA, I was ableto develop an equation modeled after past educational economists' research that tested for significance while controlling for differences between states. This equation used funding categories as the independent variables and measurements of student achievement as the dependent variables. By using this equation, I was able to measure the various levels of correlation between funding variables and achievement variables. The results suggest that the majority of funding components, though correlated, are related to achievement at insignificant levels. Student support expenditure was the only variable that had a significant relationship with reading scores for both fourth and eight grade students. What was interesting, is that student support expenditure is positively correlated with fourth grade reading scores, and negatively correlated with eighth grade reading scores.

These results are interesting for a number of reasons. First, it is important to note the difficulty I faced when collecting data for this project. Not only was there a lack of existing data, but also the data used in this project is arguably flawed when considering how accurately

it reflects the true measures of student adequacy and school quality. If the issue with my project is that the data is flawed, then there is something to be said about the current education system. Poor methods of measurement of teacher effectiveness, school quality, and student success can only lead to poor policymaking and school's not receiving the necessary resources to succeed. When these schools and students receive insufficient attention, then they continue to perform poorly, and a vicious cycle is underway. If my results do accurately capture the current relationship between funding and student achievement, then it is safe to say that funding is an insignificant variable in the equation for efficient student achievement. Along with Hanushek, Coleman, and Tow, I argue that funding is not the most important factor for education, and policy should focus on improving other variables, perhaps by prioritizing funds to specific projects for teacher effectiveness and student support services. If given the opportunity, I would continue this research in the form of a case study to examine which variables of a student's education are the most significant. At the conclusion of this project, I remain astonished at the complexity of funding for education. However, I am no longer daunted by the subject and left confused and ignorant, rather I am informed, boggled, and eager to learn more.

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Running Head: NEEDS OF URMs IN STEM

Understanding the Needs of Underrepresented Minority STEM Students:

The creation of an effective program model

Destany Franklin and Patrece Joseph

Final Report

Senior Seminar in Educational Studies

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Bates College, Lewiston, ME

Abstract

Globally, underrepresented minority (URM) students in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields struggle academically and socially in the classroom. Colleges provide resources to help increase the success for URM students in STEM. Bates College has addressed this issue with the Bates Summer Scholars Program (BSSP), an academic enrichment program. BSSP offers a small cohort of URM first-year students exposure to collegiate level science and math courses and mentorship, to address this preparedness gap. This study compares the retention rates of students who participated in the Bates Summer Scholars Program with the general population of URM students at Bates College to gauge the effectiveness of the program. Through examination of other models of preparatory programs for URM students in STEM, suggestions regarding effective enrichment models are made for future programming.

Understanding the Needs of Underrepresented Minority STEM Students & Effective

Program Models

Is education meant to produce skillful and competitive citizens, or is it a means for

higher learning, knowledge production, and exploration? Education is a complex field, with a

multifaceted definition, made of many intersecting disciplines, and affected by many

variables such as class, gender, social norms, geography, and more. In the typical classroom,

there is a hidden curricula, or implicit values, morals, and messages picked up by students on

a day to day basis. There are also explicit lessons taught through curricula. Every individual

has a different learning or teaching experience that is based on cultural and linguistic

diversity, upbringing, genetics, and the environment. Having an affinity to learning through

procedures or critical thinking also affects the way one would teach or learn. In this way,

education is complex; practice, theory, learner style and teacher style are intricate

components of education as well.

Teachers must be mindful to appeal to many types of learners in order to effectively

teach all of their students. This diversity of individuals points to the need for manipulatives

and various tools for students and teachers to use within lesson plans. In high school, the

resources provided to students include after school programs, teacher aids, and help from

home. However, students who need extra assistance are disadvantaged if they are unable to

receive help at home, an after school program, via a tutor, or by any other mean. This is an

example of how disparities create opportunity gaps, based on a lack of access or availability

to resources.

These disadvantages may exist for all students regardless of race, class, or gender;

however, it is often exaggerated for students of color. Transitioning from high school to

college can introduce more issues for underrepresented students.   Due to the diversity of student populations, is a college's duty to provide adequate resources to all learners of various abilities. Universities and colleges provide mentorship and networking opportunities as well as social, emotional, health, and academic resources to their students. When students transition from high school to college, they are all at different levels of intelligence and ability. Resources help to level the playing field (Abrams & Jernigan, 1984; Munley, Garvey, McConnell, 2010). As academic rigor increases from high school to college, it is necessary for students to be offered academic resources that complement the curricula and faculty expertise. In order to ensure the college is meeting the needs of all of its students, it is important to offer a varied selection of resources. This is often difficult due to the fact that certain groups of students may have more complex, or specific needs that must also be addressed by college administrations. This study aims to address the challenges science, math, engineering and technology (STEM) students face, within a college context, and provide suggested program components that institutions can use to help meet the needs of these students.

Underrepresented Minority Students

Within literature, students are defined as underrepresented minority students (URMs) based on racial, ethnic, socioeconomic status, as well as gender characteristics (Davis, Dias-Bowie, Greenberg, Klukken, Pollio, Thomas & Thompson, 2004; Jones, Castellanos & Cole, 2002; Nagda et al., 1998). In addition to being underrepresented within institutions of higher education, these students face additional academic, social and personal challenges, including retention. Underrepresented minority students also experience problems accessing higher education and persisting to graduation (Palmer, Maramba & Dancy, 2011).

Research has cited two main theories aimed to explain high attrition rates for

underrepresented minorities college students: lack of preparation in high school and the structural factors of the institution (Nagda, Gregerman, Jonides, Hippel & Lerner, 1998). In order to ameliorate the retention rates of URM students, most institutions focus their efforts on one of these two theories. However, a more recent approach has been a combination of the two, allowing programs to more effectively focus on integrating students into the institution. Thus emphasizing the impact of college structure, resources, and programs on the student.

Students of color often have a greater challenge succeeding, both academically and socially, at predominately white institutions (Daviset al., 2004; Jones, Castellanos & Cole, 2002). Academic integration as opposed to social integration has been found to be more important for racial and ethnic minority students (Nagda et al., 1998). For African American students, the amount of faculty contact effects both retention and performance (Nagda et al., 1998). Weak peer and faculty relationships for underrepresented students within institutions have been found to contribute to low retention rates for all types of URM students (Nagda et al., 1998). Both academic and social integration are important in improving the retention rates and success for URM students.

In addition to social and academic pressures, disparities such as socioeconomic status and class within predominantly white institutions are salient for URM students. These disparities create similar issues in which the retention rates for students of color affect success (Keels 2013). Likewise, first generation college students, students whose parents have not received a degree from an institution of higher education, are also at risk for high attrition. First generation college students are oftentimes disadvantaged in terms of level of family income and support, knowledge about college, educational degree plans and high school preparation (Ishitani, 2006; Pascarella, Pierson, Wolniak & Terenzi, 2004). Ishitani (2006)

cites family income and students whose parents who graduated from college as indicators for first generation students' retention in college. In addition, high socioeconomic status is positively correlated to academic and social integration for students (Ishitani, 2006).

It is important to note that many underrepresented minority students may be categorized as such based on more than one descriptor; for example, race, gender, socioeconomic statues, etc. However, little research has been done to test the impact of multiple minority statuses within college students. Underrepresented minorities are arguably one group that is in dire need of institutional advising and resources, due to their vulnerability to the lack of a support network, it is important that colleges provide adequate assistance for these students.

URMs in STEM

Underrepresented minorities in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) often face many issues pursuing a STEM major. It is important to note within literature on students underrepresented in STEM fields, females are considered disadvantaged regardless of their race or ethnicity. There is ample research addressing why these URM students are unsuccessful in STEM, and what interventions seem to help.

Barr, Gonzalez and Wanat (2008) conducted a study at Standford to determine the causes of decline in URM interest in pursuing a career in medicine. Results indicated that URM students exhibited a larger decline in interest than did not URM students. In addition, females showed a larger decline in interest than male participants. Loss of interest was contributed to a negative experience in a chemistry course as well as the advising system at the university.

Hurtado, Cabrera, Lin, Arellano and Espinosa (2009) assessed the experience of URMs within four institutions. Student interest in science was due to previous interest in

science, pre-college math and science courses, exposure to scientific research, the development self-confidence within the sciences and participation in science research programs. The participants in the study also noted the intimidating culture of science, as a challenging part of their experience as science students. In both of these studies students attributed negative experiences in science courses as a challenging component of their experience, however, students also reported positive aspects of math and science that increased their interest in the subject.

The literature shows a diverse set of reasons that contribute to the lack of success experienced by URM students in the STEM fields. The difficulty that URMs face during their undergraduate career usually occurs due to the lack of preparation entering college, combined with the social, political, and mental hindrances theymay deal with (Kokkelenberg & Sinha, 2010; Museus, Palmer, Davis & Maramba, 2011). The lack of faculty and staff support decreases URM commitment to STEM (Kendricks, Nedunuri & Arment, 2013; Palmer et al., 2011). Due to the fact that many students lack a strong support system, studies show that stimulating educational environments are positively linked to persistence and retention for students of color in STEM majors (Grandy, 1998; Palmer, Maramba & Dancy, 2011). URMs in STEMs sometimes have trouble finding classmates to study with and research shows peers with the same goals of doing well and supporting each other in STEM fields, provide needed support for academic work and a positive social network (Palmer et al., 2011). Adequate and consistent mentorship of peers and faculty members positively correlate to good grades as well (Kendricks et al., 2013). Also, the diversity in the race and gender of faculty affects commitment to STEM (Price, 2010). One particular study showed that African Americans persisted in STEM when there was a minority professor. However; female students were not

as persistent with more female representation in the faculty (Price, 2010). Confidence, grade point average (GPA), and cultural issues affect retention (White et al., 2008). This finding complements research that indicates stereotype threat as a variable that greatly affects students' persistence in STEM (Beasley & Fischer, 2012). In response to these factors that debilitate and dissuade underrepresented minority students from pursuing degrees in the STEM fields, universities and colleges have carefully crafted preparation programs for URMs going into STEM.

Program Models

Many of the preparatory programs that currently exist for underrepresented minorities (URMs) have similar goals to help students be successful in STEM through faculty relationships, academic interventions, tutoring, role modeling, and mentorship. What sets these programs a part from each other is how they entice their participants, and how they achieve the goals listed above.

The Meyerhoff Scholars Program (MSP) of the University of Maryland provides a learning community, academic advising, research opportunities, internships, conferences, and preparation for graduate school (MSP, 2014). MSP pushes its students to motivate each other through "positive peer pressure". MSP helps students to connect through its residential Summer Bridge program, and motivates its students to learn from each other through study groups and peer-to- peer support (MSP, 2014). MSP has proven to be successful, with its alumni going on to earn Ph.D.s and M.D.s. Although Meyerhoff invites highly qualified students to their program, regardless of their backgrounds, URMs in the program were 5.3 times more likely to continue into STEM education or careers than those who declined their MSP invitations (MSP, 2014).

The Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) Professors program is a research experience that provides mentorship and academic intervention to its students with the goal of retention in the STEM fields (Wilson et al., 2013). Similarly to HHMI, the pre-freshman accelerated curriculum in engineering (PACE) program at Morgan State University strives to prepare incoming students for collegiate level math, physics, and English (Drew, 2014). PACE encourages its students to become role models by providing a network of mentors such as graduate students for tutoring and faculty for mentorship (Drew, 2014). PACE leads to membership in the Center of Advanced Microwave Research & Applications (CAMRA) program, which partners with NASA to provide scholarship, applied learning, and a strong network of faculty, peers, and professionals (Drew, 2014).

The Colby Achievement Program in the Sciences (CAPS) intends to help students of color become comfortable with scientific material, technique and equipment (Jacobs, 2010). A small cohort of students enter the program the summer before their first year at Colby (Lepkowski, 2014). CAPS prepares its students for first year science courses. In addition, this program strives to help students become more comfortable with collegiate level sciences through close faculty mentorship, computer programming training, and exposure to research and the lab environment (Jacobs, 2010; Lepkowski, 2014). CAPS is a four-year program of continuous reflection, mentorship, and networking. Students receive a $4,000 stipend consecutively for the three years after their first summer to do research either at Colby, or anywhere they choose (Jacobs, 2010). CAPS students may also become a part of the Colby Research Scholars (CRS) program through which students serve as lab assistants for professors during the academic year (Lepkowski, 2014; Jacobs, 2010).

The Benjamin Bannaker Scholars Program (BBSP) of Central State University, a historically black university (HBCU), is aimed at increasing the number of high performing

students and their retention and graduation rates within the STEM fields. Within this program students receive a stipend and a mentor within their field of STEM study. Students participate in academic learning communities, living learning communities, mandatory mentor meetings, an honors program, professional development workshops and graduate school visits as well as undergraduate research. Participants in this program cited mentoring as most impactful on their success (Kendricks et al., 2013).

The Texas Women's University (TWU) received a grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to help increase the number of students pursuing graduate degrees in STEM fields. Within their program, TWU using financial and mentoring support to help students in this pursuit. As a result of the grant, within the STEM program at TWU there was a 97% retention rate of its students (Navarra- Madsen, Bales & Hynds, 2010).

Although it is hard for a universal model to improve the success and retention rates of URM students to exist, research stating the most important factors to STEM retention is important in informing the creation of programming. Every program is unique to its intended audience, but there are factors such as mentorship and lab experience that seem to be absolutely necessary in STEM programming.
However, given the difference in institution size and location, it is hard to predict the transferability of programs across different institutions. Therefore, there is a need for more qualitative data (White, Altschuld & Lee, 2008) when understanding the challenges faced by URM students in STEM fields. Even though there is sufficient research on program models that address the issues facing STEM students, there is still a need for a specific program model that addresses the issues faced by Bates students specifically.

Bates Summer Scholars Program

Bates College offers a selective, small cohort, summer residential program, the Bates

Summer Scholars Program (BSSP) that intends to bridge the academic and social gaps for URMs entering their first year at Bates. The Bates Summer Scholars Program was founded to foster the success of URM students prior to their entrance as first year students at Bates. Each year ten students are selected from the incoming pool of potential science majors to participate in two faculty taught courses, including a science and a math course. Students spend the first part of the day in class and the afternoon in lab where they are given exposure to lab equipment and experience working collaboratively. Within this program model students are able to form relationships with peers pursuing a similar goal, as well as increase their preparedness for entry-level science and math courses at Bates. Quite successful, the alumni of the Bates Summer Scholars Program have a 97% graduation rate from Bates College. However, preliminary perspectives on the program from faculty that teach the summer courses, alumni, and current students have shown flaws in its structure: the program is not sustainable in its current organization, is limited by funding, and an evaluation of its recruiting process is needed. Since this program in its current capacity can only serve a limited amount of students at Bates, creating a more effective program is ideal.

This study surveys the reasons why URM students at Bates and in BSSP who indicated interest in STEM, did not declare or remain a STEM major. The results from this study, along with previous research on program models, helped to create the suggestions and changes to BSSP. Kerry O'Brien and the Dean of Faculty's office have provided data on the specific demographics of the BSSP program as well as data gathered from student surveys. This study will gauge the effectiveness of BSSP by comparing the perceptions of faculty and students involved with the program.

The current study will also compare the rates of URMs at Bates in STEM majors to

those in BSSP, to gauge whether or not this particular program has an effect. Based on this data, as well as research on other program models, recommendations amending the current elements of BSSP or suggestive of alternative program models will be included. The main question guiding our research is: how can Bates improve the retention rates and academic success in the sciences for underrepresented minority students? In order to answer this larger question, we need to answer a few smaller ones such as, why do Bates Summer Scholar Program students switch out of STEM majors, what are some of the challenges Bates underrepresented minority students face in STEM fields, and what are some other program models that may lead to student success and retention in the STEM fields? To answer these questions, research regarding how many students matriculate into Bates as intended science majors, if perspective science majors remain in the sciences (as of March 1st of their sophomore year) and whether or not these students continue on to STEM fields after graduation must be understood.

Method

Bates College is currently focused and invested in improving resources for students from disadvantaged backgrounds pursuing STEM. The DOF office was interested in research that would help them understand what aspects of effective programming would be useful in improving the Bates Summer Scholars Program. Along with a representative of DOF, we crafted a project, to address these issues. The DOF was working with Institutional Research, so their expertise, along with our training in research methods within social science, helped to shape this project.

The Dean of Faculty's office collected institutional data and surveys regarding BSSP students, and underrepresented minority students in STEM at Bates. These documents survey

student perceptions as well as quantitative data regarding student retention in STEM. The data represents Bates Summer Scholar Program participants as well as under represented minority students from the classes of 2010 to 2015. Although the definition of underrepresented minority students in the literature is inclusive of minorities on the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, and nationality, within the survey administered by the Dean of Faculty the population solely encompassed ethnic and racial minority students, this is due to the context of Bates College. Comparing those in the program to those not in the program, even though they are all classified as 'underrepresented minorities', allows for the effectiveness of BSSP to be perceived (Navarra-Madsen et al., 2010). Students declare their majors during the second semester of their sophomore year so the youngest surveyed were current juniors. All students surveyed were offered confidentiality. The student surveys used a Likert scale with responses ranging from 1(*not at all*) to 5 (*to a great extent*), which is appropriate for gaining the spectra of student perspectives (Kendricks et al., 2013; Griffith, 2013). In addition, utilizing institutional data and demographics allows all of the student responses to be contextualized (Ost, 2010; Oh & Lewis, 2011).

Faculty participants were chosen at random for interviews. Six STEM faculty received interview requests, and four responded. The interview questions were sent before the interview. In one case, the professor responded via email, as opposed to having an in person interview. All participants were offered confidentiality and will be referred to as a 'STEM faculty' member. Even though the participants were randomly selected, there was an even distribution across the STEM departments.

Since all of the participants who were contacted did not respond, the results from the interview do not evenly span all STEM departments at Bates.

To better inform the suggestions offered, the literature review included details on the structures of various programs aimed to improve the retention of URMs in STEM fields. Furthermore, the transcript from a student focus group, which occurred during the 2012 through 2013 school year, was analyzed. Practices in community-based research outlined by Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker and Donohue were reviewed and informed the methods of data analysis conducted in the current study (2003). An Institutional Review Board proposal was not needed, as the DOF collected the data, and were exempt due to the study being an internal review.

Concepts and themes that were consistently mentioned across all of the data are presented in the results. The literature is combined with faculty and student perspectives to be sure both stakeholders are represented when considering suggestions for new program models. In doing so, this project allows the perspectives of current and alumni students as well as faculty and staff to be voiced.

Results & Analysis

Although most of the students (97%) who have participated in the BSSP have graduated Bates College, many of these students did not graduate with degrees in the STEM fields. The current study aimed to provide an alternative program model that improves the retention rates and academic success in the math and sciences for underrepresented minority students. Research questions included, why do Bates Summer Scholar Program students switch out of STEM majors, what are some of the challenges that underrepresented minority students face in the STEM fields that may contribute to discontinuing a major, and what are some other program models that may lead to student success and retention in the STEM fields.

Research collected from student surveys were used to understand the reasons why

URM students may switch out of STEM fields. The top reasons for URM students discontinuing in STEM majors were the same across surveys administered during two different school years (Table 1). The first six reasons include interest in another discipline or field, worried about having a lower GPA other students being more prepared in math or science, the time demands of labs, and lastly, students do not feel supported by student peers in math or science. The reasons highlighted by students for discontinuing in the STEM fields were consistent with the literature about why students may not succeed or pursue in math and sciences (Beasley & Fischer, 2012; Grandy, 1998; Griffith, 2010; Kendricks , K. D., Nedunuri, K. V., & Arment, 2013; Kokkelenberg & Sinha, 2010; Museus, Palmer, Davis & Maramba, 2011; Ost, 2010; Palmer, Maramba & Dancy, 2011; Price, 2010; Wilson et al., 2013). It is important to note that the lowest reasons indicated by students for discontinuing STEM were language difficulties, assistance from the math and statistics workshop, completion of major requirements in four years and interests in other extracurricular activities. Thus indicating that Bates has provided adequate supports to the majority of students regarding these areas.

Data from student surveys, faculty interviews as well as student focus groups were used to identify some of the challenges Bates underrepresented minority students face in the STEM fields. One of the challenges URMs face include the many competing pressures students have to deal with such as, having multiple obligations or other social, economic, and psychological variables. One of these pressures that students self-report as an issue is stereotype threat. This psychological phenomenon is connected to students' lack of confidence in that students are worried about the negative stereotypes associated with their identity; therefore students' lack of confidence hinder their ability to succeed. In addition,

how a student experiences STEM at Bates influences their future STEM endeavors. If a student is not happy within the STEM fields they are likely to switch to another major or discontinue into a STEM field after graduation. Another important issue reported by students and faculty is the challenge students face in acclimating to the expectations and the culture of college. The transition from high school to college is a grave one in that students are required to do more work outside of the classroom and actively seek help if they feel as though they need it. All of these findings were similar to those in previous studies that highlighted the social and psychological variables that may affect a students' success in STEM fields (Beasley & Fischer, 2012; Kokkelenberg & Sinha, 2010; Museus, Palmer, Davis & Maramba, 2011; White et al., 2008).

Recommendations

In the midst of this project, it was determined that the BSSP program would be discontinued. There are benefits and drawbacks of changing some of the larger aspects of BSSP such as the summer math and science courses offered, the interaction with a Bates student leader prior to freshman year, and the introduction to college culture before the start of the academic year. Instead, the BSSP program will change into an academic year mentorship program titled Science Enrichment Fellows (SEF). The following suggestions are made to inform those involved with this new program on effective ways to combat the challenges that URMs at Bates face. With these thoughts in mind, the new program, being in its beginning years,   can still be shaped into a dynamic and effective program. The first phase of recommendations, which would occur during the first year of the program include ways to reassess students' commitment in the STEM fields. The second phase focuses on matching the student with a research lab for their first or second summer after freshman year.

Students at Bates, especially URMs in the STEM, will benefit from an increase in resources and support. Representation of a diverse community of professionals is helpful in this mission. The opportunity to interact with not only faculty who are professionals, but professionals within the field can help increase students' commitment to the STEM fields (Palmer, Maramba & Dancy, 2011). In addition, students will be able to gain a support system of knowledgeable individuals who are doing the work that students aspire to do. Ongoing mentorship is an extremely important factor to the success of students in STEM (Grandy, 1998; Palmer, Maramba & Dancy, 2011). This includes peers who are upperclassmen in the STEM fields, regardless if they do "well" in their courses. Furthermore, faculty, and staff are available and dedicated to serving as involved role models. This means that there are multiple agents available to act as mentors to students. In addition, a network of STEM alumni and BSSP alumni readily available to URMs will provide students with increased support. It is important to note that sustained support over the undergraduate career of the students is important and essential to the success and retention of these students.

In terms of retaining perspective STEM majors, retention efforts must somehow occur before the sophomore year. To accomplish this, within the new program students will only be able to remain in the program after freshman year if they are seriously considering a STEM major. This may mean that these particular students are declaring in the first semester of sophomore year, instead of the second. However, this is a benefit as it will help mentors and advisors ensure that these students are not 'behind' in their major requirements.

Research opportunities over the course of the STEM students' undergraduate experience are also a necessity. Not only are these experiences a rewarding part of the program for students and faculty alike, they increase students' commitment to the STEM

fields (Palmer et al., 2011). Faculty and students both report interactions with STEM professionals to be encouraging and transformative in their thinking. This could be one way in which the knowledge that students acquire in class is applied to their everyday lives. It is also important that this opportunity has a stipend or scholarship available, so the students are not sacrificing summer jobs that they may need in order to support themselves.

Another recommendation for an effective program is to have continuous education and robust training for faculty, staff, and student assistants involved with the program. This training would not only include workshops regarding the theory and background behind teaching methods, but it would also include training on concepts important to the challenges URMs face. Along with these trainings, continuous education on how scientific methods are utilized, what types of jobs exist within STEM, or other interesting ideas would be beneficial for the students as well. This could be in the form of a 'Journal Club', where students present relevant or recent ideas and research papers to the other students. This would again help to create the transferable and applied knowledge skills that students must cultivate.

The final suggestion is some readily accessible math and science resources for students, such as problem sets, worksheets, or an online course. These additional resources will address the lack of preparation in math and science that was cited by students as a reason for their discontinuing STEM fields. Most successful in the form of a math and science 'boot camp' that is held a few weeks before school starts, or during college vacations, students will be able to build their confidence in these subjects.

Conclusion

URM students within the STEM fields face ample challenges in pursuit of their degrees in the math and sciences. While many of these challenges occur before students enter

into college, it is important that colleges recognize and aid students. Research has shown

effective strategies for increasing retention and success for many URM students in STEM

fields, but has not created a universal model to aid in this mission. Due to the varying types

of institutions, by size, geography, resources, etc., there is not a universal model that could be

used to improve retention and success among students in the STEM fields. However, many

institutions have implemented successful programs that can be used as models and tailored to

other institutions. In the case of this study, findings from the literature, other program models

as well as research collected from students at Bates College will be used to inform the STEM

programming offered to its students.

By understanding the challenges faced by underrepresented minority students at Bates

College within the STEM fields as well as the reasons why these students may not persist in

these majors, the current project aimed to recommend programming that would address these

issues. Although Bates College had already implemented the Bates Summer Scholars

Program, this program did have flaws, the greatest being its lack of sustainability. Data

collected from student alumni of the BSSP, faculty aided in the suggestions for new

programming. New programming should include the following, an increase in resources and

supports for students, greater research opportunities for students in their first years, robust

training and education for faculty and staff, and opportunities for students to apply the

knowledge of their fields to other activities. These recommendations, grounded in literature

and research conducted at Bates College aims to help increase the retention rates as well as

the success of URM students in the STEM fields.

There were several limitations to the current study. First, the data received from

student surveys, was previously aggregated. Therefore, researchers could not view the entire

data set. Also, these data were in a survey form and often missed many of the nuances and subtleties in students' experiences that could be understood with other data collection methods, such as interviews or open ended questions.. Future research should aim to understand why many students do not declare STEM majors but continue to take courses that are STEM related. In addition, understanding if any of the other factors why students switch out of stem contribute to their interest in another subject area.

The current study provided the Dean of Faculty's office at Bates College with recommendations to improve their programming offered to underrepresented minority students in the STEM fields. By understanding the challenges these students face and how these challenges may inform students' decision to discontinue in STEM, suggestions were made to provide more comprehensive services to students.

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Environmental Education Through Nature Walks: A Study of Student Engagement With
The Environment in Two Preservations

River Valley Village Community (David Rancourt Nature Preserve) and Phippsburg
Elementary (Morse Mountain Conservation Area)

Education 450: Final Report

Hannah Mitchell
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April 9, 2014

Abstract

Based on our personal experiences working with students in Lewiston public schools we have noticed that many students are not actively engaged in the natural outdoor environments within the Lewiston area. It has been shown that environmental education and experiential learning can engage all students, recognizing that children from various socioeconomic status, linguistic, and/or geographical/cultural backgrounds perceive the world around them through different past experiences. Environmental education and experiential learning can engage students through a different lens and set of activities than classroom learning, allowing students to explore through hands-on work and develop a life-long affiliation with the natural world. We worked with youth from the River Valley Village Community and Phippsburg Elementary School to lead weekly nature walks through a local preserve and an environmental science field trip on Morse Mountain, respectively. These excursions aimed to develop students' general awareness of and curiosity about their local surroundings. We emphasized creating a sense of place by connecting with individuals' past experiences and fostering a long-term appreciation for the local outdoors. Our findings, based on overwhelmingly positive responses from youth at River Valley and Phippsburg Elementary, strongly advocate for hands-on, experiential forms of learning inside and outside the classroom.

Introduction

Problem statement
  Children are less engaged with nature than ever before and environmental education is a prominent strategy used to emphasize the necessary development of outdoor education models. It has been shown that environmental education and experiential learning can engage all students, recognizing that children from various socioeconomic status, linguistic, and/or geographical/cultural backgrounds perceive the world around them through different past experiences. (Eick, 2012; Louv 2008; Selhub & Logan, 2012; MEDOE). Additionally, through outdoor education students are allowed to explore and wonder through hands-on activities and become exposed to a life-long relationship with the local.

  Based on our personal experiences working with students in Lewiston and Phippsburg Public Schools we have noticed that youth are not often actively engaged in the natural outdoor environments in the Lewiston/Auburn and Phippsburg areas, respectively. We believe an outdoor education model exposing youth to local natural resources will develop an individual appreciation for place and their connection to the local environment.

Nature of the study
  In this community-engaged research, we will lead two different populations of students through a series of outdoor education activities. Specifically, we will implement after-school nature walks with youth from Lewiston's River Valley Village Community and lead a field trip with students from Phippsburg Elementary.

Rationale
  In order to address our perception that there is a lack of environmental education within these two communities, our project will create a structure to facilitate youth engagement in outdoor environments. We will provide specific environmental knowledge

particular to theselocal outdoor environments (Morse Mountain and the Rancourt Nature

Preserve). These outdoor excursions aim to enhance youths' positive relationships, positive

emotions, their sense of accomplishment, and engagement with the environment. Highlighting

Morse Mountain and the Rancourt Preserve as unique environments serves to foster a sense of

appreciation and respect of place. In addition, we will emphasize the development of a sense

of place by connecting with individuals' past experiences. We hope that this project will

enhance students' familiarity and comfort on Morse Mountain and in the David Rancourt

nature preserve, and encourage whole families to use these outdoor resources.

Identifying the patterns in our findings will be helpful for the field of outdoor

education and curriculum development as it will a) provide additional information on using

the outdoor environment as an effective tool for education; and b) provide specific examples

of activities and learning tools that worked well in two different outdoor environments

(Rancourt Nature Preserve and Morse Mountain).

Research questions

Through this community-engaged research examining outdoor education we had two

central guiding questions, each with a clarifying sub-question.

(1) How do young students engage with the local outdoors?

(1.1) Are there similarities in the kinds of activities that would make a learning

experience engaging for different groups of young students?

(2) What are methods of fostering curiosity, positive relationships, and appreciation for

place? (2.1) What are the implications of linking an outdoor education program

with a traditional indoor curriculum and how does this differ from an after school

outdoor education program?

Literature Review

Exposure to outdoor environments and activities is decreasing, which is increasing stress levels and negatively impacting individual's psychological well-being (Louv, 2008; Selhub & Logan, 2012). Research has shown that this lack of engagement in outdoor environments has negative impacts on the social and cognitive development of youth, which in turn negatively affects their level of education (Louv, 2008; Doddington, 2013). The reality that all public schools have established state education standards that must be achieved by students annually does not make this problem any easier, as teachers are required to cover very specific material in their curriculums, which gives teachers little flexibility to incorporate creative curriculum ideas (Maine Department of Education, 2010). However, a case study revealed that it is possible for teachers to successfully fill this gap in exposure to outdoor engagement and still meet state education standards, by developing an outdoor nature-based science and language arts program (Eick, 2012).

In response to this issue of facilitating student's engagement in outdoor environments and their learning process, several forms of alternative education have emerged. John Quay and Jayson Seaman present and define the concept of outdoor education as a form of schooling based in and around the outdoor environment, which provides a rich learning climate that allows students to learn about real-life issues as well as methods and skills for addressing them (2013). Several other researchers and scholars further support this point and argue that the process of learning outside has been shown to be beneficial for increasing self-awareness, self-esteem, memory capacity, engagement, ability to collaborate, and consciousness of one's surroundings (Doddington, 2013; Crompton & Sellar, 1981; Louv, 2011). These positive outcomes help to make the educational experience have an influential

and lasting educational impact on the student (Doddington, 2013; Crompton & Sellar, 1981; Louv, 2011).

Within the broad field of outdoor education, "place-based education" developed with the intention of enhancing individuals' awareness of their surrounding environment and the impact that they have on this environment (Huston, 2011). More specifically, this form of education connects the learner with their local environment and uses this personal connection to enhance the students' interest in learning about this environment and the intersectional aspects linked to this outdoor setting (Huston, 2011; Howley & Howley, 2011). Place-based education has also been argued to be effective in creating active, engaged and conscious citizens that are capable of understanding the social, political, and environmental intersections of a place (Huston, 2011; Gruenewald, 2003).

Just as scholars debate the definition and purpose of outdoor education and place-based education, so too is there controversy over the pedagogical approach and rationale for environmental education (Disinger, 1983; Braus, 1999; NCLI). Certain scholars focus on environmental education as a sub-topic within the subject of science ("Tbilisi", 1977; Hungerford, 2001; Bodzin, Shiner & Weaver, 2010) while others are looking at environmental education as interdisciplinary, as a pedagogical tool, and are determining ways to incorporate the discipline into curriculum standards (Hoody, 1996; Simmons, 1998; Disinger, 2001; Medina, Marrone, & Anderson, 2005 MEEA, 2007; Eick, 2012; Fenwick & Linch, 2013).

Other research has examined the importance of incorporating outdoor education for low- income, urban youth, who may not have opportunities to engage in natural outdoor environments without a structure established through their school (Ferreira, Grueber, & Yarema, 2012; Mikels- Carrasco, 2010). One case study on this topic, in which outdoor

education curriculums were implemented in seven urban elementary schools, revealed many positive findings. Researchers found that using the outdoors as an educational tool not only shifted the teachers' perspectives about the importance of this form of learning but also increased the level of interest and learning experiences for the students involved in the outdoor education program, which enhanced the sense of community within their school overall and intrigued students to continue to engage in this form of learning (Ferreira, et al. 2012; Nijhuis, 2002). Additional research has shown that outdoor education is an effective form of education for young adolescent minds as the focus on active learning is more aligned with the cognitive development of this age group (Broda, 2002).

Having examined the conversation about experiential learning through outdoor-, place- based-, and environmental education, we hope to expand on the research that has been done with youth, especially of a multicultural background. More recent studies are examining the incorporation and parallelism of multicultural education and environmental education (Cole, 2007; "Theorizing Place, 2013; Blanchet-Cohen & Reilly, 2013). Our expansion on the literature focused on alternative education will come through our work with both the River Valley community and the Phippsburg Elementary School. However, our expansion on the current research on how students with multicultural backgrounds respond to alternative education will come specifically through our work with the youth in the River Valley community. Much less is known in the field about bridging effective outdoor education models with a diverse group of students and incorporating the social, cultural, and linguistic differences of students into educational activities. Is outdoor education more effective for certain socioeconomic classes than others (Nijhuis, 2011)? What engages particular students in a particular place (Gruenewald, 2003)? These are they types of questions we will be asking

in our project as a way to further diversify the focus and spectrum of outdoor education.

There are already a number of methods available online and in publications that create environmentally focused field trips and lesson plans that comply with state standards (Bisson 1996; Pasquier & Narguizian, 2006; MEEA, 2007; "Wilderness"). Our project will use these methods as well as develop our own in order to create a pedagogical approach (including assessment) for outdoor education for students in Lewiston-Auburn and Phippsburg, Maine.

Methods

Through prior experience in both the River Valley Village Community in Lewiston and at Phippsburg Elementary, we have seen that engagement in natural outdoor environments in close proximity to students' homes is not fully addressed by schools or students' home lives.

Through this project in our Seminar in Education Studies course, we intended to address methods of enhancing opportunities for engagement in outdoor environments. We hoped to educate students about the natural communities that make Morse Mountain and the David Rancourt Nature Preserve unique environments so as to foster a sense of appreciation and respect of place. We view this culminating project as an opportunity to further our knowledge about outdoor education and gain more pedagogical experiences in this field.

River Valley methods

Context of study site

River Valley Village is located on the eastern side of the Androscoggin River, on Strawberry Avenue in Lewiston, Maine. This property is owned by The Caleb Group but contracted out to Harbor Management. According to the Caleb Group website their mission

states: "The Caleb group is a faith inspired nonprofit organization that provides quality affordable housing, supportive services and opportunities that empower the lives of those we serve" (The Caleb Group, 2013).

The housing complex offers 296 townhouse apartments and serves a bicultural, low-income community of 1,000 residents (The Caleb Group, 2013). Demographically, 50% of the residents are Somali and 50% are non-Somali. Of the population, 50% are under 18 years old (The Caleb Group, 2013). The residents in this neighborhood have access to the David Rancourt nature preserve, which is a five-minute walk from the main community center and office.

Outdoor education program

We conducted weekly nature walks beginning January 23. Our walks serve the River Valley Village Community and are open to all youth in this neighborhood between third and eighth grade. This community is a subsidized housing community located in Lewiston east of the Androscoggin River. The nature walks take place in the David Rancourt nature preserve, a five minute walk from the River Valley community center. The majority of our data collection is dependent upon student participation and feedback through journals, observations, and focus group discussions.

We developed activities that emphasized sensory experiences: visual, kinesthetic, and auditory (Table 1).

Table 1. Description of activities implemented on the nature walks with youth from River Valley.

Activity	Description
Frisbee quadrat	Students first threw a frisbee and then ran to where it landed. Next, they were asked to visually observe all that surrounded the frisbee and verbally articulate that as well as observe all the sounds they heard as well as a tree bark rubbing exercise. This activity was created with the intention of fostering students' observational skills.

Tree bark rubbing	Each student placed a page from their nature journals over the trunk of a tree and then rubbed the piece of paper with a crayon until the texture of bark was visible. The aim of this activity was to help students recognize the visible differences in types of trees as a starting point to recognizing other distinguishing characteristics between types of trees.
Compasses and magnifying	Each student was given a square of string with the task of finding a place (quadrat) on the ground to observe in detail using a hand lens. The second
Glasses	component of this activity was to use a compass to orient themselves within the woods ("Where's North?") and to determine the direction of their house based on where they were currently standing. Students learned how to read the cardinal directions and the degrees on a compass.
Blindfold tree identification	The kids split up into partners (one was blindfolded and the other was not). The non-blindfolded child became the guide for their blindfolded partner and led them to a nearby tree. The blindfolded child then had to use all their sense besides sight to identify the characteristics of the tree. After they were guided back to their starting point the blindfold was removed and they had to find the tree they had just been led to. The partners then switched roles and repeated the activity.
Snowman building contest	We broke up the students in two teams to each build a snowman and use any surrounding resources in the nature preserve to do so. Although the snow we were working with was not ideal for the activity, the kids were not deterred and instead focused on coming up with creative ways to build a snowman using fluffy snow and natural decorating resources (i.e. dead leaves and branches).
Animal pairs	All the students were secretly told a specific animal to act out using what they knew about the sounds that animal makes and how it moves. Their task was to act out their dedicated animal until they found their animal pair (the person acting out the same animal as they were).
Hide-and-Seek	With clear boundaries agreed upon, this unanimously loved game served to get students exploring on their own but also work as a group.
Partner blindfold walk	For this sensory and participatory activity, students were paired up and each given a role: one was blindfolded and the other was their guide. The goal of this activity was to have the blindfolded students use trust and sensory observations to walk a large chunk of the trail. The guide had to use descriptive words (e.g. left, right, straight) to lead their partner.

Capture the blindfold	Students formed a circle around one person in the middle who had a blindfold next to their feet. The person in the middle was responsible for guarding the blindfold. While the students on the outside of the circle were trying to take the blindfold from the ground without the center person noticing.
Sound map	For the listening/drawing activity, all the children had a piece of paper and sat in various locations in an outcropping of the nature trail. As they silently listened to their surroundings they marked down when they heard a sound and roughly where they heard it coming from.
Observing life	The goal here was to develop an understanding of how objects coexist within the same space. Each student was given the task of completing a mini
	scavenger hunt to find three adjacent natural, living organisms and hypothesize about how these organisms function in the same environment.
Guided observation	During each walk, we used time between activities and on our way back to the community center to have youth generally observe the surrounding natural and built environments. For example, we would engage students through pieces of tree identification (i.e. pine needles, oak leaves, birch bark) and ask about these specific objects on multiple walks to ground in the information. We also tried to build an atmosphere of questioning by posing to the group questions such as, "Why is there space between these trees?" and "Last week the river was frozen. What does it look like now?"

While we created the rule that students must have homework checked before they could come on our walks, approximately halfway through the semester we switched to assisting with the community's after-school homework help program prior to leading activities by the river. This allowed for more students to attend the walk and for students to have a chance to get help, if needed, and to finish assignments before going home.

For those students who did not have homework or had already finished were given the opportunity to write and/or draw in their nature journal. We created nature journals for all the students at the River Valley Village Community and beginning in Week 4, asked them to reflect and write freely or with prompts. We made it clear that anything the students wrote or drew would be kept confidential. We also took the opportunity during

Week 5 to form a focus group of the students present in order to gather more information about their perception of the walks, the outdoor classroom experience, and what they have learned/hope to learn now and in the future. At the beginning of this focus group we explained to the students that anything they shared with us would also be kept confidential and we did not link any responses to names. These journals served to act as places for personal, individual reflection as well as an outlet for feedback about the nature walks. Every week, students responded to a writing prompt about associating with place, nature or neighborhood, e.g. "Do you consider the nature preserve to be part of your neighborhood?" and "What do you think of when you hear the word 'neighborhood'?" Youth also used their journals on our walks to record tree rubbings, observation drawings, and feedback (for us) on the nature walk activities. After each nature walk we too wrote down and/or discussed observations about major events or themes. This helped us to notice patterns and to reflect on what we can do or be aware of in following weeks.

Phippsburg methods

Context of study site

Phippsburg Elementary School is a public elementary school located in Phippsburg, Maine, serving grades K-6 with approximately 100 students enrolled. We developed a partnership with the school through the Harward Center for Community Partnerships and through a previous course, entitled "Creating Educational Experiences at Morse Mountain." The school is located six miles from the Bates-Morse Mountain Conservation, an area open to the public that is comprised of about 600 acres that extend from the Sprague River to the edge of Seawall Beach. Due to the ecological diversity of Morse Mountain, host to a number of ecosystems including forest and beach, the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade science subjects can be highlighted through an experiential field trip. The science curriculum for the school's 3rd,

4th, and 5th grades are focused on forests, oceans, and vernal pools, respectively.

Outdoor education program

In addition to our work in Lewiston, we created a field trip for the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade classes at Phippsburg Elementary. We were not able to lead the field trip until Short Term (~April 30) but we visited each class to present about the topics covered on the field trip by providing a worksheet and discussion that relates to each topic (March 24). We met with Bill Wallace who led the Phippsburg-Morse Mountain last year and who is familiar with the types of activities useful for the specific environment and group of students; he provided photographs for us to orient ourselves to the area and to use for worksheets. This worksheet along with student reflections and observations collected from the field trip will provide us with helpful information for analyzing the effectiveness for this outdoor education model.

Connecting methods to pedagogy

Our methods considered how we could instruct students to form a new conceptual basis around the natural environment and the local community, while taking into account individual students and cultural perspectives (Cone and Harris, 1996). Community-based research acknowledges multiple perspectives and sources of knowledge so as to best promote the "use of multiple methods of discovery" and actions for social change. The social justice component of our project is based in youth education and awareness of local environments (Strand, Marullo, Cutforth, Stoecker & Donohue, 2003, p. 8).

We wanted to foster students' ability to connect with an outdoor learning environment so we considered how the kids at both River Valley and Phippsburg interpreted our role as teachers and as peer guides. We encountered specific instances in which it was important to act more like a disciplinary than a peer. The strategy for addressing this concern was to be very explicit about the rules that were in place and be consistent in how we responded to kids

when they disrespected or disregarded these rules. Another concern was being able to create activities that were appealing to all ages and genders. Our strategy for this was to come up with a list of variable activities so that if one did not appeal to the group at large, we had other choices to draw from.

Our methods aimed to highlight patterns within our data and more specifically provide both the River Valley and Phippsburg Elementary communities with helpful information regarding youth responses to structured outdoor learning. By identifying patterns from our data we also intended to point out what elements of an outdoor education curriculum effectively encouraged an appreciation for the nearby, local environment.

Results

Our ability to make generalizations about outdoor education based on aggregate findings from River Valley and Phippsburg students was limited by differences in developmental stages of the two programs, and restricted us to mostly making separate conclusions for each community. Additionally, the majority of our data collection was dependent upon student participation and feedback, a method of response that did not always yield full participation. Some students may not have shared their full opinion, may not have participated at all, or may not have been present at the time of discussion.

Apparent themes arose from our examination of outdoor education with both the River Valley Village youth through observations, focus group discussions and journal reflections. In thinking about our first research question (1. How do young students engage with the local outdoors?) we noticed that youth from the River Valley Community were especially responsive to hands-on, experiential activities and showed full engagement in the outdoor learning process during these type of activities. This point was further reinforced during a focus group discussion when students explained that learning through the structure of the nature walks was fun because they get a chance to, "explore, play, use all their senses, and there are no tests."

We also noticed that when the students from the River Valley Community felt valued as individuals, they showed more engagement. This was particularly evident when we incorporated the use of compasses and hand lenses into the outdoor activities on the nature walk. We clearly articulated to the students that these were scientific tools that are commonly used in outdoor environmental research and we felt they should have the opportunity to use these tools as well. Each student was eager to use these scientific instruments and

demonstrated genuine interest and curiosity in learning how to use and explore the nature preserve with them. Another effort we made to make students feel valued as individuals was to ask them for their opinions on the activities we incorporated into the nature walks. The students were very responsive to this and openly shared their feedback with us about the outdoor activities.

In consideration of our second research question (2. What are methods of fostering curiosity, positive relationships, and appreciation for place?) we found that the nature walk program was effective overall. Students became more comfortable and familiar with the David Rancourt nature preserve and more eager to explore areas off-trail. This observation was supported by student comments during the focus group discussion. When asked, "Do you feel like the nature walks have helped you connect to your neighborhood?" more than one student responded: "Yes, because we see nature around us, see and hear nature." Additionally, when asked, "What do you think when you hear the word neighborhood?" more than one student responded with at least one of the following: "friendly place, lots of trees, stream, awesome place to live that everyone is friendly, go on nature walks, house and neighbor."

Findings relating to sub-question 1.1 (What are the implications of linking an outdoor education program with a traditional indoor curriculum and how does this differ from an after school outdoor education program?) became apparent through our work with the River Valley and the Phippsburg youth. We noticed that youth from River Valley viewed the nature walk program as primarily a time for exploration and fun, which they did not always associate with learning. On several occasions, students made comments suggesting that they felt like learning during the nature walks was not like their normal indoor classroom learning because they did not have to memorize information and take tests. This idea was especially

salient when one student commented on the difference between the learning that went on in their traditional indoor classroom and during the nature walks. He stated, "The learning during the nature walks are different from being inside, I'm not bored and I'm learning and doing things that are fun." This observation helped reveal the theme of the role of learning in the outdoors and differentiating between what material is appropriate for indoor versus outdoor learning environments. Based on our experience with the nature walk program, we found that students showed engagement in the learning process when the activities were based around the outdoor environment of the nature preserve.

Similarly, when we visited the third, fourth and fifth grade classes at Phippsburg, they all showed interest in learning about prevalent ecosystems at Morse Mountain. Although we have not gone on the field trip with them to Morse Mountain yet, we did worksheets with them that were based around photos of the forest, ocean, and vernal pool ecosystems at Morse Mountain. This observed interest from the Phippsburg students, in combination with our observations from the nature walks in the David Rancourt nature preserve, demonstrated the theme of creating environment specific outdoor education curriculums as a means for further engagement from students.

In consideration of the sub-question 2.1 (Are there similarities in the kinds of activities that would make a learning experience engaging for different groups of young students?) we noticed some apparent gender dynamics during outdoor activities with the youth from the River Valley community. On many occasions, we noticed that the boys tended to interact with one another in a much more physical way than the girls during the nature walk activities, which at times created a distraction for the whole group and decreased the overall level of engagement. This being said, we found that providing physical and hands-on

activities were the most effective way to engage the boys during the nature walks and encourage them to constructively utilize their energy. These gender dynamics were also apparent during our focus group discussions. We found that many of the boys were quick to share their opinions and louder, often overshadowing the girls and seemingly discouraging them from sharing. We recognized this and asked the girls directly what their opinion was on each question even if the boys already blurted out their thoughts. The journals seem to be an effective method for students who are more shy and who would rather write their thoughts about the nature walks than verbally articulate them. We found that engaging the group as a whole was especially important in order to ensure that everyone was experiencing the nature walks in a positive manner and able to immerse themselves in the learning opportunity.

Although we have not yet led the Phippsburg students on a field trip, interacting with them through the worksheet activity reinforced our finding about positive learning experiences with hands-on, experiential activities that we implemented with the River Valley youth. Nature walk activities can serve as a model for the activities we create for the field trip to Morse Mountain.

Analysis

Our projects with River Valley and Phippsburg are in two different stages of development. The nature walks with River Valley are part of an after-school program offered by the community center while the field trip activity is incorporated into the school day and curriculum. Temporally, the nature walks are a once-a-week activity whereas the field trip is implemented only once. These structural differences are important for us in thinking about our observations about the effectiveness of outdoor education models. Our aim for both the nature walk program and the field trip is to foster engagement and curiosity about learning

and further exploration in an outdoor environment. This unifying goal for both programs signifies that our observations from River Valley in regards to effective experiential and hands-on activities can inform how we create the field trip with Phippsburg.

We also noticed that it is important to consider the place and the students you are working with in order to develop appropriate outdoor education curriculums. Between the two communities, we observed that differences in age of youth, socioeconomic status, and cultural backgrounds play a role in learning and being engaged outdoors. We also observed that place setting, i.e. urban or rural, and timing of activity, i.e. after or during the school day, influenced the type of activities and subject matter incorporated into our curriculums. Comparing activities, we found that hands-on activities and activities focused on making observations were appropriate for both outdoor education programs. We developed different activities for each community based on subject (i.e. general environmental topics with River Valley vs. specific science topics explored with Phippsburg) and based on the nature of the curriculum – after-school program vs. field trip incorporated into school curriculum. The larger significance of these findings is that in either case, it was extremely important to develop an experiential curriculum, in which students independently and in groups could explore and physically engage with the environment around them and immerse themselves in a local outdoor place.

Conclusions & Implications

Throughout the nature walks we noticed continual signs of enthusiasm for being outside and engagement in the outdoor activities. While we have not gone outside with the Phippsburg students, seeing their excitement about discussing the different ecosystems present in the Morse Mountain environment as well as being able to articulate and relate the worksheet themes to personal experiences, is indicative of their interest in outdoor

engagement. These observations of interest and enthusiasm for outdoor exploration and engagement reveals that there is a desire for outdoor education programs in both the River Valley Village and Phippsburg community. For us this indicates the need for developing more sustainable outdoor education programing within these communities and bridging the gap between learning in traditional indoor classrooms and the natural outdoor environment. We see the model of the field trip with the Phippsburg elementary as an effective model for bridging this gap, however, there needs to be more consistency and frequency around the field trips so that the outdoor learning is not based solely on one field trip each school year.

A major factor in developing successful outdoor education programs for these two communities is considering the local environmental context. Whether through after-school programming or within an established school structure, creating a curriculum about environmental and social issues will engage youth when students can connect to the familiar, the local, and to personal experiences within a place. However, in order to encourage this appreciation for place, we found that considering the individual backgrounds of students immersed in that place is important as their previous experiences may influence the perspectives they hold for place. In order to achieve this we found that asking students for feedback about outdoor activities and asking their opinions about what they would like to have included in the outdoor education program was an effective method in gauging the students' associations with place. Further, as sustainable outdoor education projects grow and develop, it is important to continually receive feedback from, and implement methods of assessment for students.

Our overarching goal of this community-engaged research was to determine how students engaged in local natural resources and whether methods of experiential learning

successfully fostered an interest in outdoor learning. Our findings, based on overwhelmingly positive responses from youth at River Valley and Phippsburg Elementary, strongly advocate for hands- on, experiential forms of learning inside and outside the classroom.

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Short-Term Experiential Learning Curriculum Development

New Beginnings Emergency Shelter

Final Report

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Abstract

Homeless youth in the Individualized Education Program at New Beginnings experience a lack of consistency in their education, resulting in under-performance and diminished self-efficacy. Having already established that positive youth development (PYD) strategies work effectively with this population, the goal of my capstone project was to research and implement short-term experiential learning exercises rooted in PYD to revamp self-efficacy and teach translatable skills. All identified exercises and resources were organized in a binder and given to my community partner. The capstone project further sought to evaluate the effectiveness of the short-term experiential learning model by soliciting feedback from the youth directly, but was unable to be completed due to unforeseen circumstances. This final report identifies three findings that emerged from my research and time spent at New Beginnings, and further address successful ways for educators to educate homeless youth.

I. NATURE OF THE STUDY

a. In partial fulfillment of the Educational Studies Minor at Bates College, I completed a Community Engaged Learning Capstone Project with New Beginnings Homeless Shelter. The capstone project was approached in two phases. The first phase was to research and implement short-term experiential learning exercises rooted in positive youth development. Exercises identified as effective were to be organized in a binder that my community partner could easily access. Exercises were to be diverse in content and skill level, as it was impossible to predict the type of individual attending the program on any given day. The second phase of the capstone project was to assess the effectiveness of the short-term experiential learning model by soliciting opinions of the youth directly. Due to unforeseen circumstances, my partnership ended sooner than scheduled, and I was unable to complete the second phase of the project. Phase one was the only completed phase.

II. DEFINITIONS

a. According to Sarah Vazquez, Education Specialist at New Beginnings, and also my community partner for this capstone project, positive youth development and experiential learning are two educational foundations that benefit homeless youth. She wanted my final product to be supported by these foundations because, as an organization, New Beginnings already identified them as successful for the specific population of program attendees. Below I provide two definitions to ground my research.

b. **Positive Youth Development (PYD):** A policy perspective that emphasizes providing services and opportunities to support all young people in developing a sense of competence, usefulness, belonging, and empowerment (Best Practices, 1).

c. **Experiential Learning:** Educational programs functioning outside of conventional school classrooms that place participants in responsible roles and engage them in cooperative, goal-directed activities. (Experiential Learning, 180)

III. **CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION**

a. New Beginnings Homeless Shelter offers various programs, one being the Emergency Shelter. The Emergency Shelter is a short-term facility that serves runaway or homeless youth who are in crisis. It provides emergency care for up to 12 youth ages 12-19, and the maximum length of stay is three weeks. One of the services that the shelter mandates is the Individualized Education Program. Youth in the shelter spend two hours, five days a week with Sarah to work on academic-related work. If youth are in the midst of switching schools, oftentimes their old/new school will fax work for them to complete and fax back. If youth have officially dropped out of school or their school is not in contact with the education program, Sarah helps identify the youths' strengths and interests to develop temporary project ideas.

b. I completed my capstone project field hours on Monday mornings by helping youth work on academic-related work. All program participants that I interacted with were white, high school aged males. I only interacted with one white female throughout the entire semester.

IV. PROBLEM STATEMENTS

a. When I initially sat down with Sarah to discuss the trajectory of this project, she identified two problems that needed attention: the social problem and the program problem.

b. **Social Problem:** Homeless youth in the Individualized Education Program at New Beginnings Emergency Shelter lack continuity in their lives, which consequently disrupts the consistency of their education. This instability often means there is incongruence between age and skill level. For example, a student may technically be in 9th grade, but only know 4th grade level math. As a 9th grader, this student *knows* that he/she should be able to do 9th grade level math, but cannot for various reasons. This shortcoming fosters feelings of self-defeat, which in turn, threatens self-efficacy. Diminished self-efficacy and overall self-worth was identified as the most prominent social problem for youth at New Beginnings.

    i. Sarah communicated that the challenge to confronting the social problem is developing projects that reinforce the common core, while simultaneously seeming applicable to these youths' everyday lives. Prior to our partnership, Sarah approached the social problem by using an experiential learning model rooted in positive youth development. Sarah found a few exercises that used this type of educational model, but many of these exercises required an entire class to participate or long time frames to complete. Sarah never had a full classroom of students, nor did she know if her students would attend the program for one day or three

weeks. With this information in mind, it was not feasible to identify long-term experiential learning lesson plans that call for a large number of participants. As she described it, "I need 'one-shot' deals because I might work one-on-one with a student on Monday and never see that kid again."

c. **Program Problem:** In addition to confronting the existing social problem, knowing how to measure progress for short-term attendees proved to be another challenge. Although homeless youth are allowed to stay at the Emergency Shelter for a 21-day period, the average length of stay is only 2-4 days. For example, Sarah often worked with a youth for 2 consecutive days, assuming they would be back the next day, but then would never see that youth again. Therefore, it was impossible to predict how long each youth's stay would be, which made it difficult to administer an evaluation survey soliciting the effectiveness of the short-term educational program. Thus, one of the primary goals of the partnership was to determine whether the existing program structure was truly impactful, and whether the program's mission statement addressed the needs of these homeless youth.

V. HOW STUDY ADDRESSED THE IDENTIFIED PROBLEMS

a. The current project aimed to identify effective short-term experiential exercises that apply to homeless youths' everyday lives. Once these youth realized the practical applications of each task, their participation had value. Participation was less about grade achievement, and more about how practical skills could be gained through education-oriented exercises. It was also thought that involving homeless youth in the evaluation process would offer them a sense of educational empowerment. If the youth were given an opportunity to

advocate for their needs, it would have indicated that authority figures were listening and responding. This would additionally directly impact their self-efficacy, the current social problem.

VI. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Individualized Education Program at New Beginnings has adopted an educational model that promotes positive youth development (PYD). According to the Oregon Commission on Children and Families, "PYD is a policy perspective that emphasizes providing services and opportunities to support all young people in developing a sense of competence, usefulness, belonging, and empowerment" (1). Unlike "deficit-based" programs, PYD programs are "strength-based." In other words, the focus on PYD programming is not about "fixing" troubled kids, but rather building on their self-identified abilities (Team up with Youth, 1). One of the primary objectives of PYD programming is to provide all youth with the supports and opportunities they need to empower themselves. The most successful PYD programs enable youth to participate in activities that encourage self-understanding, self-worth, and a sense of belonging and resiliency (OCCF, 3). According to Sarah Vazquez, Education Specialist at New Beginnings, PYD has already proven itself as an influential framework for empowering homeless youth. Thus, in addition to maintaining this model, it is imperative to complement PYD with an experiential learning curriculum. Experiential learning is defined as, "Educational programs functioning outside of conventional school classrooms that place participants in responsible roles and engage them in cooperative, goal-directed activities with other youth, with adults, or both (Hamilton, 180). Implementing an experiential learning model is highly desirable at New Beginnings because it enhances development and growth opportunities, as well as empowers youth to make

positive life choices. Yet, little research has focused on short-term experiential learning models, making it difficult to find exercises that apply to the short-term attendees at New Beginnings. However, there is still an abundance of literature that identifies key programmatic features of experiential learning models. It is possible that New Beginnings may have to adjust the particularities of this model in order to appropriately serve its attendees.

Heinze, Hernandez Jozefowicz, and Toro (2010) have conducted research on youth satisfaction ratings of programs targeting homeless youth and youth at risk for homelessness. They found that youths' overall experience was driven more by agency climate, interpersonal interactions, and opportunities for personal growth than material goods, services, or other resources obtained through the agency (1370). Older youth considered agency rules, organization, and predictability important factors in guiding satisfaction ratings, whereas younger youth, who oftentimes rely heavily on their caregivers, rated protection and security as important agency features. This research sheds light on the type of environment and structure New Beginnings should strive to achieve. Breaking up assignments for homeless youth into distinct pieces of work recognizes the transience of homeless youth and helps ensure completion before departure. (Murphy & Tobin, 35). Rather than working on huge projects with indefinite timelines, if youth complete small portion of a larger assignment each meeting time, they will experience frequent accomplishments. This is important in terms of restoring self-efficacy. Homeless youth will additionally benefit from more flexible ways to negotiate the curriculum. For example, partial credit programs have been successful (Murphy & Tobin, 35).

Experiential learning exercises specific for homeless youth emphasize using a life-

skills curriculum focusing on hygiene, budgeting/financial, and soft skills (Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholars). With the population at New Beginnings in mind, the Individualized Education Program would particularly benefit from implementing exercises that promote the development of soft skills. The primary objectives of a soft skill curriculum include knowing how to assess a situation, identify a problem, and locate/utilize available resources to problem solve. Robert Wood Johnson Clinical Scholars (2012) articulate the importance of knowing how to set goals and not letting external obstacles or pressures interfere with the goal. Florida Department of Education provides additional support that goal setting is a "powerful technique to develop a solid foundation for future planning and organization" (76). Goal-setting programs encourage youth to set well defined, measurable short-term and long-term goals. With long-term goals established first (I want to graduate high school), aspiring to achieve them give youth short-term motivation (I need to pass algebra this semester). Similar to goal-setting, experiential exercises on decision-making teach youth how to confront challenging situations. It is imperative that these homeless youth understand the responsibility attached to their decisions/actions, and how their decisions/actions may affect others as well. Activities that promote goal setting and decision-making aim to empower homeless youth and help rebuild self-efficacy.

VII. ORIGINAL RESEARCH QUESTIONS

a. What short-term experiential learning exercises rooted in positive youth development can help bolster self-efficacy in homeless youth?

b. How can the Individualized Education Program at New Beginnings ensure that these exercises foster self-efficacy and translatable skills?

VIII.   METHOD

a. The method of the capstone project was approached in distinct stages. Stages are listed below in chronological order:

i. **Research:** During this stage, I identified effective short-term experiential exercises by doing web searches, conducting outreach, and using existing resources. Overall, it was challenging to pinpoint exercises that would fit well to the specific population at New Beginning because they usually required long time frames to complete, a large class to participate, or expensive materials. Some exercises could simply not be modified.

1. Most web searches I conducted suggested goal setting, decision-making, or role-playing exercises. Although these exercises showed evidence of benefiting homeless youth, New Beginnings already addressed personal development in other programs. In other words, the purpose of the Individualized Education Program was not to offer this type of service, but rather more academic- related services.

2. A peer of mine, Patrece Joseph, recently completed her senior thesis on how to track and assess student progress at New Beginnings. I used a contact list of agencies she generated to jump- start my personal outreach process. The purpose of conducting outreach was to identify agencies similar to New Beginnings that utilized short-term experimental learning models, and to learn what exactly these models looked like. The outreach I conducted was also as unhelpful

as the web searches because the majority of the organizations' focus was on GED attainment and job security. Please see Appendix 1 for more detailed notes on my outreach.

3. During the research stage, I definitely experienced some roadblocks in terms of identifying exactly what Sarah wanted. All of these roadblocks slowed my research process down significantly. And with our partnership ending earlier than planned, this project was crunched for time. Sarah slightly adapted the desired final product (the binder), and asked that instead of finding entirely new exercises, I modify and organize all of her existing materials. The existing materials are actually what really jumpstarted the curriculum development process.

ii. **Curriculum Development:** During this stage, I worked closely with Sarah to examine the exercises we identified during the research stage. Depending on the instructions, we sometimes had to modify the exercise so it applied to the specific population that attended the education program.

iii. **Implementation:** During this stage, I underwent some role-playing exercises with Sarah. For example, she asked what I would do if a youth expressed interest in establishing a friendship, but how to negotiate the fine line between mentorship and friendship. Further, we talked about what positive youth development looks like, and what challenges I might face (i.e., youth resistance). After I felt comfortable working with the

youth, I was given permission to lead a short-term experiential exercise titled, "Property Rights and Tragedy of the Commons Fishing Game." Please see Appendix 2 for the official directions.

iv. **Evaluation:** Although I was unable to complete the evaluation stage, I envisioned creating and administering a student feedback survey. The overall goal of the project was to quantify program effectiveness and determine if the program addressed the youths' needs. This was to be achieved by soliciting student impressions and concerns of the program. Furthermore, in hopes of revamping self-efficacy, I thought if we positioned students to take ownership of their education (by expressing that New Beginnings needs *their* help) they would feel empowered.

v. **Binder Development:** I organized the final product, the binder, into the following sections: Research, Resources, Math/Science, Language Arts/History, and Miscellaneous. The "Research" section included all of the scholarly articles that inspired my literature review. All notable and applicable passages of the articles were highlighted. The "Resources" section included materials for activity planning, as well as a document listing URL links for more short-term experiential learning exercises. Please see Appendix 3 for this document. Each subject-specific section — "Math/Science, "Language Arts/History," and "Miscellaneous" — included the directions for short-term experiential learning exercises (with worksheets) that could be implemented with the youth on any given day. Modifications were made to each exercise as needed.

IX. REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

    a. After Sarah identified the social and program problem, and explained the desired final product, I generated a few reflective questions to guide my research process, as well as refer to during my personal reflection of the community partnership experience. Additionally, because my research questions targeted the original plans for the research and evaluation stage, I saw it necessary to adapt my research questions into reflective questions.

    b. What existing educational exercises can be implemented or modified to meet the target population at New Beginnings that are short-term and experiential in nature?

    c. What are the key features of these exercises and the education program at New Beginnings that benefit homeless youth?

X. PRESENTATION OF DATA & DATA ANALYSIS (My data is presented in the form of overall "take-away" points rather than in the form of traditional quantitative data. Guided by my reflective questions, I identified three "take-away" points from working with the youth at New Beginnings. Each "take-away" point is supported by evidence and analysis).

    a. Students are effective learners when educators adopt a strength-based rather than deficit-based approach.

        i. The following example illustrates a case in which the strength-based model was successful. A boy at the program was being extremely disruptive by provoking his peers. The other youth at the education program inevitably fed off his negative energy, which created an environment that was

impossible to focus. After leaving, my community partner privately emailed me to apologize/explain the boy's behavior. Later that week, she sent me a follow-up email regarding the boy's complete turn around. Once Sarah stopped reacting to his cry for negative attention and tried to solicit his educational strengths, the two of them discovered a common love for philosophical writing. The boy refocused his energy by writing an essay about the philosophy of special education. He was motivated by an intrinsic interest and individual strength. The following week I had the privilege of reading his essay. He eloquently shared his personal journey about being labeled as a special education student, and how this label constricted his opportunity for growth.

According to the boy, before becoming a resident at New Beginnings, his teachers did not recognize his academic-related strengths and deemed him perpetually disruptive in class settings. The most fulfilling part of reading his essay was seeing how proud he was of his work and the positive recognition he received from others. This case demonstrates the importance of implementing an experiential learning model that uses a "strength-based" approach rather than a "deficit-based" one. Once Sarah solicited the boy's strengths, he was able to produce quality work, and more importantly, see the value in his education.

ii. One day a boy was working on a grammar worksheet and Sarah asked if he could give an example of a noun. The boy shouted, "bitch." Although youth in most educational settings would be reprimanded for using such

profanities, Sarah acknowledged that the boy actually understood parts of speech if he was granted permission to use the word "bitch." His strength was being able to identify the part of speech that "bitch" belonged to, and that is what he was recognized for. He was not recognized for his "deficits" – using poor language in an educational setting. To my surprise, the boy did not even make a big deal about the fact he was allowed to use a swear word for an educational exercise. He approached the situation maturely. This example demonstrates that capitalizing on a youth's strength can facilitate purposeful learning.

b. Exercises with "take-home" points that offer translatable skills are most effective.

    i. "Property Rights and Tragedy of the Commons Fishing Game," (Appendix 2) the exercise I implemented with the youth at New Beginnings, provides strong evidence that exercises with "take-home" points and translatable skills are well received. The primary "take-home" points of this exercise included lessons about negotiation, sharing, and strategizing, as well as raised questions about the power of ownership and why owning "things" affects the way we treat our "things," and why we continue engaging in destructive behaviors when it harms the environment. The youth appeared so engrossed in this exercise because each "take-away" point could directly relate their life. When the youth grasped the fact that the skills they were learning in an academic setting could transfer to a real life setting, the exercise was more appealing because it was not solely academic. It also had applicability.

ii. Exercises on goal setting and decision-making are effective with homeless youth because the skills acquired from these types of exercises apply to a diversity of real life scenarios. In other words, having these skills help youth deal with real issues outside of an educational setting. According to the literature, these types of exercises resonate with homeless youth because they need "soft-skills" in order to survive.

c. Student-centered exercises where students feel empowered and responsible for their learning will be well received. This also includes exercises that incorporate principles of experiential learning: hands-on, collaborative, team-based, and communicative learning.

i. "Property Rights and Tragedy of the Commons Fishing Game" (Appendix 2) appeared to be extremely well liked by the youth at New Beginnings, and I believe its effectiveness can be attributed to the fact that the exercise incorporated elements of experiential learning and offered translatable skills. The exercise was physically hands-on, student-centered, and team-based. It involved communication and critical thinking amongst all members. This case demonstrates that when youth are active participants in educational exercises, their engagement significantly increases. When youth are granted an active versus passive role, it signifies that educators trust their ability to take responsibility for their education, and that a person of authority believes they are capable of success. In sum, student-centered exercises that incorporate principles of experiential learning directly address the social problem of this capstone project: strengthening

self-efficacy.

XI. CONCLUSIONS

a. Conclusions About Findings: My findings support the idea that short-term experiential learning exercises rooted in positive youth development work effectively for homeless youth at New Beginnings. This capstone project identified that when homeless youth feel respected and see the value in/applicability of their education, their self-efficacy is enhanced and their participation is more energetic, voluntary, and rewarding. The three take-away points that emerged during my partnership with New Beginnings offer key programmatic features of experiential learning that educators should consider when working with, or developing a curriculum for, homeless youth.

b. Conclusions About Community Engaged Learning: Participating in community-engaged learning and establishing a partnership with New Beginnings was extremely rewarding. Every successful partnership does come with a few pitfalls, however, and my personal conclusions about community engaged learning warrant some reflection. I experienced many roadblocks in terms of the research and evaluation stage, as well as grappled with the limited time I had to complete the capstone project. I learned not to get frustrated, though, because most of these roadblocks were out of my control. In order to successfully confront the drawbacks I experienced during community engaged learning, I was willing to negotiate and adapt the original project. Because I had strong communication with my community partner, adapting the final product seemed effortless.

    i. I also struggled striking a balance between my community partner's needs

(the binder) and my own needs (the capstone project). My work for New Beginning and my work for the capstone project often felt disjointed, but when I was able to grasp the fact that I was serving two different purposes, the community partnership was much more gratifying.

XII. OVERALL CONCLUSIONS & IMPLICATIONS

a. My partnership with New Beginnings Homeless Shelter elicited three major take-away points in regards to working with homeless youth: Students are effective learners when educators adopt a strength-based rather than deficit-based approach; exercises with "take-home" points that offer translatable skills are most effective; and student-centered exercises where students feel empowered and responsible for their learning will be well received. This also includes exercises that incorporate principals of experiential learning: hands-on, collaborative, team- based, and communicative learning. The three take-away points I propose target how to instill educational value in homeless youth using a short-term experiential learning model rooted in positive youth development. These findings are significant because they acknowledge key programmatic features and strategies to foster academic curiosity and strengthen self-efficacy in homeless youth. Because most homeless youth experience adversity *outside* of an academic setting, their ability to perform well *in one* often suffers. In other words, because of homeless youths' background, educators might need to find different ways to educate them than the ways they would typically use for youth with stable home lives. I offer educational strategies and programmatic features that are *specifically* tailored to engage homeless youth.

It is my hope that these take-away points guide and inspire educators who work with homeless youth.

b. Because I was unable to complete the evaluation stage of my capstone project, additional research conducted for the Individualized Education Program at New Beginnings should examine program effectiveness. In this particular study, I evaluated program effectiveness based on my own personal research and observation, but future research should seek feedback from the actual participants. Perhaps future researchers could use my proposed method of evaluation to jumpstart the evaluation process.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Hamilton, S. F. (1980). Experiential learning programs for youth. *American Journal of Education*, *88*(2), 179-215.

This article is sectioned into three parts. The first defines experiential learning and describes some of its properties, purposes, and forms. The second part provides a framework for assessing program effectiveness. Examples of reviewed experiential learning programs are reviewed in this section. Lastly, Hamilton offers recommendations for future research regarding the value of experiential learning. This article is particularly useful as it explicitly explains the characteristics of experiential learning, and highlights established methods to measure program effectiveness.

Heinze, H. J., Hernandez Jozefowicz, D. M., & Toro, P. A. (2010). Taking the youth perspective: Assessment of program characteristics that promote positive development in homeless and at-risk youth. *Children And Youth Services Review*, *32*(10), 1365-1372.

This research examines youth ratings of homeless agencies that utilize positive development models. Participants were given a questionnaire that solicited ratings in terms of program dimensions, client characteristics, and overall satisfaction. This article proves to be a valuable source as it offers a credible scale that could potentially inspire the survey I will create and administer during the evaluation stage of the current project.

Murphy, J. F., & Tobin, K. J. (2011). Homelessness comes to school: How homeless children

and youths can succeed. *The Phi Delta Kappan, 93*(3), 32-37.

This research identifies successful strategies for schools enrolling homeless youth. Murphy and Tobin provide an education framework that includes developing awareness, attending to basic needs, providing effective instruction, creating a supportive environment, providing additional supports, collaborating with other organizations, and promoting parent involvement. In addition to the information about increasing awareness about youth homelessness, the sections regarding educational instruction and supportive environments will aid my research on experiential learning practices.

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Team Up With Youth! Retrieved January 2014, from Sarah Vazquez, Education Specialist at New Beginnings

APPENDIX 1 — Outreach to Homeless Shelters

1. **Bridge Over Troubled Waters (Boston, MA)**

   a. The only education-oriented program offered at BOTW is Adult Education. Their shelter is for 12 youth who are in the "final stages" before becoming self- sufficient in the real world. All youth who stay in the shelter are working, saving money, and working toward getting their GED. They amount of time youth stay at the shelter varies.

   b. When I asked about experiential learning, the woman I spoke with said that the students sometimes go on field trips to community colleges. When asked to elaborate, she only spoke of Adult Education.

2. **Youth Build Boston (Roxbury, MA)**

   a. Left a message on 2/14/2014 for Monica. Waiting for call back. Tom Kane – Youth Build Alternatives (Portland) returned my call on 2/24/2014.

      i. Contact information (phone number): 775-0105 ext. 162

   b. 9-month program. ½ time spend working toward GED, but other ½ of time, work on practical skills/experiential learning.

   c. One day in classroom, next day working with vocational crew.

   d. Youth build model has always revolved around construction (started back in 1990s). Ask students what they want – Education, but also make communities better.

      i. Doing some work with Portland Housing Priority. Also doing a culinary arts program.

      ii. Goal when kids leave is to have GED because can't do anything without GED. But also engage in job shadows, working in community.

       iii. Follow model of Youth Build USA

3. **Street Academy**

    a. Part of the Portland Public School program, but collaborates with other services: Preble Street Resource Center, Day One, Portland Public Health. Referred me to a woman named Kristen at Preble Street – talk to her about building self-efficacy/self-esteem.

    b. Trying to connect homeless youth with education. For some, means re-enrolling in public school, obtaining GED (GED testing on site – pre-testing, tutoring, administering test), employment work (job skills and job placement), enrolling in college, etc.

    c. Work with youth who are 16-older. But because Street Academy falls under umbrella of Adult Education, able to work with youth 21+

    d. Transient Population – so mainly focus on traditional education. Find that youth really need GED, college degrees, or job placements to become self-sufficient, so focus on that.

4. **Preble Street – Teen Center (Portland, ME)**

    a. Left a message on 2/14/2014 for Kristin. Waiting for call back.

    b. Works at Teen Center – Provides immediate services, but focuses on building relationships, enhancing self-esteem, and offering youth the opportunity to develop life skills.

5. **Learning Works Program (Portland, ME)**

    a. Work with youth ages 16-24. Focus on alternative education, GED preparation, job-skills, life-skills, and leadership development

b. Tom Kane – Director of Student Development, Youth Building Alternatives. Left a message on 2/14/2014. Waiting for a call back.

6. **Youth Care (Seattle, WA)**

    a. Called on 2/14/2014 and went straight to voicemail. Call back.

7. **Larkin Street Youth Services (San Francisco, CA) – Helpful.**

    a. Workforce development – Hire Up – Education/employment support.

    b. Britney Tanenbaum – ext. 213 – btanenbaum@larkinstreetyouth.org - Britney is the Underage (under 18) Education Specialist at Hire Up. Her focus is on education and employment goals. How can she get youth to approach education/employment with no professional experience? How to help youth understand value in education, and once that is achieve, how to approach goals.

        i. Left message on 2/14/2014 for Britney. Waiting for call back.

    c. Joey – ext. 234 jnotaro@larkinstreeyouth.org -- Works with youth GED preparation, continuation with high school diploma.

        i. Called on 2/14/2014. Voicemail said that Friday, Feb 14 would be his last day at Hire Up and that he would no longer be in the position.

    d. Edwin Ramirez – eramirez@larkinstreetyouth.org - Need to email him as he said he will direct/expose me to different materials/resources. Spoke about two different programs, one being 4 weeks and one being 6 months. For this 4-week program, life-skill building, employment goals, GED information is condensed inhour group sessions. Still receiving same information, but curriculum is modified for the given timeframe.

        i. Emailed on 2/14/2014 to ask for resources.

ii. Send a follow up email to Edwin! I think he will be a great resource.

APPENDIX 2 — Property Rights & the Tragedy of the Commons Fishing Game

INTRODUCTION

Property rights—the formal and informal rules regarding the use, ownership, and transfer of property—provide important incentives. Ownership generally provides an incentive for people to consider the value of property in the future. Therefore, people tend to take better care of things they own and value. This lesson helps students experience and understand the influence of property rights on scarce resources.

CONCEPTS

• Choice

• Incentives

• Property Rights

• Voluntary Exchange

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Students will:

1. Understand that incentives influence how people choose to use resources.

2. Explain how private ownership provides incentives to manage resources wisely and creates better likelihood of prosperity.

MATERIALS

• A piece of flipchart paper (or an overhead transparency)

• Overhead projector (optional)

• A marker

• A handful of "goldfish" crackers or beans

• A roll of dimes or quarters, or a bag of candies

PROCEDURE

Part I:

1. Ask students to hypothesize the reasons for continued over-fishing even as fishers run out of fish. Record the hypotheses on the board or an overhead transparency and explain that you will come back to consider this later.

2. Explain to your students that, changes in incentives change the choices people make. In order to understand this better, ask students to take part in a simulation and have them explain the behavior they saw.

Part II: The Simulation

1. Recruit 6 volunteers to come to the front of the room and gather around the flipchart paper (or overhead projector). Instruct the rest of the class to watch what is happening and be ready later to comment on what they see.

2. To begin, throw several goldfish crackers or beans randomly on the piece of paper (or on a blank transparency). Make sure all students in the class can observe what is going on.

3. Explain to the volunteers that they are fishers and you are a fish buyer. You will give them two 20-second fishing rounds and will purchase any fish they bring to you in good condition.

The paper (or transparency) represents the ocean and the fish crackers (or paper clips) represent the fish in the sea. (Explain that you will *not* purchase the fish that are crushed or broken.) You will buy any fish caught in the first 20-second round for 10 cents (or one candy) each and any fish caught in the second 20-second round for 25 cents (or two candies). (note: consider ahead of time how many fish to put on the screen and how much you're willing to pay for them. Generally the fewer fish and the older the students, the higher the pay must be to provide and effective incentive to participate. With younger students use individually wrapped pieces of candy and candy bars instead of coins.)

4. Immediately after clearly giving the instructions say, "Go!" and watch the time carefully. Do not give students time to consider the possibilities or talk over the problem before you say, "Go." *(Students tend to grab the fish crackers immediately, although there may be an initial, brief hesitation until one student reaches in. Some fish will be destroyed and only a couple of students will earn money. Usually no fish are left for the second round. If using flipchart paper the paper is usually scrunched and mangled, some of the fish crackers are usually damaged.)*

5. Pay the students for their catch. Announce that there can be no second round because the fish are all captured or crunched. Ask the six students if they understood that the fish would have been worth more in the second round. *(Usually, this misunderstanding does not occur. But, if it does, consider running the experiment again, particularly if no student has tried to organize the others to wait. If you decide to run it again, do so quickly. The result—grabbing, damaged fish, and nothing left for the second round—will be the same.)*

6. Ask the fishers why they didn't wait for the second round. *(Anticipate that they may 'blame' whoever jumped in first, but all will comment that they couldn't afford to wait for the second fishing round because they were afraid everyone else would take them all.)*

7. What caused the over-fishing that destroyed the fish population?
(Help students articulate that the fish depletion was not the result of 'bad' people doing 'bad' things. No one set out to destroy the fish; people were pursuing their own best interests given the incentives they faced.)

8. Announce that you are going to run the experiment again and explain that the time rounds and pay rate will be the same—10 cents (or one candy) each for the first 20-second fishing round and 25 cents (or two candies) on the second round.

9. On the flipchart paper, or on the overhead, draw 6 "territories." Now explain to your volunteers that there is one new rule.

10. Assign one rectangle (territory) to each student and explain that he or she owns the fish in that rectangle. Have them initial their territory. Also explain that the fine for taking someone else's fish is $1 and the loss of future fishing rights. Put one or two fish in each person's territory. Have some ambiguously placed fish in between two territories or in the periphery.

11. Make sure that students understand the new rule. Remind them that there will be two 20-second rounds, say "Go," and start timing. *(Usually students will not harvest the fish. Some*

who are confused by the rules may try to harvest others' fish; be sure to stop this and take away that student's fishing privileges.)

12. After 20 seconds, call "Stop." Pay for any harvested fish. Remind the students the price for the second round. *(If anyone asks about a third round, ignore the question and shrug and go on with the activity.)*

13. Quickly start the second fishing round. When the round ends, call "Stop." Pay for the harvested fish, pick up any remaining fish, thank the volunteers and send them back to their seats.

14. Ask students to identify the similarities and differences in the first and second experiments, both in terms of set-up and in terms of results. *(Students' answers should include the idea that people chose to harvest early in the first experiment because they were afraid someone else would take the fish if they let them remain. In the second experiment, that wasn't the case.)*

15. Encourage students to explain the differences and similarities using economic terms like choice, incentives, property rights and voluntary exchange. Below are some questions you may pose:

Choice:

• Were the alternatives and the choices different in the two experiments? *(Yes)*

• What was scarce? *(The fish, the time for fishing—no difference from the first experiment)*

• What alternatives were available to the fishers? *(To fish now, to fish later, to not fish at all— no difference from the first experiment)*

• What choice did they make and what was the consequence of their choice?

• Did any of the fishers set out to deliberately destroy the fish population?

Incentives:

• Were the incentives the same or different?

• Was there a reward for fishing in the first round of the second experiment?

• What was the punishment for fishing in the first round of the second experiment?

• Did the incentives encourage different behavior?

Property Rights:

• Did the changed property rights rules affect the behavior in the fishers?

• How did the property rights rules differ?

• Did the changed rules of ownership affect the incentives? How?

DEBRIEF

Return to the original question: Why do people who care about and even depend on the health of fish populations participate in the over-fishing that is destroying many fish stock? What do you think about your list of hypotheses? Where any of them correct or helpful? Note: Before taking part in this lesson, students have a tendency to explain the over-fishing problem by assuming people are greedy, ignorant, or stupid. The activity illustrates that those ideas do not explain the behavior very well. The problem isn't the people; it's the rules of the game. The character, morals, knowledge, and mental capacity of the people in the two experiments were the same. However, people behaved differently when the property rights changed the

incentives.

CONCLUSION

Conduct a wider discussion on the issue of the tragedy of the commons using the reading below. Can you think of other environmental issues in which the tragedy of the commons plays an important role? *(Students should be able to recognize several local and international issues.*

Most endangered species problems are tragedies of the commons. Trash in public parks, lakes, restrooms, and even the mess in the school cafeteria are commons problems, as is the pollution of the greatest commons of all—the air.) This lesson plan is based on, with some modification, *Fish Tales: Classroom Lessons About the Economics and the Environment*. By Donald R. Wentworth and Kathryn Ratté, copyright 2002 by PERC (www.perc.org). A downloadable, pdf version of the "Fish Tales" lesson plans is available from the PERC web site.

Food for Thought: The Tragedy of the Commons: Written by Gabriella Megyesi

In the first experiment, ownership wasn't defined, and no fisher was willing to risk waiting to until the second round because other fishers would take all the fish. As a result there was over- fishing. Economists refer to this scenario as "the tragedy of the commons."

The original term comes from eighteenth century England, where towns reserved some land as common land available for everyone to use. Because everyone could use the common land, shepherds in England used common land rather than their own land for grazing. There

was no problem at first, as long as only a few people used the commons; but when many did, they overgrazed the land. The grass died.

The key to understanding "the tragedy of the commons" is to remember that people are more likely to take better care of things they own than things that someone else—or no one else—owns. Private ownership creates incentives that reward the wise use of property and the conservation of resources for use in the future. The wise use of property increases its future value.

Publicly owned land, on the other hand, creates incentives for overuse. When everyone owns land collectively, people who actually use the land share the costs of their use with everybody else – including those who don't use it. For example, people in England placed additional animals on the common land even though the livestock were scrawny and unhealthy and the commons overgrazed.

Why is the elephant population decreasing in Kenya and Zambia, while their numbers are increasing dramatically in South Africa, India, Botswana, and Zimbabwe? (In those African countries where elephants are owned in common, and where the ivory trade is banned, the number of elephants are dwindling rapidly. They are victims of poachers in search of ivory. But in India, South Africa, Botswana or Zimbabwe, elephants are not government owned (they are owned by villages or by individuals), and the ivory trade is legal. Despite this (really, because of it) the elephant population is growing! Why? Villagers are issued hunting permits, depending on the size and health of the herds in their area. The villagers may choose

to sell the permits. The hunters benefit by gaining meat and hides; the fees paid by the hunters help to support wildlife management services as well as provide income for the villagers.

For information on fisheries management and environmental conservation, visit the Fraser Institute publications page at www.fraserinstitute.ca.

APPENDIX 3 – URL Links for Additional Short-Term Experiential Exercises

1. **Field Trips as Short-Term Experiential Education** (Article found in JSTOR, Teaching Sociology)

   a. Article focuses on the basic steps to planning, undertaking, and evaluating fieldtrips. It concludes by addressing the advantages of such excursions.

   b. This article would be a helpful guide for Sarah when/if she plans fieldtrips.

      i. Printed off

2. **Introduction to Hands-On Activities** (David Agnew – Arkansas State University)

   a. Five steps in the Experiential Learning Model

      i. Experience – Do the activity

      ii. Share – Reactions to activity, discuss the observations with others

      iii. Process – Reflect and analyze from your personal prospective

      iv. Generalization – Connect lesson learned to life

      v. Apply – Transfer what was learned to similar situations

   b. After activity is done, instructor should conduct a review, debrief, and closure. Follow up questions include:

      i. What did you think?

      ii. What did you like about this activity?

      iii. How did it go?

      iv. What skills would you need to do this as a career?

      v. NOTE: Do not evaluate or test the student. Be positive about the activity. Not about assessment.

3. **Experiential Learning Exercises: Sources and Specific Examples**

(http://sbaweb.wayne.edu/~absel/bkl/Bg/BGe1.pdf)

    a. Specific examples of exercises including: Specific Company/job role plays, decision-making exercises, debate exercises, critique/evaluation exercise, game show format exercise

        i. Printed off

4. Laurel and Associates, Ltd. (http://laurelandassociates.com/category/experiential-learning-activit ie s/)

    a. This website is designed in a blog-post format where educators thoroughly describe experiential learning activities that they have implemented in their classrooms. Seem short in duration and don't necessarily have academic-related goals – More about problem solving, understanding different perspectives, debunking stereotypes.

    b. Look at links on the right side of website – GREAT resources. Resources include:

        i. Attitude-changing learning activities

        ii. Case study

        iii. Dry topics – How to make a boring topic interesting

        iv. Job interview

        v. Make participants more alert

        vi. Start with "why"

        vii. Problem solving

        viii. Role play

    c. Good ideas/inspiration for Sarah.

5. Leaving Home Education Resource Site http://www.leavinghome.info/educational-

resources/

    a. Patti Buck suggested that I explore this website. Although activities are designed ABOUT rather than FOR homeless youth, she thought some could be adapted for the youth at New Beginnings.

    b. Go to "Free Session Plans" on the right of screen. Some of the activities that I thought could be modified and applied were listed under the following headers:

        i. How much will it cost?

        ii. Where will you be in 10 years time?

    c. All of these activities are in downloadable, printable PDFs – extremely accessible and short-term in nature.

6. **The Fraser Institute** (https://www.fraserinstitute.org/education-programs/teachers/classroom-resources/lesson-plans.aspx)

    a. The Fraser Institute has developed a number of innovative programs and initiatives – such as programs for non-profits, educators, and the economic freedom index.

    b. This site is where "Property Rights & Tragedy of the Commons" is from. Other activities are titled:

        i. Understanding Climate Change

        ii. Supply and Demand: Market Game in Oil

        iii. Trade & Voluntary Exchange

7. **Property and Environment Research Center – PERC**

(http://perc.org/sites/default/files/fish_tales.pdf)

    a.   This PDF offers multiple activities regarding classroom lessons about economics and the environment. Students will use economic reasoning to help solve mysteries surround tragic reductions in fish populations.

    b.   Seem like great "one-time" activities.

8. **Lesson Plans – History**

    a.   http://www.discoveryeducation.com/search/page/-/-/lesson-plan/u.s.%20history/index.cfm

    b.   http://www.besthistorysites.net/index.php/lesson-plans

9. **PBS Learning Media** (http://www.pbslearningmedia.org/)

    a.   Browse PBS Learning Media (at bottom of webpage) and you can search by grade, subject, media type (video, interactive), etc. GREAT format of website. Easy to navigate.

The Push for Correctional Education: Examining the Cumberland County Jail Cumberland

County Jail Adult Education Program

Portland, Maine

Aisling Ryan

Bates College Education Department

April 9, 2014

Abstract

The proposal addresses potential correctional education research at the Cumberland County Jail (CCJ) in Portland, Maine. It was been determined that 70% of prisoners nationwide never complete high school, and 40% of prisoners are considered functionally illiterate (Pryor & Thompkins, 2013). However, research shows that correctional education plays a major role in lowering recidivism rates, while increasing post-release employment opportunities (Pryor & Thompkins, 2013). The current project was conducted with Lt. Arlene Jacques, analyzing whether education programs at the Cumberland County Jail make an impact on rates of recidivism and in-jail disciplinary action of students who participated in 2013 CCJ programing. An obstacle was data interpretation for inmates who have been at CCJ for a longer period of time than those who were only residing there for a couple weeks. This may cause disproportionality between the number of classes taken versus in-jail disciplinary action. Overall, results concluded that inmates who take courses at the Cumberland County Jail are significantly less likely to receive major violations. This implies that there should be a push for correctional education in jails and prisons.

**The Social
Dilemma**

It is evident in that the United States is dominated by an educated class. It is nearly

impossible to obtain a job without at least a GED or a high school equivalent degree, which

pushes the highly revered "American Dream" to the wayside for individuals of low-income

families or those who have less opportunity to access a good education. While unemployment

is a major risk for those without a high school diploma, additional consequences, such as

imprisonment, tend to coincide with inequalities of educational attainment (Ewert, Sykes,

Pettit, 2013). Approximately 70% of the nation's inmates never finish high school, with 46%

achieving only some high school and 16.4% of inmates with no high school education at all.

Additionally, 40% of the nation's prisoners are functionally illiterate—a rate five times higher

than the U.S. average (Pryor & Thompkins, 2013). However, despite these realities, less than

5% of inmates are offered postsecondary programming during the academic school year while

residing within the correctional system.

With a rapidly growing prison population, the United States cannot afford the

consequences of releasing uneducated prisoners into society. Incarceration pulls millions of

individuals out of the workforce (Ewert, Sykes, Pettit, 2013). However, research shows that

inmates are not prepared for the economically oriented world when returning to the workforce

post-incarceration (Pryor & Thompkins, 2013). New York, for example, released 40,000

inmates at the end of 2009, and only 34% of the inmates were employed post-release (Pryor &

Thompkins, 2013). Additionally, homelessness, unemployment, and financial obstacles

consequentially lead to recidivism (Abrams, Terry, & Franke, 2011). The recidivism rate

increases 55.9% among offenders who do not complete their high school degree

(Lockwood,Nally, Ho, Knutson, 2012). U.S. incarceration rates will continue to increase (the

U.S. currently holds a quarter of the world's prisoners) (Liptak, 2008), which will consequentially be detrimental to society as a whole. Therefore, based on previous research, educational attainment for inmates is critical to improving the nation's well being.

The Cumberland County Jail (CCJ) in Portland, Maine, is currently the frontrunner in Maine correctional education. The jail provides opportunities for inmates to take high school equivalent courses, obtain an adult basic education, or even provide an opportunity to take a college course with Masters students from the University of New England (Jacques, 2014). Additionally, CCJ offers vocational training programs, such as life skills classes, employability skills, introductory computer courses, culinary arts, key boarding, writing basics, and gardening projects.

For the winter semester, I worked under the guidance of Lt. Arlene Jacques at the Cumberland County Jail in Portland, Maine. Using Spellman, a database that holds all inmate disciplinary information and behavior history while at Cumberland County Jail, and comparing it to educational programming record of each inmate, I addressed the following three questions:

- What is the effect of educational programming on inmate recidivism in a jail setting?

- Does educational programming increase or decrease disciplinary action within a jail setting?

- What can be implemented or modified through educational programming that will decrease disciplinary action or recidivism post-release?

Literature Review

There is not much of an argument against revamping correctional education in the United States. The consensus among scholars emphasizes that general education while incarcerated allows for an easier transition back into society (Cantrell, 2012; Thomas, 2013; Blomberg, Bales & Piquer, 2012). Two major components, the overall purpose for correctional education and what should be taught to inmates while incarcerated, have been debated among scholars.

The perspective of why correctional education is valuable for an inmate's post-release success varies from scholar to scholar; a perspective among some academic researchers tends to focus on rebuilding a democracy of well-informed citizens, while other researchers perceive correctional education as simply an opportunity for inmates to rebuild their psychological and emotional well-being (Cantrell, 2012; Thomas, 2013; McKinney & Cotronea, 2011). Cantrell (2012), for example, perceives education as an opportunity for inmates to obtain equal democratic citizenship. Students, while incarcerated, should be utilizing their time to "transform into active, aware, engaged citizens by fostering critical thinking skills encouraging debate, and applying course lessons" to their personal lives. Because of this, teachers have the potential to positively change personal perspectives and build open minds. Cantrell also emphasizes that jail environments are extremely oppressive environments, and therefore, correctional education allows for inmates to explore, express, and/or reject ideas, positively defining their incarceration time (Cantrell, 2012). Extending on this perspective, researchers also argue that providing educational opportunities within a prison or jail environment will eventually address the disconnect between incarceration and social opportunity in terms of literacy, education status, and employment (Pryor &

Thompkins, 2013).

The emphasis on utilizing education to promote democratic citizenship is not the only reason scholars state the need for correctional education. Other scholars argue that inmates who have been incarcerated and have recidivated multiple times have struggled with academics since their elementary education. Because of this, correctional education should be a tool to empower inmates and improve a positive overall self-image. Thomas (2013), for example, emphasizes that inmates are not always going to become productive members of society, due to psychological and emotional well-being. Because of this, it may be more productive for correctional education to be designed to *not only* address academic and vocational proficiency, but also be an opportunity for inmates to improve their positive self-image and future aspirations. Therefore, correctional practitioners should promote intellectual development and assist inmates in reaching goals. This will hopefully improve their self-esteem and gain a clearer perspective of their social environments (Thomas, 2013). This perspective directly aligns with the self-determination theory, in which a practitioner places a particular emphasis on intrinsic motivation to achieve, has been found particularly effective in correctional education classrooms. This is because fostering this self-motivation tends to promote feelings of competence and individual autonomy (McKinney & Cotronea, 2011).

Scholars have also argued about the type of curriculum that should be taught in a jail's classroom. The most commonly promoted correctional curriculum emphasizes academics (such as post-secondary education or a GED), service learning education, or vocational skills. While this topic is heavily debated, scholars hold strong arguments for all three types of curriculum.

Effective programs tend to be based on post-release success. Programs that focus on

vocational strategies and community employment are studied to be the most effective (Bouffard, Mackenzie, Hickman, 2000). Therefore, focusing incarceration time on preparation for life post release tends to decrease rates of recidivism and increase contribution to society. This type of curriculum builds on the need to promote democratic citizenship and social equality for inmates.

Recent studies have shown that inmates with higher academic achievement tend to have more positive post-release experiences. For example, juveniles who strive for academic achievement are much more likely to return to school post-release and much less likely to reoffend (Blomberg, Bales, Piquero, 2012). Additionally, challenging courses tend to push inmates to succeed beyond correctional education. A program offered by Masters students in Oklahoma, for example, challenged inmates to partake in a college level course through intense reading and rigorous work. However, inmates' success was highlighted when 14% enrolled in a university or vocational school post-release (Rose, Reschenberg, Richards, 2010). Research demonstrates that academic achievement boots offenders' well-being, confidence, and ambition to find value in education post-release.

Finally, studies have also shown that service-learning programs tend to improve inmates' connection to post-release reality (Frank, Omstead, Pigg, 2012). Service learning programs provide inmates with the opportunity to volunteer in the outside community and become civically engaged while incarcerated. The argument holds the basic need to introduce reality to inmates for when they are released from jail or prison. This type of education prepares inmates for the practical realities faced on a day-to-day basis, which hopefully promotes self- transformation, critical thinking about reality, introspection, and community development (Frank, Omstead, Pigg, 2012).

The state of Maine is in need of research on the impacts of education provided during incarceration. While studies have recognized the benefits of *prison* education, in which inmates are incarcerated for long periods of time, there is very little research on educational programs within county jails, in which inmates stay for only a few weeks to a year. However, in 2012 alone, the police reported 35,000 offenses, and 58.1% of inmates have been re-incarcerated since their release since 2004 have reoffended (Crime in Maine, 2012; Muskie School, 2008).

Therefore, focusing on post-release services may benefit over half of the state's offenders.

Methods

My Experience

While I have always been curious of what exists beyond public school education, it was not until I was in the midst of my thesis when I discovered that correctional education could be a potential research project. Last semester, I worked in a Family Treatment Drug Court program at the Lewiston District Court, which focuses on parents whose children were in child custody due to drug or alcohol addiction. It struck me, however, that approximately 95% of the parents in the program had not graduated high school, and many were struggling to achieve their GED certification, an FTDC graduation requirement, while participating in the program. What I eventually came to learn, however, was that most of the parents had grown up with extremely troubled, unsettling childhoods, and going to school was simply not a priority. How can a person whose parents taught them to use drugs at age 10 be interested in math homework? How can a person who is in fear of being violently abused in their own home ask for help on a reading assignment? How can a teenager focus on graduating high school when she has two children and is at high risk of becoming homeless? These moments

of revelation got me thinking about correctional education. From what I have seen working in schools, at a homeless housing program during the summer, and at the Lewiston District Court, education is *so vital*, but also so unfathomably challenging for some individuals coming from troubling backgrounds.

Before a course begins, Lt. Arlene Jacques, my community partner, writes this statement on the board:

Jail is the best thing that has ever happened to you.

According to Lt. Jacques, many inmates chuckle when they see this. How in the world could jail be the best thing that has ever happened? There is no space, no sympathy, no freedom, and a bunch of angry people all placed together in one building. No way, can jail be the best thing that has ever happened to them!

Time stops in jail. Everything that has influenced an inmate's life is intentionally beyond the cement walls of his or her cell. For many inmates, jail is the first time they think about what they have done, the consequences of their actions, and what their future *will* look like or *could* look like depending on their own choices. Therefore, why not take advantage of it? Why not finally learn to cook, receive certifications for employment, receive counseling, or achieve a high school diploma?

I wanted to look into correctional education because I believe there are inmates with incredible potential but have received little opportunity or have faced too many barriers to succeed. Therefore, I wanted to address the unanswered questions of what is currently available for inmates. If there are educational opportunities, are inmates taking advantage of them? How are these correctional education opportunities affecting inmates inside and outside of their jail experience?

Procedure

Lt. Arlene Jacques requested that I answer the overarching question: Do the Cumberland County Jail education programs work? The basic request was to do an overall evaluation for the program, which was a skill I had acquired through my Psychology major performing quantitative analyses. However, because of my qualitative thesis last semester, I had done little SPSS analysis work during my senior year. Therefore, this project was a perfect opportunity to practice the necessary quantitative skills I will need after graduation, but also provide concrete answers to Lt. Jacques and the education staff at the Cumberland County Jail. When evaluating a program, SPSS provides concrete tests and manageable strategies to make conclusions based on large amounts of data.

Data

Data was collected from three different Excel files. In total, information from 301 inmates was recorded. Half of the inmates recorded were enrolled in 2013 educational and vocational classes. The other half of the recorded inmates were randomly selected from a master list of inmates who resided at Cumberland County Jail in 2013 longer than thirty days. This is because all inmates who were enrolled in classes were incarcerated for longer than one month. Due to confidentiality purposes, inmates' names and social security numbers were deleted, and instead, each inmate was assigned a number between 1 and 301.

Coding

Data regarding the number and type of classes taken, hours spent in classes, number of certificates, number of major violations, the number of times each inmate entered Cumberland County Jail in 2013, and the number of days spent at CCJ were recorded for each inmate file. The number of days at CCJ, in addition to the number of returns was both

found on the inmate CCJ database. All information about classes, certificates, demographic information was located in the "education and vocational classes" excel file derived from Spellman (CCJ database), and the number of violations was directly from the CCJ 2013 disciplinary record. All information was collected and inserted into a large excel file (See Appendix).

Categories that only need a continuous variable (such as the number of hours or an age) were recorded using a specific whole number (17 hours, 34 days, etc.). However, other dichotomous variables (such as yes or no, or male or female) were coded for SPSS data analysis using 1,0 or 1,2 to represent each variable (i.e. yes=1, no=0; male=1, female=2) (See appendix).

Analysis

Using this coding technique allows for SPSS software to sort and analyze the data for testing. Once the data was coded and copied into SPSS, all of the data was analyzed using comparison tests, such as t-tests, correlations, and ANOVAs to determine which programs are most effective, in addition to tests regarding relationships to recidivism and discipline.

Challenges and Limitations

One of the greatest challenges I faced during this process was finding my way to the Cumberland County Jail. I had originally began at the Maine Correctional Center in Whindam, Maine. All throughout December and into January, I was in contact with their education department. However, when it came time to schedule a time to meet face to face, all contact stopped. I tried to get in contact through email and phone calls for weeks before I came to the conclusion that the project plans we had set in place were simply not going to happen.

However, with the help of Ellen Alcorn, I was in touch with Lt. Arlene Jacques within a few hours of asking for help! The experience itself ended on a positive note, and organizing with the Maine Correctional Center allowed me to improve the professional skills needed when working with an unresponsive community partner.

Coding carefully and consistently was a great challenge in this research project. Each inmate has a certain piece of data on every excel sheet I used. For example, for "John Doe", I looked at one excel sheet for his education records, another for his violation record, another for GED hours, and another for days served at CCJ. Because 600 files of data were not compiled, I spent hours clearly aligning the names and the courses with the disciplinary files. However, because of privacy and security, I coded without social security numbers, implying that I had to be careful to avoid coding inmates with the same or similar names. Because of this, I was left with organization questions: How could I be 100% sure that the names, activities, and violations were aligning? How could I ensure that my data remained accurate without any mistakes? Because of these questions, I have spent hours meticulously coding the data. In addition to coding organization, I have also been faced with challenges regarding data interpretation. Because some inmates have spent a longer time at the jail, they either had a larger history of violations, or they took more education courses. Because of this, I had to be careful with how I interpreted my data. How could I relieve any discrepancies? How could I take their sentence length into account? How could I interpret my data consistently if the inmates all have unique experiences at CCJ? To solve some of these questions, I have spent hours ensuring that all of the information aligns, and much of my data organization has occurred at the jail, so confidentiality has not been a major issue. Additionally, in order to ensure that I am taking sentence length into account, I have only recorded inmates who have

been at the jail for over 30 days. I have also recognized during random sampling that inmates who are in maximum security are not allowed to take classes.

The coding challenges I have faced, however, are excellent lessons in quantitative research. According to past professors who have assisted me with SPSS analyses, coding data correctly is slightly subjective. This is because no raw data set will be a perfect set to code. There will always be the outliers, the confusing variables, and the missing data points. Because of this, the researcher must make a decision about how to address these problems and deal with it consistently across the set. According to my past statistic professor, Dr. Amy Douglass, decision making is one of the greatest skills a psychology researcher can have. Therefore, one of my solutions to facing this challenging data set is remaining consistent and thinking very carefully about every decision I make while coding. However, when I was stuck, Professor Douglass assisted me with making these decisions. In addition to utilizing Professor Douglass' assistance, I have also asked Lt. Arlene Jacques many questions, simply to ensure I am on a clear, confirmed track to interpret the data correctly.

The SPSS data files will be the clear determining factor of whether my results will come out as significant. Without clear and consistent coding, my analysis could have been inaccurate and therefore provide little or no information to the Cumberland County Jail. Additionally, I was careful utilizing the SPSS analysis software. Ensuring the use of correct tests in my analysis was also a determining factor for my final product.

There was only one serious ethical consideration I needed to address. Because the inmates have already been sentenced, all information that is provided to me is generally public information. However, certain details from the Excel files, such as violations that occurred while in jail, are sensitive pieces of information, and I continued to be cautious with

respecting the privacy of the inmates. This simply entails that I had to be careful sending emails, restrain from saving names, and delete social security numbers from the files.

Results

Presentation of Data

A set of independent sample t-tests were conducted in order to examine whether the education program at the Cumberland County Jail affects disciplinary action taken inside the jail or recidivism rates after inmates are released. An independent sample t-test compares one variable to two similar sets of data. In this case for example, I used a t-test to compare the proportion of major violations to inmates who have taken classes versus inmates who have not taken classes.

Inmates who took vocational classes had a significantly lower proportion of major violations than inmates who did not take classes at all (242) = .755, $p < .05$. Proportions of major violations were used in this case specifically because of inmate sentence length. While inmates in this sample are required to be sentenced to the CCJ for at least 30 days, some inmates resided at CCJ for 35 days, while others resided at CCJ for 300 days. Therefore, I had to recognized that one major violation in 300 days was a very different case than one major violation in 35 days. I used proportions in order to take sentence length into account.

Inmates who achieved certifications were significantly less likely to obtain a major violation at all (164) = 1.429, $p < .05$. This means that more inmates who received certifications in classes, such as Safety and Sanitation or GED, had no violations than inmates who did not receive any certifications.

Inmates who participated in the GED courses were significantly less likely to have a violation at all (164) = 3.274, $p < .05$. This means that more inmates who took the

GED courses obtained no violations than inmates who did not partake in the GED courses while residing at CCJ.

Conclusions

Analysis of Data

According to the given results, the correctional education program has an effect on the disciplinary action that occurs at Cumberland County Jail. The data indicates that overall, major violations decrease for inmates who take the GED and vocational classes.

Correctional education allows for inmates to utilize their time at the jail wisely. Many inmates who find themselves in classes are potentially avoiding conflicts that occur in extremely hostile environments, and therefore have no interest in engaging in violent or unacceptable behavior. This, in particular, may be why partaking in educational classes decreases poor in-jail behavior. The mental energy and the effort that hostility can waste are instead being used in a productive manner.

The major violation decrease seen in the results may have also occurred because inmates have been provided unique personal opportunities that may not be as accessible outside of Cumberland County Jail. Inmates learn and engage in aspects of life in a way they have not had the opportunity to do before. Instead of coming home to a drug-filled environment or having the responsibility of maintaining a home and a child, inmates are finally handed the opportunity to take high school or college level courses, address cognitive and emotional problems, and perceive their environment in an entirely different way. Reflecting on Lt. Jacques comment about how "jail is the best thing" that can ever happen to an inmate, taking vocational and academic classes while time has temporarily stopped may allow for inmates to perceive life in an entirely different way. Walking out of jail with a

certification places many inmates on a higher employable status than they were when first entering Cumberland County Jail.

While taking education courses are voluntary, there is a lot of incentive for inmates to take education courses at Cumberland County Jail, indicating that the results are not solely focusing on "well-behaved" inmates. Inmates who are there for a longer sentence have opportunities to gain a little more freedom at the jail though work and volunteering. The Trustee program at Cumberland County Jail, in particular, allows for inmates to participate in the kitchen and work in maintenance, which permits for more freedom than the average inmate. However, in order to maintain a Trustee position, inmates are required to take a certain amount of education courses. This has provided incentive for inmates to take classes.

Suggestions and Further Implications

The education program at the Cumberland County Jail did not affect inmates' recidivism rates. This implies that the education programs do not play a role in inmates' lives post-release. However, this makes some sense. Inmates who attend Cumberland County Jail for a long period of time are likely to face environmental obstacles outside of jail that have significantly influenced why they were at Cumberland County Jail in the first place. If an addict, for example, has spent 300 days taking GED courses and completely separating him or herself from a drug- influenced environment, returning back to that same unstable environment could potentially trigger a relapse, landing that person back in jail only months later. While time stops in jail, time eventually starts up again, and it is scary for an inmate to be placed back into the environment that put him or her in jail in the first place. Therefore, the education program provides incredible opportunities for inmates, but in some cases, recidivism is based on exterior influences, rather than interior.

Based on this idea, I would like to suggest that the Cumberland County Jail implement courses that are specifically based on preparation post-release. Programs that target how to handle a potentially unhealthy environment may assist inmates immensely in areas of life they struggle to be in control of. For example, a program could be implemented to teach inmates how to react to triggers, avoid negative relationships, re-obtain housing, look for jobs, or handle money in an appropriate way. While there is a post-release transition program at the Cumberland County Jail, it would be beneficial for inmates to spend their time at CCJ wisely by learning how to prepare for life after incarceration.

Based on the results regarding major violations, pushing to get inmates involved in the education programs would be extremely beneficial to the students, but also the staff of the Cumberland County Jail. The results indicated that inmates who take courses at the jail are less likely to receive any sort of major violation. Therefore, increasing the number of inmates who take education courses will benefit jail management by decreasing poor behavior rates. Pushing for more inmates to take these programs may also allow for inmates to reflect on their futures while incarcerated, and help them recognize the value in education while their lives are temporarily on hold. If correctional education has the potential to increase competence, self- autonomy, and confidence for individuals who possibly have not had those feelings before, then increasing the push for correctional education is *vital* to our economically-oriented society. Therefore, Cumberland County Jail would overall benefit from increasing the number of students taking advantage of these courses.

Future Research Direction

Because of time limits, I was unfortunately unable to add a qualitative component to my research. While I observed classes, I never had the opportunity to interview inmates about

their experience taking the classes. In the future, I think adding an interview component would be a huge way to enhance the value of the project. Surveys, data, and coding can only go so far. A qualitative research component would provide in depth, personal understandings of why and how the results came to be. Interviews also tend to provide detailed information about the programs that would not necessarily be visible in data analysis, such as their experience as a whole and the impacts beyond jail.

Additionally, if this project were bigger or extended for a longer period of time, I would hope to create a matched-pair design of inmate files. This means that I would match an inmate who has taken education or vocational classes with an inmate who has not based on sentence length and security level. This would definitely provide more accurate information for the Cumberland County Jail, as the comparisons of the two groups would be so similar. It would also be beneficial to have this matched-pair design include a larger sample size. With 10,000 inmates and 300 students, there is definitely a possibility to increase the accuracy and power of the research in the future.

Final Thoughts

My intentions working at a jail derived from my observations of education discrepancies within the justice system at the Family Treatment Drug Court. The Cumberland County Jail was an incredible experience, and I was astounded by the passion and positivity coming from staff members, in addition to the drive inmates had to take these education courses. As mentioned, the results of this capstone project indicated that the educational programming had an effect on the number of major violations. I do not think this would have been the case, however, without such good teachers and such a supportive community. A moment that stood out to me, in particular, was when I observed a GED class, which

consisted of four students all at different learning levels practicing for upcoming exams. Although each student was at a different level, every student had a similar desire to learn and succeed while residing at CCJ. The inmates were asking detailed questions, committing their complete focus to the assignment at hand, and they were extremely respectful to the teacher. What I loved, in particular, was their overall interest in achievement. For some of them, they told me that they took classes because "enough was enough", while others took these classes as a trustee requirement, while others simply had an interest in receiving their high school diploma. Whatever the reason was, every student at the table had a drive to achieve.

These observations are partially why I am pushing for more correctional education in the nation's jails and prisons. Education discrepancies are clearly a social dilemma in the United States, and a very large portion of inmates do not have a strong educational foundation, which consequentially leads to higher rates of recidivism, homelessness, and poverty post-release (Cantrell, 2012). However, research in the correctional education field has indicated that utilizing this jail or prison time wisely could provide opportunities for democratic citizenship, self- autonomy, and success. Solely based on this capstone research, correctional education also improves jail management by decreasing the number of major violations. Finally, based on personal observation, inmates partaking in the education courses *want* to succeed. They *want* to take these courses. They *want* to improve their futures and not end up back in jail or prison. For some inmates who take these education courses, *jail* really is *the best thing that has ever happened to them.*

Annotated Bibliography

Abrams, L. S., Terry, D., & Franke, T. M. (2011). Community-based juvenile reentry services: The effects of service dosage on juvenile and adult recidivism. *Journal Of Offender Rehabilitation*, *50*(8), 492-510. doi:10.1080/10509674.2011.596919

This study particularly focused whether the length of time participating in community-based services affected the recidivism rates of adults versus juveniles. Through phone surveys of individuals who had participated in a specific community based program in Western United States, 75 participants responded, regarding questions about the program and their reentry history. Results showed that juveniles were significantly impacted by longer time in the program. However, the recidivism rates of the convicted adults were insignificantly impacted by the length of time in the program. A major reason for this could be that adults are significantly impacted by external factors, such as employment. This is important to my research because it helps me take factors, other than education, into account when I am evaluating the success of the program.

Blomberg, T. G., Bales, W. D., & Piquero, A. R. (2012). Is educational achievement a turning point for incarcerated delinquents across race and sex?. *Journal Of Youth And Adolescence*, *41*(2), 202-216. doi:10.1007/s10964-011-9680-4

Research done by Blomberg, Bales, and Piquero examined the effects of education on youth delinquency. The researchers examined 4,147 juvenile delinquents who were released from Florida correctional institutions. The data was analyzed to determine that juveniles with above average academic achievement were much more likely to return to school, and they also had a lower recidivism rate. However, there was not much of a relationship between race, sex, and school attendance. Therefore, this article is a critical example of how education can be utilized as a tool to prevent juvenile delinquency. This is particularly important for my research, as I will be working with male and female inmates of various different ethnic

backgrounds.

Bouffard, J. A., Mackenzie, D., & Hickman, L. J. (2000). Effectiveness of vocational education and employment programs for adult offenders: A methodology-based analysis of the literature. *Journal Of Offender Rehabilitation*, *31*(1-2), 1-41. doi:10.1300/J076v31n01_01

Researchers examined the effectiveness of specific types of correctional education on offender recidivism within the prison population. Based on empirical research, fifteen years of database information, and communication with specialized researchers, it was determined that specific types of correctional education are more effective than others in decreasing the rate of recidivism. Vocational education, multi-component correctional industry, and community employment (education focused on necessary knowledge out of prison) were analyzed as particularly effective, whereas "life skills" programs were not as effective. Due to privacy issues of the prisoners, there was a limitation on the research that could be conducted. However, overall, vocational-based education is effective for the prison population. This research is particularly important for me to understand which types of programs to focus on during my evaluation.

Cho, R., & Tyler, J. H. (2013). Does prison-based adult basic education improve postrelease outcomes for male prisoners in Florida?. *Crime & Delinquency*, *59*(7), 975-1005.

Researchers were interested in whether Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs in correctional facilities were effective for prisoners post-release. Using Florida's administrative database, researchers determined that ABE did not have an effect on the recidivism rate. However, prisoners who did not drop out of the program were more likely to gain post-release earnings and employment post-imprisonment. Therefore, researchers determined that Adult Basic Education is effective, as long as prisoners choose to stay within the program, rather than drop out and return, allowing for an uninterrupted educational experience. This study recognizes national economic benefits to implementing sustainable ABE programs

within the prison. This is valuable to my research so I can understand the general research of adult education post-release.

Ewert, S., Sykes, B. L., & Pettit, B. (2014). The degree of disadvantage: Incarceration and inequality in education. *Annals Of The American Academy Of Political And Social Science*, *651*(1), 24-43. doi:10.1177/0002716213503100

This article particularly focuses on educational attainment and inequalities among race and income within the United States prison system. Researchers discuss the discrepancies of high school dropouts, education, and prison within the United States, in addition to the vitality of remaining in school to remain sustainable in the workforce post-release. However, prison tends to leave inmates unprepared after being released, placing the former inmates in a worse situation than before. Race, in particular, plays a major role in these discrepancies. The article discusses the disadvantages of the prison, welfare, and education system. This article is peculiarly vital when understanding the need for correctional education.

Kim, R., & Clark, D. (2013). The effect of prison-based college education programs on recidivism: Propensity Score Matching approach. *Journal Of Criminal Justice*, *41*(3), 196-204. doi:10.1016/j.jcrimjus.2013.03.001

According to this research study, prisoners who take college courses while incarcerated are less likely to recommit a crime. However, these past studies have never taken self-selection bias into account. The goal of the current study is to research the effects of taking college courses in prison, while removing the potential possibilities that self-selection bias is a factor in past statistics. Using propensity score matching, a method that takes external factors of participation into account, such as socioeconomic status, mental health, and academic history, the actual effects of college level education programs were compared to recidivism rates. Studies show that there was a lower recidivism rate for those who took college courses. However, when taking self-selection into account, the results were totally

inflated, indicating that selection bias needs to be considered when doing these particular

studies. This study is particularly related to my evaluation of the research, as I will have to

take selection bias into account myself.

Liptak, A. (2008, April 23). Inmate count in u.s. dwarfs other nations'. *New York Times*. Retrieved from http://www.nytimes.com/2008/04/23/us/23prison.html?pagewanted=1&_r=2

This particular article raises awareness of the sky-rocketing numbers of prisoners that

the United States currently holds. Approximately 25% of the world's prisoners are

incarcerated in the United States. The violence in the United States, versus other countries, is

generally the same. However, non-violent crimes are generally lower in the U.S. than in other

locations, such as Australia. Nonetheless, the U.S. continues to incarcerate individuals at a

much higher rate.

The reasons why this occurs are explored. This si particularly important for my research, as it

provides perspective on the Maine prison population.

Lockwood, S., Nally, J. M., Ho, T., & Knutson, K. (2012). The effect of correctional education on postrelease employment and recidivism: A 5-year follow-up study in the state of Indiana.
Crime & Delinquency, *58*(3), 380-396. doi:10.1177/0011128712441695

This article examined the effects of education level on recidivism by conducting a

five- year study. The study is based on prisoners of the state of Indiana, and researchers

analyzed a five-year data set of the Indiana Department of Corrections. After examining

demographics, education level, and the current status of the prisoners, results demonstrated

that the highest recidivist offenders were those who did not complete high school, and the

younger offenders were more likely to be convicted of a crime post-release. Finally, the

recidivism rate increased 55.9% for offenders who had an education below a high school

level. This study shows that education is a defining factor in post-release behaviors. This is

particularly valuable for my research, as I can utilize this article to understand my statistical results.

Maine statistical analysis center. (2012). Retrieved from http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/justiceresearch/Publications/Adult/adult_fast_facts.pdf

Statistics of 2012 Maine incarceration rates are stated. I will utilize these statistics to compare the work done at the Cumberland County Jail to the statistics for the rest of the state.

O'Neill, L., MacKenzie, D., & Bierie, D. M. (2007). Educational opportunities within correctional institutions: Does facility type matter?. *The Prison Journal*, *87*(3), 311-327. doi:10.1177/0032885507304351

The current research addresses the question of whether the type of education program within correctional facilities affects rates of recidivism. Utilizing the education programs at the Maryland State Correctional facilities, inmates that were serving approximate six months partook in either a "boot camp" education program or a traditional correctional facility. The programs were evaluated based on the number of inmates who successfully completed their GED within the correctional center. Results concluded that the "boot camp's" small environment ended up being more successful, generally due to the support base and therapeutic utilization of the program. This particular article is very important to my research, as many of the successful programs at the Cumberland County Jail are small, intensive, therapeutic groups.

Pryor, M., & Thompkins, D. E. (2013). The disconnect between education and social opportunity for the formerly incarcerated. *American Journal Of Criminal Justice*, *38*(3), 457-479. doi:10.1007/s12103-012-9184-0

The literature by Pryor and Thompkins addresses the social barriers related to education for those who are currently incarcerated or have a prison history. Researchers first examined the statistics of the recent prison population in terms of literacy, education status, and employment post-release. Because many prisoners do not have the solid educational

background required for many case matters, in addition to employment opportunities, it was determined that correctional education is extremely valuable. Prisoners claim that when released from prison, there are too many stressors happening at once. Therefore, using the time in prison wisely will benefit the prison population in the future. This is important for my research because it allows me to emphasize the importance of Cumberland's correctional education.

Rose, C., Reschenberg, K., & Richards, S. (2010). The Inviting Convicts to College Program. *Journal Of Offender Rehabilitation*, *49*(4), 293-308. doi:10.1080/10509671003716092

Inviting Convicts to College is a college prepatory program for inmates in the state of

Oklahoma. However, the interesting factor of this program is that undergraduate college students of the University of Oklahoma Oshkosh are responsible for teaching and running courses, primarily to introduce more college opportunities for inmates. The article explains the positive effect that the program has on prisoners well-being, the literacy challenges of partaking in a college course, and the overall success of the program. For example, 14% of the prisoners that partook in the program were enrolled in a university or a vocational school by the end of the program. This program is important for my research because one of the most sustainable programs at CCJ is a class in which Masters students teach.

State of Maine (2012). *Crime in Maine*. Retrieved from
http://www.maine.gov/dps/cim/crime_in_maine/2012pdf/007%20Highlights.pdf.

This document contains a general summary of Maine's crime history within the past 10 years. This is particularly important for my research, as it highlights the need for correctional education in the State of Maine.

Additional References

Cantrell, D. (2012). Correctional Education as Democratic Citizenship Education. *Journal Of Correctional Education*, *63*(2), 27-36.

Frank, J. B., Omstead, J., & Pigg, S. (2012). The Missing Link: Service-Learning as an Essential Tool for Correctional Education. *Journal Of Correctional Education*, *63*(1), 24-34.

Jacques, L. A. (2014, January). Interview by A Ryan []. Getting to know cumberland county jail.

McKinney, D., & Cotronea, M. A. (2011). Using Self-Determination Theory in Correctional Education Program Development. *Journal Of Correctional Education*, *62*(3), 175-193.

Thomas, R. G. (2012). Expanding the Purpose of a Prison Education Classroom. *Journal Of Research And Practice For Adult Literacy, Secondary, And Basic Education*, *1*(3), 173-178.

APPENDIX

Subject=Subject's assigned number (1-301)

Took Classes

  1=Ye

  s 2=

  no

Days_In_Jail= The Number of days they resided at CCJ (continuous)

VIO=Did they have a violation?

  1=

  yes

  0=no

Prop_Maj_Viol= proportion of major violations

  $Number\ of\ Violations \div Number\ of\ Days\ in\ jail$

Prop_HRS = proportion of class hours

  $number\ of\ hours\ \div number\ of\ days\ in\ jail$

Anger_Awareness = did they take anger awareness classes?

  1=ye

  s 0=

  no

AA_HR= Number of Hours taking Anger Awareness classes (Continuous)

Crochet = did they take Crochet classes?

    1=ye

    s 0=

    no

Crochet_HR=Number of hours taking Crochet classes (Continuous)

Garden = did they take gardening classes?

    1=yes
    0= no

Garden_HR= Number of hours taking gardening classes (Continuous)

Key_Boarding = did they take key boarding classes?

    1=ye

    s 0=

    no

Keyboarding_HR= Number of hours taking key boarding classes (Continuous)

Typing = did they take typing classes?

    1=ye

    s 0=

    no

Typing_HR= Number of hours taking typing classes (Continuous)

Wellness = did they take Wellness classes?

    1=ye

    s 0=

    no

Wellness_HR= Number of hours taking wellness classes (Continuous)

COG_Skills = did they take cognitive skills classes?

    1=ye

    s 0=

    no

COG_HR= Number of hours taking cognitive skills classes (Continuous)

Culinary = did they take culinary classes?

    1=ye

    s 0=

    no

Culinary_HR= Number of hours taking Culinary classes (Continuous)

Food_Cookery = did they take food cookery classes?

    1=yes

    0= no

Food_Cook_HR= Number of hours taking food cookery classes (Continuous)

Food_safety = did they take Food Safety classes?

    1=yes

    0= no

Food_Safety_HR= Number of hours taking food safety classes (Continuous)

Parenting = did they take parenting classes?

    1=yes

    0= no

Parenting_HR= Number of hours taking gardening classes (Continuous)

S_S = did they take safety and sanitation classes?

1=yes

0= no

SS_HR= Number of hours taking safety and sanitation classes (Continuous)

UNE_Class = did they take classes with University of New England students?

1=yes

0= no

UNE_HR= Number of hours taking University of New England student-run classes

(Continuous)

Writing = did they take Writing classes?

1=yes

0= no

Writing_HR= Number of hours taking writing classes (Continuous)

GED = did they take GED classes?

1=ye

s 0=

no

GED_HRS= Number of hours taking GED classes (Continuous)

Total_Hours= total number of hours taking classes (Continuous)

Number_Programs_Taken=total number of education programs taken (Continuous)

Total_Cert=Total number of certifications received (Continuous)

Investigating Community Engaged Learning:

A Critical Examination of the Bates College Education Department Internship Program

A Seminar in Educational Studies Capstone Project
By
Elisabeth Bassani
& Susan Russell
April 9, 2014

Each year, hundreds of students participate in community-engaged learning through the Bates College Education Department and Harward Center for Community Partnerships. The goal of many of these placements and projects is to allow students to connect their academic learning with real-life experiences and service. This year, the Bates College Education Department launched a new internship program in three after- school programs in the Lewiston community as an opportunity for students to engage in long-term volunteer placements. As opposed to the 30-hour placements that students typically complete as part of education courses at Bates, this internship required a significant time commitment, enhanced leadership, and organizational responsibilities over the course of the entire school year.

As the program is in its first year, there are many questions and points of inquiry surrounding its effectiveness, the intern experience, and the desired outcomes for community partners and the students they serve. The purpose of this Capstone project is to explore and examine the program in order to gain a better understanding of how the program might be improved to better achieve goals for interns, partner organizations, and the college and ensure its lasting success.

I. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Community engaged learning provides college students with the opportunity to get involved in their local communities and apply academic learning to real world settings and situations. The Bates College Education Department Internship Program attempts to provide students with the opportunity to participate in a more consistent type of community engaged learning and allow them to develop leadership, organization, and problem-solving skills in roles at after-school programs in the local Lewiston community. However, as this program is in its first year, there are some areas in which it needs to be strengthened and improved in

order to provide the students, community organizations, and school children with a more equitable and beneficial experience.

II. NATURE OF THE STUDY

In this project, we will examine the Bates College Education Department Internship to gain a better understanding of its strengths and weaknesses from the multiple perspectives of Bates College interns and community partners. This project will hopefully unearth any community partner and intern needs that are currently not met through the internship program and create suggestions and strategies for improvement.

III. STUDY RATIONALE

Our study addresses the disconnect between the overall ideals and goals of the internship program and the ways in which it is being implemented in the community partner organizations in Lewiston. We accomplish this by investigating the concerns, problems, and areas of improvement from both the perspective of the organization and the interns themselves. In particular, we are interested in understanding specific ways that the internship can be improved and discovering any expectations or needs that are not currently being met.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Academic internships provide undergraduate students with a unique opportunity to engage in the community and supplement classroom learning. Meaningful service learning can not only strengthen ties between the university and the community, but also provide students with the chance to pursue interests and discover passion. In terms of learning goals, students are able to apply volunteer experiences to textbook reading and class discussions. According to Westerberg & Wickersham, community based internships provide the chance for students to earn academic credit, practice interdisciplinary skills, be exposed to the habits

of professional practice, increase self-awareness, exercise civic responsibility, expand of social and professional networks, and build a resume (2011).

Robert A. Rhoads (1998) recognizes the importance of community engagement in educational studies and the need for undergraduates to participate in a cause larger than their studies (p. 277). At the same time, students can approach issues that span across disciplines such as political science, sociology, psychology, and educational studies and apply a context to classroom learning (Rhoads, 1998, p. 287). In the long-term, studies have shown that undergraduate students that participate in community learning continue social responsibility beyond the college years (Astin, 1999). The more time that students devote to meaningful service learning, the greater the benefits. Astin & Sax (1998) recognize three major benefits to community-based engagement for undergraduate students; academic development, civic responsibility, and life skills (p. 255). For a professional development perspective, Jane Eyler (2002) links academic internships with lifelong learning and participation (517). Providing an outlet to connect personal interest with academics allows undergraduate students to pursue interests and discover career goals (Eyler, 2002, p. 518).

While college towns vary in size and socioeconomic status, the specific focus of this project is on service internships in impoverished communities. Service learning in an economically and racially diverse area has a distinctive impact on student volunteers. As described by Antonio et. al. (2000), higher education in the United States has become increasingly aware of the "growing political and social disengagement among college students." Consequently, college students are limited in their future role as active and democratic citizens as a result of the value placed on future intellectual and financial success. Service learning in areas experiencing a lack of resources, poor healthcare, or struggling

schools provide an extension to national and global social problems that might be spearheaded by the same undergraduate volunteers in the future. Interacting with children and adult community members that diverge from the privileged atmosphere of an elite college or university has the potential to commit undergraduate volunteers to social justice and racial understanding (Antonio et. al., 2000).

One important way that service learning can be implemented and carried out in impoverished communities is through internships with local organizations. An internship, as opposed to occasional volunteering, allows students to create relationships with community members and students, implement more structured programs, and create significant change in the organization. In order for the internships to be meaningful and effective, there must be a project or task that is significant and clear to the students, continuous support to the student, and reciprocal learning on both the part of the student and community partner (Corey, 1972). Internships that link college and university students to their local communities have historical roots beginning in the 1970's in southern US states and were successful because they offered alternatives to traditional classroom learning and translated student thought and energy into good works for state and local communities and organizations (Corey, 1972). Thus, community engaged learning in the form of internships has a proven history of success in creating positive outcomes for students, universities, and local communities. In order for student service learning to achieve meaningful outcomes for students, community partners, and institutions of higher education, program planning, coordination, and implementation is key. While the literature on successful community- engaged learning programs is still relatively new, it identifies a few key elements and practices to ensure successful partnerships between colleges and local communities.

Institutionalization, where community-based learning and research are integrated into core institution practices, policies, and curriculums and then formalized through official accountability structures and offices, is often the most important step towards establishing equitable community-engaged learning initiatives (Shrader, Saunders & Marullo, 2008; Stater & Fotheringham,2009; Hamner et al., 2002; Bringle & Hatcher, 2002). The literature suggests that when institutions of higher education use this two-step process to build, organize, and meaningfully incorporate community-engaged learning programs, community partner organizations experience more positive outcomes than if institutionalization does not occur (Stater & Fotheringham, 2009).

Another important factor when designing community-engaged learning programs at the university level is maintaining strong links to academic studies and disciplines (Hollandar & Saltmarsh, 2000). When constructing specific aspects of community- engaged learning programs, the literature points to the importance of incorporating student voice, meaningful engagement, reflection, academic connections, and addressing demonstrated community needs in order to maintain a high level of student engagement and learning (Slavkin, 2007). Programs must be carefully considered and implemented in order to produce lasting, equitable outcomes.

Ultimately, the literature points to student service learning and community engagement programs' ability to foster meaningful relationships between universities, students and the local community, create significant change, and help students foster practical skills outside of the classroom. Our goal is to expand upon this research and apply it to the Bates College Education Internship program in effort to establish better practices and achieve equitable outcomes for all parties involved.

V. METHODS

We became interested in exploring meaningful community based partnerships between Bates students and Lewiston organizations following our experiences volunteering in local classrooms as Educational Studies minors. After learning about the internship in after school programs, we sought to explore ways to improve the program for the Bates students, community partners, and the education department.

To execute this project, we first explored literature regarding community-based partnerships between universities and colleges with educational organizations in underserved areas. We sought to understand the known benefits and challenges for each party with the goal of gaining a greater understanding of the mutual relationship that is formed between community partners and college students. Relevant research included studying community-based partnerships that exist across the country, different types of community-based educational programs, what kinds of internship programs contribute to effective community engaged learning, the long-term effects of community-based programs, and theories regarding teacher education.

First, we gained an understanding of the current design of the internship and interviewed current interns as well as the community partners. We focused on the personal goals of both the interns and community partners, and asked them to describe the areas in which the program excels or where it might fall short. Our ultimate goal was to discover the strengths and weaknesses of the program, and provide a comprehensive report that includes recommendations for improvement. To ensure ethical community based research practices, we looked to Minkler (2005) who emphasizes complete disclosure to participants, in our case the individuals we are interviewing, as well as ensuring that the research will ultimately

benefit the community at hand. We further followed best community-research practices by being persistent in our efforts to interview participants and setting up times and locations that were convenient for them. As the interns and community partners were critical to our study, it was important for us to approach them with flexibility and excitement,

The interviews provided us with valuable insight and key points of improvement on which we will base our recommendations in this report. As the goal of our interviews was to find common critiques and benefits of the program, we were pleased to discover alignment in the opinions among many of the interviewees. While the feedback from both the interns and the community partners was mostly positive, heard recurring suggestions for improvement.

In order to provide recommendations for improvement, we drew on key findings in the literature and programs that provide methods that would align with the internship program at Bates. We aim to provide specific recommendations that are easy to implement and lead to a more streamlined program for the Education Department, interns, and community partners affiliated with the internship program.

Challenges to our research included scheduling interviews and resisting frustration when an interviewee forgot about a scheduled meeting time or when meeting information was miscommunicated. Another challenge we faced was the qualitative nature of our data. As all of our data came in the form of recorded interviews, it was time consuming to re-listen to the recordings and translate what was said in the interview into concrete categories and suggestions. We attempted to mitigate this issue by taking detailed notes during the interviews in addition to the recording. By having two sources to capture what was said during an interview, we were better able to organize our information.

We remained cognizant of the ethical concerns of doing interviews with our peers and

superiors and were vigil about confidentiality. By obtaining verbal, often recorded consent to use any information interviewees have divulged, we were able to ensure that each participant was comfortable with our inclusion of their comments and suggestions. During each interview, we gave the participant a one-page description of our project and provided our contact information. This was a successful practice as it gave each person a more detailed understanding of our project and goals while also providing them with the opportunity to get in touch in the event that they have questions or concerns.

VI. RESEARCH QUESTION

What are the challenges and successes of the Bates College Education Department Internship Program as it relates to both the interns and community partners?

Sub questions:

- What are common themes that arise in the interviews with the intern and the community partners?

- What recommendations can we provide to the internship program to ensure its growth and longevity?

VII. BACKGROUND & CONTEXTUAL DESCRIPTION

The Bates College Education Internship program is a new opportunity that connects students to local community organizations and allows them to run an activity or program and engage with students over the course of the entire school year. The first interns were hired at the end of the 2012-2013 school year and began their work in September, 2013. The program consisted of 11 students this year. Interns complete about five hours of service per week to total 160 hours for the year and also participate in a monthly meeting with other students in the program. The internship program was designed by a collaborative effort from the Bates

Career Development Center, Bates College Harward Center for Community Partnerships, and the Bates College Education Department.

The interns work in a variety of roles and programs across the three community organizations where the program is currently in place. The organizations are 21st Century at Lewiston Middle School, Hillview, and Tree Street Youth. They are all after-school programs that extend the school day by providing academic support and offering extracurricular clubs and activities for mostly underserved students in Lewiston. Many of the students that the interns work with are Somali youth that have moved to Lewiston over the course of the last decade. The Bates interns run art programs, leadership teams, community service activities, college and SAT prep programs, and serve as mentors, role models, and teachers for the students.

This internship program serves as a model for community engaged learning in the Lewiston community. By providing students with the opportunity to take their learning outside of the academic classroom and apply it to interactions with local students, this internship program marks an important expansion of community-engaged learning at Bates.

VIII. PRESENTATION OF DATA

Five salient themes arose from the interviews with the interns and the community partners. These key findings include the connection of academics to experience, the value of leadership opportunity outside of the Bates campus, the application of President Clayton Spencer's purposeful work initiative, the importance of consistency, and finally, technical issues to be addressed. In the following section, we will explain and reflect upon these key themes.

IX. ANALYSIS OF DATA FINDINGS

The Connection of Academics to Experience

The Bates College Education Department already does a great job of connecting academics to real world educational settings outside of the traditional classroom environment. The interns we interviewed emphasized how the internship program took this connection a step further by increasing levels of responsibility in the program and made comments such as, "*It wasn't me shadowing a teacher but it was me teaching.*" Because of the more intensive hour requirement, interns were able to move beyond the role of an observer and actually be a program leader. As many of the interns are also upperclassmen Educational Studies minors, they were able to use the academic and experiential knowledge fostered in past courses to inform their role at the various placements. As opposed to the 30-hour volunteer requirement where, as one intern noted, "*people go and they are a tutor or a mentor but they're not really the person in charge of the program,*" the internship allows students to play a more active role in learning and program implementation.

Leadership Opportunity Outside of Bates

"I wanted to get this experience where I work as a leader, not only just as a tutor and a mentor but also as a leader."

The internship program offers a leadership opportunity to Bates students to get off of the Bates campus for a significant time each week and become active participants in the Lewiston community. Six of the nine interns we interviewed expressed the independent nature of the program and enjoyed having the opportunity to improve their leadership and coordination roles in an educational setting. One intern mentioned that her personal purpose for participating in the internship program was to, "*focus on my leadership skills in a*

classroom." For students interested in education as well as the Lewiston-Auburn area, the intensive nature of the internship program provides the opportunity to understand the complexities of the educational as well as social, economic, and political spheres of the local community. In addition, the internship program provides the opportunity for interns to learn how to be active participants in society whether they plan to stay in Maine or move on to a different community after graduation.

Purposeful Work Initiative

"I had always wanted to be a teacher since I was in middle school and recently I've been thinking of other ways I could interact with kids without necessarily being a teacher and I thought this was a great way to explore that a little more." President Clayton Spencer is advocating for Bates students to participate in internships and career-related experiences to prepare for the working world after graduation. Almost all of the interns that we interviewed mentioned the program's connection to future careers and the potential to use it as a gateway to work after Bates. This theme was especially strong in our interviews with the senior interns who were thinking about what to do after graduation this May. The internship program provides students with the opportunity to explore multiple career paths in education and determine if and how they want to transition this work into a full time career. Many of the interns we interviewed mentioned gaining greater clarity on their desire to pursue careers in education as teachers or leaders of after school programs. Even if education was not the path ultimately chosen, one intern recognized that *"education intersects with all aspects of life and with any career one would go into. You are always teaching or learning from somebody."*

In addition to developing career interest, participating in the Bates Education Intern Program is an excellent resume booster. The internship is highly independent and is executed

through the drive of the intern. Over the course of the year, interns complete the process of developing, implementing, and reflecting on the project or program they are leading. This process is a valuable indication of commitment and self-drive which are valuable characteristics for many employers.

Consistency

"We have a lot of opportunities through Bates students that we otherwise might not have"- 21st Century From interviewing the organization leaders of Hillview, Tree Street, and 21st Century, the value of having a consistent of an intern throughout the entire year was the most overwhelming theme. Community partners were able to relinquish greater responsibility to the intern, especially in comparison to Bates students who are completing a 30-hour volunteer requirement for an education class. More importantly, the consistency of having a Bates student lead a program at the same time each week provided a great sense of support to the young Lewiston students participating in the various after school programs. Seeing a familiar face encouraged the development of trust and created a safe space for students to be comfortable and grow as learners and individuals. Again, this differs from the 30-hour placement where Bates volunteers are at placements sporadically, for a short amount of time each week, and only for a semester.

From the interns' perspectives, the longer nature of the internship program provided the opportunity to create meaningful relationships with the students. All of the interns that we interviewed expressed enjoying the ability to connect with students and remain part of their after school experience for the entire year. It is often difficult for both Bates and Lewiston students when Bates volunteers leave at the end of the 30-hour placement. It is usually around this time that students begin to really establish connections with the students they are working

with. The internship program thus provides a solution to this issue by creating an alternative placement option that lasts for a much longer period of time.

Technical Issues

Like any new program or initiative, logistical issues regarding the implementation and execution of the Bates Education Department Internship Program were to be expected. Over half of the interns expressed the desire to have more organization and support on behalf of the Harward Center. They mentioned making the weekly meetings more effective and establishing a more team-like structure for the internship. While some interns worked together in the same programs, others felt as though they had little peer support and wanted a better forum to discuss issues and ideas for their individual programs. Several interns discussed frustration with the credit structure and the need for more funding. We will discuss these issues further in the following section. In general, the greatest concern of the community partners was ensuring the longevity of the program as well as an improved understanding of the role of the intern. Organization leaders expressed the need for a strong transition and expansion plan for the internship in the coming years.

X. CONCLUSIONS REACHED

The following section outlines conclusions we have reached regarding recommendations to improve the Bates College Education Department Internship Program for both participating interns and the community partners.

Interns

From interviewing the participating interns we have concluded that greater support is needed from both the community partner and education department. In terms of support from the community partner, it became clear from the interviews that the role of the intern in the

program and attached responsibilities need to be more transparent. One intern mentioned the lack of communication between the multiple parts of the internship, "*There is not as much communication between the education department and the site coordinators. My site coordinator is kind of MIA a lot. She has never seen me in action, ever.*" In addition, the interns mentioned their desire and need for behavioral management and lesson planning training. Although education courses at Bates cover a wide range of relevant topics, they often lack focus on practical teaching and classroom management skills. As posited by one intern, *"For someone who doesn't know about classroom management, isn't good at building curriculum or writing lesson plans, I could see it being very overwhelming.*" Perhaps the monthly meetings between the Harward Center and the participating interns could be focused on new challenges that arise as leaders of a classroom. On intern articulated her frustration with the monthly meetings and stated, "*Hopefully in the future they will have more of a set purpose.*

Sometimes it feels like we are there just to complain."

As mentioned previously, the credit and course structure of the internship was problematic for several interns. Currently, the internship counts as one education course to go towards fulfilling the seven-course Educational Studies minor requirement. Many interns expressed an interest in receiving academic credit for the internship as they still have to take a full course load on top of the 60 hours of required service each semester. Several interns expressed frustration with this element of the program design and said, "*It's hard to do four classes and work and do 120 hours of an internship. 60 hours in a semester is a lot. It would be great if it could be an actual credit course because you are putting in 120 hours, and I feel like in one credit courses you put in less than that."* We recommend attaching at least partial,

if not full, academic credit to the internship program, as participants would have more energy and time to commit each semester. It is important to recognize, as one intern did, that the internship is, *"not the most organized at this moment, but I think that's just because it's the first year."*

To additionally justify the academic credit, many interns mentioned that they would not mind meeting in a classroom setting once a week or every two weeks. There seems to be a lack of connection between the internship and the study of education. One intern said that *"it almost feels sometimes like I have an internship through the Harward Center that's called an ed. internship."* In addition, the 60-hour volunteer requirement per semester inhibited the interns' ability to also take an education class on top of the internship. In the interviews, many of the interns expressed an interest in also taking an education course. As stated by one intern, *"I also think that it has taken away from me being able to take ed. classes. There are just too many hours to complete for the internship in addition to a 30-hour class. Plus your hours for your internship can't be cross-counted. So I haven't been able to take an education class this year because of the internship."* This year, if the interns had elected to take an education course they would have been required to complete an additional 30 hours of service on top of the 60 hour requirement for the internship. We recommend either allowing interns to take an education class in addition to the internship without requiring extra volunteer time or the full 30 hours.

Finally, multiple interns brought up the issue of funding for the internship. Interns expressed the need for additional funding for their programs and projects, particularly for materials. One intern expressed her frustration with the lack of funding and the way it impacted her intern experience. She said, *"I got really upset and this is probably more the*

Harward Center than 21st Century, because I didn't get the crafts grant last semester or this semester. And I needed that because we're supposed to go on college trips and where are we supposed to get the money for the buses from? For the interns, we need that money to do things." Perhaps a grant can be allocated specifically to the internship program or the college could spearhead a fundraising initiative. Because community partners often do not have room in their budgets for additional materials or activities, Bates can be particularly helpful at providing interns with the materials and resources they need to create engaged programs for the local students.

Community Partners

The feedback from the community partners was overwhelmingly positive. All of the community partners we interviewed expressed interest in having more interns in their programs. One leader spoke to the ways in which the internship could transform offerings at her after-school program. She said, *"if Bates can give me 10 interns, we could have an arts intern, we could have a STEM science intern, we could have physical activity, I mean I think would be great for Bates students to connect what we are doing with our program to what students are expected to achieve in school."* Her comments also reflect the reciprocal nature of the internship program, where both the organizations and the Bates students are benefitting from the community-engaged learning experience. We recommend expanding the program to include more interns at the three organizations where it is already in place. After a few years of the successful continuation of the program at these organizations, we recommend it be expanded to other organizations in the Lewiston community. We see connections between work that Bates students are already doing through volunteer and other Education Capstone projects as well. This work could serve as a springboard for the establishment of permanent

internships in more organizations and ultimately expanding the scope and focus of the Education Internship Program.

Based on the other information that we gathered from the community partners, we recommend a redesign of the job descriptions to cater to both community partner and student intern understandings. One community partner suggested designing two types of internships, one that was more "*structured and intensive*" and another that provided a more "*free and independent*" experience. Community partners also asked for further guidance from Bates regarding the role of the intern. It was sometimes difficult for the organizations to determine how much responsibility or independence to give the interns. By tweaking the job description to more specifically define the role and nature of the internship, Bates could provide community partners with a clearer idea of program as a whole.

XI. IMPLICATIONS

Our findings and conclusions ultimately inform the internship program directors of the best ways to improve and change the program in order to provide the interns and community partners with the best possible experience. By creating specific suggestions that target both the intern and community partner frustrations and concerns, we establish ways to extend the program and ensure its longevity and success in the Lewiston community. While we understand that it may not be feasible to implement all of our suggested improvements, this research can act as a guide for future changes and discussion around internship program initiatives at Bates.

XII. OVERALL CONCLUSION

Our findings are particularly useful and important, as they provide clear feedback on the intern experience in the first year of the Bates College Education Internship program and

can inform the directors on areas for improvement and change. This internship program provides an innovative opportunity that allows Bates students to actively engage in the Lewiston community, apply academic learning to real-life experiences, shape career pathways, and have meaningful impact on the lives of local school students. By identifying the strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement, this project contributes to the success and ultimate longevity of the program. As the internship initiative can serve as a model for future internships at Bates, it is important and beneficial to understand the best practices that lead to a positive and equitable experience for the Lewiston community members, partner organizations, and interns.

More extensive research could be done to identify ways to expand the internship program. By identifying what types of organizations would be interested in hosting a Bates intern, further research could help create and smooth pathways to expansion of the program and its impact. Exploring what students do after completion of the internship and graduation would also provide some interesting information on the impact that the program has on students' lives and career goals. How does this work translate to careers? Would internships in other areas actually lead to purposeful work? This investigation would be useful not only to the Education Department and Harward Center but to the college as a whole. We see our investigation of the Bates Education Department Internship as only the first step towards gaining a complete understanding of the effectiveness of community-based internships in Lewiston and hope it will contribute to the future vibrancy and success of the program.

Antonio, A. L., Astin, H. S., & Cress, C. M. (2000). Community service in higher education: A look at the nation's faculty. *Review of Higher Education, 23(4),* **373-397.**

Astin, A. W., & Sax, L. J. (1998). How undergraduates are affected by service participation. *Journal of College Student Development, 39***(3), 251-263.**

This article summarizes the effects of classroom-based volunteering on educational and personal development of the college student. This article will contribute to our review of the impact of the internship program on participating students.

Astin, A. W., Sax, L. J., & Avalos, J. (1999). Long-term effects of volunteerism during the undergraduate years. *The Review of Higher Education, 22***(2), 187- 202.**

This article describes the benefits of volunteering for college students in an empirical study. This article will also contribute to our review of the impact of the internship program on participating students.

Bringle, R. J., & Hatcher, J. A. (2002). Campus-community partnerships: The terms of engagement. *Journal of Social Issues, 58***(3), 503-516.**

This article explains the importance of campus-community partnerships and how to develop positive relationships. This article will enhance our knowledge of various programs, as well as provide comparison to the education department internship program at Bates

Corey, J. F. (1972). A brief history of service-learning internship programs. *Higher Education in North Carolina, 7*(4), 1.

Hollander, E. L., & Saltmarsh, J. (2000). The engaged university. *Academe, 86*(4), 29-32.

This article provides an informative overview of community engaged learning and social responsibility in higher education in the United States. The authors discuss the historical roots of community engaged learning and the social problems that give rise to the need for the promotion of engaged citizenship in higher education. This article ultimately suggests new ways that colleges can build and grow community service programs and will be helpful in the section of our final report where we make suggestions for the future of the internship program.

Kennedy, E. M. (1999). University-community partnerships: A mutually beneficial effort to aid community development and improve academic learning opportunities. *Applied Developmental Science, 3*(4), 197.

This article describes the importance of maintaining a positive relationship between universities and surrounding communities as well as the ways in which higher education institutions can contribute to the development of local education. This article will contribute to our understanding of the role of universities and colleges in community-based partnerships.

Secor-Turner, M., Sieving, R., Garwick, A., Spratt, R., & Duke, N. (2010). Culturally sensitive community engaged research with african american young women: Lessons learned. *Journal of Community Health Nursing, 27*(3), 160- 172.

This article focuses on the importance of incorporating cultural sensitivity into community engaged learning methods and research. While the authors focus on African American populations, their findings and outcomes could perhaps be extended to different cultural and ethnic populations. Maintaining a high level of cultural sensitivity is especially

important for interns working in the Lewiston community, as many of the community partners serve a large number of Somali students.

Stack-Culter, H., & Dorow, S. (2012). Student and community partner expectations for effective community-engaged learning partnerships. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, 16*(**3**)**, 103.**

This article examines best practices for community engaged learning in a college/university setting. Authors researched what both students and community partners were seeking to gain from the community engaged learning relationship and were able to facilitate open discussion of the needs of both groups. This article may be able to inform some of our practices and approaches to our project involving the internship program at Bates and may have similar findings.

Stater, K. J., & Fotheringham, E. (2009). Mechanisms for institutionalizing service-learning and community partner outcomes. *Journal of Higher Education Outreach and Engagement, 13*(**2**)**, 7.**

This article looks at institutionalizing service learning programs and partnerships at the university level. It will be helpful to our project because it could provide a foundation for our recommendations to the Bates Education Department for best practices and steps to further improve the internship program.

Ward, N. L., Strambler, M. J., & Linke, L. H. (2013). Increasing educational attainment among urban minority youth: A model of university, school, and community partnerships. *The Journal of Negro Education, 82*(**3**)**, 312-325.**

This article describes educational attainment for underserved youth as well as the successful community partnership academic program affiliated with Yale University.

This article will help us understanding the impact of community-based partnerships on the younger student and how the internship program at Bates compares to the Yale program.

Ward, K., & Wolf-Wendel, L. (2000). Community-centered service learning: Moving from doing for to doing with. *American Behavioral Scientist, 43*, **767- 780**.

This article discusses the importance of meaningful service learning opportunities in college environment. In relation to the educational internship program, this article relates to the effort to create stronger relationships between education students and community partners.

Westerberg, C., & Wickersham, C. (2011). Internships have value, whether or not students are paid. *The Chronicle for Higher Education.*

This article provides information regarding the importance of internships for undergraduate students. Experience in a professional environment can help narrow interests or determine potential career goals. In addition, internships provide value to organizations that are not normally accessible to undergraduate students, such as nonprofits or community centers.

Witchger Hansen, A. M. (2010). Community partners' perspectives of commmunity-university partnerships that support service-learning. (Order No. 3412101, Duquesne University). *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses, ,* **229. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/728161439?accountid=8505. (728161439).**

This article focuses on how community partners perceive and experience service-learning relationships for university students. Although this deals with an occupational therapy program, the authors' findings can be extended to our research, as they focus on what community partners seek from relationships with university departments, programs, and students. This article will be helpful for our project because it can provide some background

as to ideal relationships between local communities and universities.

Worrall, L. (2007). Asking the community: A case study of community partner

perspectives. *Michigan Journal of Community Service Learning, 14*(1), 5.

This article examines the role that community partners perceive themselves to have in relationships with academic programs and departments. It includes community partners' motivations for joining the university relationship, benefits of the partnership, and reasons to continue involvement. This article will be helpful to our project because it can inform us of reasons that community organizations may seek partnership with Bates and its students.

The Power and Effectiveness of Peers on Campus:
Peer Educators for Sexual Assault Education and Prevention

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April 16, 2014

Introduction.

Over the last couple of months, more and more college students are speaking up about their experiences of sexual assault on campus. In 2012, a student from Amherst College, Angie Epifano, wrote an opinion piece for the student newspaper that reached millions of people outside of the Amherst community. The article was a recollection of her rape on campus, her lack of support from Amherst administration, and her struggle to overcome the instance on her own. The release of the article, on October 17, 2012, would ultimately become a turning point in the college's handling of sexual misconduct on campus. In addition, it would encourage other sexual assault survivors to end their silence and share their unwanted experiences.

In light of Epifano's story and other recent events of sexual assault on college campuses, many colleges and universities have begun to review their resources for survivors. As it stands today, 1 in 4 college women will be raped during their college career (One In Four USA, 2014). This alarming statistic, along with recent accounts of campus reports and mishandlings, has made the issue of campus sexual assault gain attention from students, administrators, and policymakers. Though it is the responsibility of administration to create and enforce campus and state policy, the change needs to come from within the student culture. It is up to the students to change the culture that is created on campus, to foster communication, and to treat each other with the respect that every individual, regardless of gender, race, class, and sexual orientation, is entitled to. In this study, I explore a way that students at Bates, through peer education, can be used on campus to address the issue of sexual assault.

Sabrina Yocono, the Sexual Assault Victim Advocate at Bates, expressed to me, in one of our meetings, that students are not coming to her to discuss unwanted sexual experiences

and are opting to report anonymously. She thinks that students would be more willing to report instances of sexual assault in person if there was an individual, or several individuals, that could better serve the student; someone with relatability and understanding of the college culture. This cultural typically refers to the weekend culture—the time when students engage in partying and hooking up. It is within this culture that respect and communication gets lost. She thought that a peer education program could greatly benefit the Bates community. Since Sexual assault is a sensitive subject, students often may not feel comfortable with talking to the sexual assault victim advocate or other women in the health center about their unwanted experience. Because the campus culture is lived and experienced by students, having another student, or a peer mentor, positioned in the health center could be a beneficial addition to the school's commitment to increasing the reporting of sexual assaults and locating areas of concern on campus.

Since my matriculation at Bates, my interest in gender and women's issues has intensified with every year. For the past two years, I have dedicated my academic and personal passions to sexual assault prevention programming and campus education. During my junior year, I worked with a handful of students to raise awareness about the Bates sexual assault policy, the importance of giving sexual consent, and the on-campus resources that are available for sexual assault survivors. We organized and facilitated open forums and distributed a survey regarding sexist language used on campus. The following semester, I studied at American University through the Washington Semester Program. At AU, I was given the opportunity to create a semester long research project. Continuing with my work in the anti-rape movement, I investigated American University's alignment with The Clery Act and how the college was responding to instances of sexual assault on campus. Through this

experience, I was able to work closely with the Sexual Assault Victim Advocate and with the Peer Educators that worked at the Wellness Center. Upon returning to Bates, I wrote my senior thesis on *The Social Forces that Influence Heterosexual College Women's Sexual Behavior.* These experiences have led me to my current work of understanding the benefits of a sexual respect peer education program at Bates.

Literature Review.

There are numerous books and articles that relate to this research project and that identify ways that colleges and universities are responding to the increasing number of sexual assaults on campus. "The federal government has acknowledged the importance of this issue by mandating that sexual assault prevention efforts be conducted on campuses that receive federal funding. As a result, college education programs have emerged as one of the more popular strategies for sexual assault prevention" (Anderson and Whiston 2005:374). Though there are many methods of prevention to consider, the literature used for this paper highlights peer education as an effective strategy for sexual assault elimination. The goal of a peer education program is to train students to better help survivors and to raise awareness of the issue n campus (Foubert and Marriot 1997: 261).

The current statistic is that one in four women will be sexually assaulted during their college career. The culture that is being created on college campuses, particularly the peer culture, has been a source of blame for increasing incidents of sexual assault. "According to a Department of Justice report, typical aspects of college partying make women vulnerable to rape, such as easy access to alcohol, loud music, private rooms, and peer cultures among men that may emphasize "group secrecy" over reporting possible assaults" (Sweeney 2011). Because there is such an emphasis on peer culture and the way that college students are socializing, it is important that colleges and universities organize a system of education and

outreach that is well received by its students and that has the ability to create social change. Accessibility to sexual assault education will ultimately help transform the rape culture that is prevalent among college communities.

Since sexual assault is a problem of socialization and social grounding, the student voice can be used as a powerful source of education.

> Academic and student affairs leaders long have acknowledged that much of students' learning takes place in cocurricular and extracurricular settings dominated by their peers. That fact has quietly grown in importance in recent years as educators, student affairs leaders, and student health officials increasingly have recognized that peers can play a particularly important role in dealing with students' problems involving such things as alcohol abuse, drug use, sexual assaults, and sexually transmitted diseases" (Hunter 2004: 41).

Students know and understand the inner workings of the college culture and what socially happens on campus. There is room for relatability and understanding in this peer to peer approach to education.

A peer education program is designated for students, by students, and about students. In this education model, students interested in mentorship and activism undergo intensive training that includes "social morning theory, listening skills, confrontation skills, referral skills, programming strategies, information on role modeling and ethics, stress and time management, and marketing skills" (Hunter 2004, 43) in addition to particular training on sexual assault prevention and response. Once trained, peer educators should be able to properly deliver material to other students and point them in the direction of on campus resources and professionals. Their role is to meet the needs of students that are seeking information and support. In this sense, peer educators are both a moral guide and means of support.

In trying to get students to be trained and to be a part of prevention programs,

scholarly research has stressed the way that the peer positions are advertised to college students. If it is advertised as a "training workshop on how to help a survivor" (Foubert and Marriot 1997: 261) students may be more inclined to participate. By presenting material as a means of positively impacting the lives of others and creating change on campus, participants may be more willing to participate. Successful prevention programs usually are "grassroots in nature, formed when a group of students develops the desire to change the campus environment to make it safer, more fun, and closer to what they want society to look like" (Hunter 2004: 43). The commitment to community action, awareness, education, and support among the student body is what is ultimately going to increase the campus climate and culture. A peer education program is a place to start.

Research Methods.

My capstone combines gender, the sexual culture on campus, and education used to address these topics. Research was conducted in order to answer the question: "What does a peer education model confronting the issue of sexual assault look like on college campuses? and could or should this model be applied to Bates?" In an attempt to best understand successful peer education programs, I used qualitative data for my research. More specifically, I used participant observation, "a qualitative method for gathering data that involves developing a sustained relationship with people while they go about their normal activities" (Chambliss and Schutt, 2010: 225). In this study, "normal activities" was conversation. On February 8th, 2014, I had the opportunity to attend ConsentFest! at Bowdoin college. Consentfest! is an annual conference catered to students at NESCAC schools confronting issues of sexual assault on campus.

Colleges represented at the conference included Bates, Bowdoin, Colby, Tufts,

Williams, Brown, and Skidmore. In total, there were about 20 attendees that were predominantly female. I was very impressed by the student representatives from these colleges, their spirit of activism, and the way that they are carrying out the peer education programs at their respective colleges. As a participant observer, I was able to gather useful information pertaining to student training, curriculum, students role as a health educator, and outside resources for program development. Because I gained knowledge of peer education programs at these colleges, and developed connections to students that are advocating for change on campus, I decided to conduct extensive research on the specific colleges that were represented at the conference. It is important to note that these colleges are likeminded; they have similar sizes, culture, climate, liberal ideas, and well educated students.

I navigated each of the colleges' websites for sexual assault resources on campus, specifically peer education programs. In addition to collecting data from Bowdoin, Colby, Tufts, Williams, Brown, and Skidmore, I also explored Amherst, Connecticut College, and Wesleyan (NESCAC schools that were not present at the conference). I recorded my findings in an excel spreadsheet that was organized into the columns: mission, what the training entails, training hours, hotline training, number of peer educators, and notable successes. In addition to exploring the schools' websites, I met with Sabrina Yocono, the Sexual Assault Victim Advocate at Bates, Heather Lindkvist, the Title IX Coordinator, and the Men Against Sexual Violence to discuss Bates' response to sexual assault on campus, the resources that are available to students, and the implementation of a sexual respect peer education program. During these meetings, I took detailed field notes.

The members of Men Against Sexual Violence were among several other student activists that I conducted informal interviews with. Using Bates webmail, I emailed a

question prompt to fourteen student activists at Bates. Of these fourteen students, I had six responses. The goal of the interviews was to get answers to the questions: (1) Do you think that peer health education is an effective way to educate? If so, why? (2) Do you think that the Bates community can benefit from a peer education program for the elimination and response of sexual assault? These questions were strategically worded to allow for open-ended discussion and interpretation. This method usually allows for the "feelings, experiences, and perceptions," of individuals (Chambliss and Schutt, 2010: 236) to develop. As hypothesized, there were similar feelings of peer health education and a model program at Bates. In order to protect student opinions, I did not include student names.

My project ideas started very broad and big. Initially, I wanted to start a peer education program and aid with the student training and curriculum development. After meeting with Heather, however, I learned that she has been in the process of trying to create a peer education program that promoted student advocacy for sexual assault awareness and education. This created a barrier for my project. With Heather already having ideas in mind about programming, my project is researching the peer education models that other colleges have and the model that Bates will soon have. I plan to present my findings to Heather, upon request, in hopes that she could benefit from my research.

Analysis.

In the past couple of years (and months), Bates has substantially increased its efforts in addressing the issue of sexual assault on campus. Administrators have revamped the freshman orientation program, increased the sexual assault victim advocate's hours in the health center, strengthened the Title IX team, and have placed emphasis on reporting. In addition, Bates students have started the "got consent?" campaign and have increased student activism on

micro levels. In particular, Men Against Sexual Violence (a fairly new club on campus), the Women's Advocacy Group, Women of Color, and the Stringfellow Committee, have proven themselves to be student activists dedicated to creating an environment of respect. They have held open forums and discussions about sexual assault, the importance of giving consent, and on campus resources that are available to survivors. Since these efforts, reporting has substantially increased. Though Bates should be applauded for its successes, more can be done to continue to promote a healthy and safe campus community. The colleges and universities that I investigated had similar achievements to Bates, as well as peer education programs for the elimination and response of sexual assault. Each school's program had a mission statement that was specific to the school's campus, a detailed description of the role of peer educators, and a breakdown of their training and work hours. Some schools also had newly added components to the program or 'program extras' that exemplified the college's ongoing efforts to better improve their resources for students. According to my findings, peer education is not a new method of addressing sexual assault on college campuses. In fact, many colleges and universities have had peer education programs for several years. With this being said, Bates is simply behind in the times in terms of the peer education movement.

Below is a breakdown of the peer education model at other colleges and universities that have demonstrated success on college campuses.

Mission Statement.
The mission statements of the sexual assault peer education programs illustrated a common goal of creating a campus filled with knowledge and respect. It declares the group's purpose on campus, describes what they do, and expresses their commitment to the aforementioned role of a peer educator. Statements included recurring themes of promoting

emotional support, awareness, responsibility, healthy choice, and sexual health. In each

school's mission statement, at least two or more of these themes were mentioned. Also within

the mission statement, peer educators advertised themselves as student leaders who wanted to

engage in a two way education system: educating themselves while simultaneously educating

their peers on issues concerning the lives of everyday college students. They label themselves

both as a resource for support and as a referral agent. Amherst College's Peer Advocates of

Sexual Respect encompasses all of the above into a well-crafted paragraph. Their mission

statement reads:

> As Peer Advocates of Sexual Respect, we are students who have received intensive training and on-going supervision to act as a resource referral group for students who are in need of emotional support. We envision ourselves as a natural option for anyone questioning sexual issues ranging from the traumatic to the romantic. We not only address problems as they occur but work on ways to prevent and recognize looming problems. We are a resource to the Amherst community not just for intense, illegal activity but also issues stemming from everyday relationship interactions. We support peers as they work through uncomfortable experiences of a sexual nature. Our group therefore provides a safe environment for questions, concerns, and support. We work to create an environment where people are respected by others. We promote awareness of the impact of sexual disrespect on victims/survivors and what constitutes a healthy relationship (Amherst College, 2014).

Role of peer educators.
Similar to Amherst, the role of peer educators at my other colleges of study is to not

only address problems as they occur, but to create ongoing campus dialogue about the issue of

sexual assault on campus. One way they do this is through the facilitation of workshops. In

my research, I found that each peer educator co-leads one to two workshops per semester.

These workshops are catered towards male and female groups, clubs, and teams on campus.

They can cover an array of topics (sexual consent, resources for survivors, how to report, what

is considered healthy sexual behavior, etc.) and can be reserved or booked in advance. Sexual

assault education is usually only offered during freshman orientation, so the goal is to reach as

many students as possible. The educational workshops create a 'refresher' course for the upperclassmen.

In one of my focus groups, a male athlete expressed his concern for current sexual assault education on sports teams. In his opinion, workshops at Bates should specifically target athletic teams because of the unique athlete culture. He felt that his captains, who led a talk during practice, did not appropriately address the issue. The participant claimed that the talk felt forced and that it was obvious that it came from the top down. He believed that the male captains were not educated enough on the issue to be presenting it but, despite the fact, were encouraged to do so by the coach. This is a conflict that peer educators at Bates would solve. The education would not necessarily be coming from within the team, but would still be coming from a peer perspective. Some schools addressed the education of athletic teams by targeting the captains of men's teams and encouraging them to become peer educators themselves. They saw this as way to dispel the myth that male athletes are misogynistic and a way to shed the team in a positive light. Ideally, the captains would be the ones to host the workshops to their teams.

In addition to hosting workshops, peer educators are responsible for publicizing the issue of sexual assault on campus and advertising themselves as a resource for sexual assault survivors. Poster campaigns and presentations were two common methods peer educators used to try to reach the entire student body and promote overall student awareness of the issue of sexual assault and of their role on campus. Peer educators want to be recognized as an available resource to offer support and answer questions and concerns. To do this, Bowdoin and Amherst peer educators compiled a list of the peer educators' email addresses and put them on the back of each bathroom stall. Rather than giving out personal emails, Brown has

created one confidential email that students can send questions to. In addition, Brown has also started a texting service that will respond to students within 24 hours. These program components will require peer educators at Brown to go through additional training and be strongly committed to their role as a peer educator.

Becoming a peer educator.

Each school's program has 11 to 15 male and female students serving as peer educators. Students can begin the role as first years and continue their title as a peer educator throughout their college trajectory. The process of becoming a peer educator is usually done through an application and interview process that is overseen by the more senior peer educators. The most common questions on the applications are the student's interest in the role, their related experience, and why they would be an ideal candidate for the position. Bowdoin's application, for example, asks students: "(1) Why do you want to be a peer health educator? (2) What might differentiate you from other candidates? (3) What experience (if any) do you have with health education and/or counseling and/or leading groups or workshops for your peers? (4) What are the most important health issues on this campus? What topics are you most interested in teaching about? What are some potential ways Peer Health could address this issue?" (Bowdoin College, 2014).

Interest in becoming a peer educator usually stems from interest in the subject matter, a desire to hold a leadership position on campus, and attraction to the incentives that the program offers. While some peer education programs operate as a volunteer internship opportunity, others are paid positions. Wesleyan is one of three schools that offer stipend positions. Students usually work three to five hours per week in the health center in addition to attending group meetings that meet bi weekly or monthly. In order to be prepared for drop in hours, peer educators receive training, which is usually through a nationally recognized

bystander intervention program, the Title IX coordinator, and the health center. Training usually takes place during orientation and will be a two day process, with each training session being an average of four to six hours long.

Brown's training, for example, is done through "Bringing the Bystander" and is a one-day, six hour intensive training. Peer educators will receive basic training on sexual assault prevention and response and additional training for listening skills, responding skills, and referral skills. As a part of their commitment to their role as a peer educator, students will have ongoing training throughout their semesters as peer educators. Skidmore is the only college in my sample that offers course credit for the peer health education training. These training courses, Peer Health Education and Advanced Peer Health Education, are offered each semester. Upon completion of both of these courses, students will be able to begin their role as a fully trained peer health educator in the health center.

Confidentiality.

Out of the colleges that I researched, Skidmore and Williams are the only peer education programs with complete confidentiality. During the peer education debrief at Consentfest!, a representative from both of these colleges spoke about the element of student confidentiality within their role as a peer educator. Both of these students, in addition to the other peer educators at their respective colleges, had to undergo additional training in order to be recognized as a confidential resource. Questions were raised regarding what a position with peer confidentiality actually entailed. Since colleges have to adhere to the Clery Act and the newly formed Campus SAVE Act, it is important that all cases of sexual assault on campus be reported. Though exact details of an event remain between the student and the peer educator, it is the responsibility of the peer educator to inform the college that a sexaul assault has been reported.

At Williams, the student Rape and Sexual Assault Network (RASN) offers a 24 hour/ 7 days a week confidential hotline service. If a student calls in, a peer educator will respond to the call and will meet the needs of the caller (whether it be the survivor, or friend of a survivor, etc). If details of an assault are shared with the peer educator, it is the educator's responsibility to notify Williams security that there has been a sexual assault on campus. The only information that needs to be processed is the date of the incident and where it took place. These measures are strictly for reporting purposes and no other details of the event will be asked of the peer educator. According to the college, Williams has one of the highest reporting statistics, which shows that, though there are unfortunate circumstances, their on campus resources (such as their peer education program) are being utilized (Williams College, 2014).

Though Bowdoin does not have a peer position with confidentiality, peer educators do not share details of their reports with other peer educators or peers in general. At Consentfest!, Bowdoin's Title IX coordinator spoke of Bowdoin students' handlings of confidentiality. She said that if peer educators have concerns about a situation that was presented to them, they come to her with questions that are phrased in a way that is somewhat protective. She gave an example of a student speaking hypothetically, in which case, the Title IX coordinator responded with a hypothetical solution. This segwayed into a conversation about how students carry themselves professionally. If peer educators see a survivor on campus who has disclosed information to them, their job is to treat them like any other student.

A girl from Skidmore, followed by a girl from Bowdoin, spoke of students approaching them at parties, recognizing them as a student resource, and speaking with them about an unwanted sexual act that they or a friend experienced. The peer educator from Skidmore

reflected on a particular situation and said that she gave herself time to recollect herself and bring the student to a more quiet location. She listed to what the student had to say and reminded her of the on campus resources that are available to her. Since this was a unique situation, she sent the student a text message from her phone, reminding her of the confidential walk-in hours, not knowing if the student would have recollection of what was said, or if the student would follow up with the peer educator again. The peer educator noted that it was not her responsibility to seek the student out, and that at that point she had done everything in her control. The peer educator from Bowdoin agreed and conversation segwayed into anonymous resources.

The Title IX Coordinator at Bowdoin said that she has found that students are reporting through drop boxes that are stationed throughout campus. This service makes reporting easy, anonymous, and confidential. However, she added, students worry about being seen by a drop box. Because of this, Bowdoin has created an online reporting option, which many other colleges and universities have (including Bates!). Going one step further to increase anonymity and confidentiality, Williams has a designated button on their Sexual Assault Survivor Resource page that allows the student to exit the site quickly. Representatives from Brown noted that their goal of their confidential question and answer email service was to make sure the student felt as comfortable as possible.

Because of these concerns, it is important to situate peer educators in a location that is not central to the campus or in an area that has a lot of traffic. Most peer educators are located in the health center or in the Women's Resource Center but some colleges are beginning to rethink their positioning. The goal is to make peer educators accessible to students and, in turn, allow students to feel comfortable with utilizing the resource on campus without fear of

judgement or stigma.

Conclusion: Peer Educators at Bates.

Heather Lindkvist, Title IX coordinator at Bates, is already in the process of creating a

sexual respect peer education program. During Short Term, Lindkvist has offered a course

entitled: Gender, Sexuality, and Violence: The College Campus and Beyond. The description

of the course reads:

> Students consider sexual culture and gender-based violence (e.g., sexual assault, dating
> violence, and stalking) in the college context. The course explores the cultural norms,
> institutional structures, public discourse, and myths that perpetuate, enable, and
> support gender inequity and violence. Students examine gender-based violence and its
> intersection with sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, race/ethnicity, and
> class. Students critically analyze the modes of intervention aimed at eliminating
> gender- based violence through research about and workshops with victim services
> organizations, law enforcement, healthcare providers and legal professionals. Though
> the course situates sexual culture and gender-based violence in the United States,
> primarily on the college campus, students explore related case studies within a global
> context. Students design and propose community action projects to catalyze change
> about sexual culture and gender- based violence on their campus or in their community
> (Lindkvist, 2014).

Students enrolled in the course will ultimately contribute to the development of a Sexual

Respect Peer Educator program. Since the course offers advocacy training, students in the

course would ideally serve as the college's first set of peer educators for the Fall 2014 term.

When asked if peer education was an effective way to address the issue of sexual

assault on campus, six of six of my respondents from Bates believed that it was. Their

responses reflected the value of a peer to peer relationship through emphasizing the

relatability factor (both in age and exposure to culture). One student wrote:

> I think peer health education sounds like a great way to educate! I haven't had much
> experience with it directly, but I think the idea of sending a message from peers rather
> than a professor or professional teacher makes the message more personal, more
> relatable, and more believable. It also encourages students to care when they might
> otherwise brush it off as not relevant to their lives. I also think peer education
> encourages students to feel comfortable asking more questions. In addition, peer
> education can help create a culture where students are role models of the anti-sexual

assault values they teach about, and where education happens among students on a more casual and regular basis.

When asked if a peer education would be beneficial to the Bates community, the respondents, six of six, strongly believed that it would. However, many of them expressed that additional resources and services would also need to be available to students and that the college would need to continue in its efforts to addressing sexual assault on campus. Since Bates has already been improving its resources for survivors, and in the process of implementing a sexual respect peer education program, the issue of sexual assault is becoming more community engaged. I firmly believe that the Bates campus community is well on its way to being transformed.

<p style="text-align: center;">*Works Cited*</p>

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*The Story Behind A Photograph: A Study of a Photography
Project with Homeless Youth*

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Every picture tells a story. What story rests hidden within the imagery of a photograph? For my capstone project I explored this question by conducting a photography project at New Beginnings, a private non-profit housing shelter in Lewiston, ME. I implemented a project influenced by a photography program called *Pictures of Hope,* designed by nationally acclaimed professional photojournalist Linda Solomon. My capstone exposed the kids to the creative, constructive process of composing a piece of art. A photographic image can embody a range of meanings, symbols, and ideas for the artist and it is important for the artist (or, in this case, the students) to understand *what* they want to convey so they can figure out *how* to effectively depict such ideas. This project focused on the self-exploratory process of constructing a photograph, from a potential concept to a finalized creation. Additionally, this capstone was also dedicated to instilling a sense of control and power within the youth, thereby helping them uncover *and* discover their inherent talents.

I. Problem Statement

According to Maine's State Report Card on Child Homelessness, out of the nation, Maine ranks 9th in in child homelessness. Moreover, according to this report, out of a 1-50 scale with 1 being the best and 50 being the worst, Maine is ranked in the following manner: Extent of child homelessness: 7; child-well being: 50; risk for child homelessness: 11; overall ranking: 9.[1] With this information in mind, it is quite incredible to think about New Beginnings' work and the opportunities this shelter offers to homeless children. The 'success numbers' from the 2012 annual report for the New Beginnings shelter (15,650 nights of housing where youth were safe and off the streets; 14,5000 meals served at the Shelter; 760

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[1] The National Center on Family Homelessness, America's Youngest Outcasts: State Report Card on Child Homelessness

youth and families served this year by New Beginnings; 180 youth that stayed at the 24-hour Shelter from throughout Maine; 84% of youth served reunified with family or acquired safe housing)[2] highlight the large impact that this shelter has on homelessness in Maine; on a micro-level scale, considering the enormity of homelessness throughout the country and Maine specifically, New Beginnings plays a vital role in helping Maine youth stay off the streets. New Beginnings offers a variety of programming—Emergency Shelter; Transitional Living Program (TLP); Outreach Services and Education; and HIV Prevention, Research, and Training— that work towards meeting the Agency's Mission: "New Beginnings' mission is to assist and advocate for people in crisis due to unstable or conflictive living situations, resulting in increased stability and more productive lives." [3] Through their programming, New Beginnings thus offers these youth much more than a house to live; this shelter also helps the kids to develop life skills that support their transition from the streets of Maine to becoming more independent and self-sufficient members of the community.

II.   Nature of the Study

While New Beginnings' programs provide these kids, who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness between the ages of 16 and 21, with opportunities to learn independent living skills, pre-vocational training, support, and counseling, these kids are not often given the chance to 'be heard' or creatively express themselves. I believe that these youths, who come from a variety of backgrounds, have a large amount of artistically expressive potential that merely needs guidance and attention. I hope that my project will help these youth to uncover, or discover, their vast array of potentials; by doing so, I hope to aid these students in

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[2] New Beginnings: Annual Report 2012
[3] http://newbeginmaine.org/about-us/mission-and-goals/

making tangible, meaningful products that are personally significant and relevant. As Solomon says, "When you show children that you care about what they wish for in life, perhaps a child who never felt he or she had self worth, now will." Because these kids are not used to relating with, or receiving support from, adult figures, many of these kids have not been given the opportunity to develop such verbally expressive skills. With this in mind, this photography project will give these youth a creative outlet in which they can express themselves without relying solely on words.

III. Rationale for the Study/How the Study addresses the identified problem

My capstone addresses the prevalent need for providing youth with a safe, creative, and collaborative environment to explore old and new interests. By fostering the youth's *inherent* creativity and nurturing *new* forms of creativity, my capstone addresses the lack of creative space in these youths' lives. In particular, I was interested in uncovering successful practices of working with homeless youth, specifically in terms of low-income homeless youth. As a relatively privileged Bates student, I have attempted to bridge the worlds of my life at Bates with the lives of these homeless youth. By forming such connection with the youth, I have not only exposed them to the importance of forming relationships but also filled the 'void,' if you will, of creative opportunities that are absent in the lives of these youth. Thus, my project works on both a personal *and* a more general level. On the one hand, my capstone works to instill in these youth a sense of purpose and confidence. Additionally, my project will contribute, although on a very small yet important scale, to the overall need for creativity within the lives of these homeless youth.

IV. Literature Review

A review of the literature indicates that arts education, and the implementation of arts within public school education, is a highly contested and controversial topic. Across the literature, there are shared understandings and controversies, open-ended questions, and documented gaps in research. For instance, the continuous cutting of arts funding in schools reflects how educators and policy makes often perceive the value of the arts in a degrading manner; these individuals see the arts as an *additional*, rather than a *necessary*, component to a child's overall growth as a student. Within the overarching topic of *arts education*, I have broken down this umbrella term into 5 'branches' of other, sub-topics: Using Photography with Youths, Photography and Homeless Youths, Art Therapy and Homeless Youth, Art as a form of activism or community builder, and then an array of specific, implemented photography-based programs. By creating such subgroups, I was better able to categorize, and then utilize the information from, all of my sources.

One of the most prominent controversies in arts education literature is the rationalization/validation of arts education: should the arts be justified because of their potential to complement, and improve, academic learning *or* because of their own valuable influence on student's education, independent from other academic subjects. Extensive research exposes the fundamental role that the arts play in transforming, or enhancing, education. Within the field of arts education research, it is a unanimous understanding that the arts teach communication skills, aid in the development of visual literacy abilities, and provide youth with a fun and 'productive' expressive outlet (Seide, et al., 2009). Yet while the arts indeed improve student's academic abilities test scores, correlation is *not* causation. Research has shown the need for educators to transcend the approach of rationalizing the arts

based on their transferability to other subject. Instead, educators and policy makers—involved in budget cuts and other schooling decisions— should to focus on justifying the arts for their *own* intrinsic value (Winner). In this regard, in order to grant the arts the status they deserve, it is imperative to look at the conceptual, rather than mere practical, skills that students acquire through the arts (Seide, et al., 2009). Instead of gaining rigid, testable skills that are visibly scored on exams, students develop the disposition to think in creative, expansive, and liberating ways, unattainable in other disciplines within the academic realm (Winner).

Other research has examined the intimate connection between literature on arts education/art therapy and literature on the power of art as an approach to activism and as a vehicle for personal growth and community building (Felshin 1995, Miller 2006, Neel 2004, Rudkin 2007, Wang 2004). What is relevant is how the synthesis of these distinct bodies of literature speak to the ways in which the arts are both a way to help students *reflect*—in terms of self-evaluation and observation—and also act—in regards to personal expression and innovative exploration. Projects like Photovoice, which is a perfect case study for my capstone project, have worked towards exposing individuals to the expressive potential— both individually and collaboratively with a community—of the arts (Gavin 2003, Hubbard 1991, Wang 1997, Wang 2000). My capstone project will illustrate the overlap between the sub-topics of the literature mentioned above—all concepts converging around the overarching theme of arts education. While a photography project with homeless youth is, in no way, a form of traditional 'therapy,' I hope to reach similar outcomes by helping the youth explore their personal emotions, improve their perception of his/her self-worth, foster self-awareness, and put words to some of what s/he might be feeling but have difficulty expressing (Davis 1997, Metzger 2012 & Prescatt 2008). My capstone project will mirror

such 'goals' of art therapy, thereby 'filling' in the gap that exists between strict art therapy practices and traditional arts integration with students. Within the field of arts education, there exists very little research regarding programs that recognize the connection between the *therapeutic* and the *educational* components of the arts. Thus by synthesizing, and then building on, existing research and practice of art therapy and arts education, I will expose the transformative power of the arts: the ability to gain access to, and uncover, student's communicative capacities—skills that that may otherwise be repressed because of the youth's inability to verbally or textually express such ideas (Feen-Calligan 2008 & Hubbard 1991).

With the goal of nurturing the youth's creativity and talents, I turn to *Art Start,* a nationally recognized model for using the creative arts to transform young, at-risk lives (http://art-start.org). By providing the youth with a path to discover, and then explore, their creativity, my project provides the youth with direction and routes to success. Throughout the semester I have used this program as a model to help me proceed with developing this project—an alternative, 'extracurricular' outlet for the youths' creative energy.

V. Methods

While I initially planned on taking fieldnotes *during* my time working with the youth, I seen recognized that this would be too disturbing and make my work seem too artificial (in terms of making it seem like I was implementing a research design). I also anticipated that the youth would completely shut down and act in more reserved, unnatural ways if they knew I was 'studying' something. From the very first meeting I ever had with the youth, I became instantly aware, and somewhat worried by, the youths' perceptions of my work; I could tell that a lot of them viewed my project as a 'school- based' assignment with little personal relevance. Thus, I purposefully kept on relaying my *own* interest in, and

passion for, working with these youth. All of this led to my decision of taking fieldnotes *after* my meetings with the youth. As Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw notes, "every fieldnote tale is embedded not only within the day's entry but also within the context of ongoing fieldwork and note-taking." I tried to objectively take fieldnotes as a neutral ethnographer, thus preventing any forms of *imposed* expectations or judgments of any particular position. By doing so, at the end of the project, I was able to look back at these recounted events and examine how *my work* with the youth evolved and how *my observations* developed in response.

While I did use Qualitative Methods to answer my research question, my project added another factor to a traditional form of qualitative methods. In this regard, my project is a result of a combination of the following methods: Field Research-"Research in which natural social processes are studied as they happen and *left relatively undisturbed*" (Chambliss and Schutt 223); Participant Observation- "A qualitative method for gathering data that involves developing a sustained relationship with people while they *go about their normal activities*" (Chambliss and Schutt, 225); and Mixed Partic ip atio n/Observatio n- "Adopt a role that involves some *active participation* in the setting" (Chambliss and Schutt, 227). Upon reflecting on my methods, it is apparent that while I was conducting field research, I did, indeed, alter the social environment of the youth and I was not focused on researching how such changes impacted the 'participants' (i.e. the youth). By intentionally creating, and the engaging with, an alternative social context, I was taking part in a non-traditional form of field research. Additionally, by providing the youth with my arts-based activity, I was not working with them as they went about their 'normal' activities. And finally, while I did actively participate in the activities, I did not adopt a completely

participatory role (I was still observing the youth's behaviors). All of my 'edits' to the

traditional forms of qualitative methods has led me to understand that my project does not fit

into one classified category of research.

The following is a timeline of my capstone:

- January

    o Email Linda—set up date for visit at Bates or meeting via Skype (if necessary) (n/a)
        ☐ Tutorial with Linda (either in person or on the computer)
    o Training with my supervisor Ethan May at New Beginnings
    o Attend "House Meeting" to meet the youths and give them a preliminary introduction to the project

- February

    o Tutorial with students—build off of initial introduction to project
        ☐ Camera lesson—brought packet entitled Using the Elements and Principles of Design in Photography
        ☐ Help students brainstorm ideas regarding their "hopes and dreams" and plans for their photographs—what type of imagery do they want to capture in their photographs?

- March

    o Project implementation
        ☐ Adapt Museum-based methodology called Visual Thinking Strategies (VTW)—principles that focus on discovering a hidden narrative within a piece of art by asking 1) what do you see in this image?, 2) what do you see that makes you say that?, and 3) what more can we find?
        • Modify these questions/ideas to help youth conceptualize their project and begin plans for execution
            o Show the kids a variety of photographs that have a strong narrative/story line
            o Ask the kids to brainstorm: a) what does the photography depicts? b) what imagery do see that makes them say that? and c) how/in what ways did the artist visually depict their story within their imagery?
        • Have the kids come up with own 'story line' or message they want to visually represent in their own photographs
            o Ask the kids to think about what kind of imagery

will resonate/respond to their intended messages for their photographs

  o Have the kids figure out where they can find such imagery—in the shelter, outside in nature, Lewiston, etc.

- ☐ Three visits for photography expeditions
- ☐ One final visit to identify and select images for Art Room at Symposium
  - • Frame/mount the photographs
  - • Encourage children to write small blurbs about photographs—why did they take these pictures? What is personally-relevant/significant about these photographs?

- April

  o Presentation at Bates' Symposium
    - ☐ Youth, along with staff from New Beginnings, attend the Symposium and visit the Art Room

VI. Research Question

Original Questions from Proposal:

- Beyond teaching the students how to use a camera and document their desired imagery, how will this photography project help these kids learn the power of artistic expression, and thus, give the youth a voice to express their feelings?

  o Subquestion: How will this project give youth a "way to be heard"? Essentially, how will one picture come to symbolize one child's picture of hope?

Adapted Question as project developed:

- Beyond teaching the students the fundamentals of photography and cameras, how will an arts-based program instill the youth with a sense of control and power?

  o Subquestion: How will photography's power of artistic expression help these youth understand their own intrinsic abilities, talents that may merely be underdeveloped or unexposed?

o   How can this one activity for my capstone inspire the youth to seek out, and

then engage in, other projects that will help them develop new skills and

interests?

VII. Background/Contextual Description

New Beginnings is a homeless shelter serving runaway youth, youths at risk, and

homeless youth since 1980. The agency's mission, "to assist and advocate for people in crisis

due to unstable or conflictive living situations, resulting in increased stability and more

productive lives" (http://newbeginmaine.org/about-us/mission-and-goals/) is manifested in

their array of programming—ranging from community and outreach services and HIV

prevention, research & training. Thus, in addition to providing housing for the youth, this

shelter provides its youth with opportunities for stability and access to other community

resources such as educational, medical and mental health services. Additionally, New

Beginnings offers the youth case management, counseling (both individual and group),

substance abuse prevention, pre-vocational training, and adventure challenge trips. I mainly

worked with youth from the Transitional Living Program, which consist of a Supervised

Apartment Program and a Community Living Program.*[4]

VIII. Presentation of Data

I identified two themes from synthesizing my participant-observation findings from

my work at New Beginnings. The first pattern I discovered is the *direct relation/correlation*

between degree of support and 'fulfillment'/ complement of task. The larges piece of evidence

I have for this finding is comparing the 'failures' and 'successes' of implementing my project

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[4] see *New Beginnings Annual Report 2012* and the *Types of Programs* handout I created for more
information

with the youth. I have found that it is very important to frame questions and convey guidance in a supportive yet non-restrictive manner. For instance, if you 'baby" the youth too much (which it appears I unintentionally did in the beginning of the project), they retaliate in such a way that is quite detrimental to the overall project. Rather, it is imperative to create a form of reciprocity in terms of 'guider' (Ally and me) and 'those being guided' (the youth). By the end of my time working with the youth, I would present the task at hand in such a way that conveys my interested in, and intent on, following the lead of the youth themselves. As I communicated to the youth that I was willing to (and going to) step back and act as a mentor, their work ethic and overall products increased and developed, respectively.

This idea leads me to another theme I have discovered: the necessity in finding a *balance between showing/setting examples for the youth and then allowing the youth to take control of the project*. The most telling evidence for this finding was the point in the project when Ally and I showed the youth some examples of our own pictures. Although the youth loved seeing our own photographs (and actually asked to keep them in the end), we discovered that giving the youth such models was actually quite limiting for the youth's own creativity. In response to seeing our photographs, the youth were trying to cater their thinking/wishes for their *own* pictures based on *our* pictures. Thus, after showing them a couple of examples we put our own pictures aside and helped the youth discover what they wanted to document, thereby granting them an element of personal control over their work.

IX. Analysis of Data Findings

The *literature* on both arts education with low income children and arts-based programs with homeless youth, my *observations* of the youth, and my *own* experience throughout my capstone all converge around the following key concepts: instill a level of

power and confidence within the youth; provide a balanced amount of educational, social, and emotional support to create a rapport with the youth; and nurture the youth's inherent creativity while simultaneously helping them discover new talents. My findings from my experiences at New Beginnings (with homeless *and* low income youth) mirror/parallel literature from distinct groups of data—either literature on arts education with low- income youth *or* literature on arts-based programs with homeless youth. The literature does not make any connections between low-income and homelessness. Yet, there are things to be learned from literature on low-income arts programs that speak to homeless programming. The similarities between my capstone data findings (and these *two* groupings of literature (mainly in terms of theory/practice behind art programming), thus prove that these two discrete categories of data should, indeed, be in dialogue. My capstone project and research appears to 'fill in the gap' among the literature that mainly focuses on the expressive and liberating potential of arts for *either* low-income children *or* homeless youth. Thus, by taking a step back and noting that these two groups of kids do indeed share a lot of similar characteristics— lack of opportunities/resources, instable home life (potentially), resilience in the face of transition/hardships, etc.—it is clear that literature should, indeed, converge around these two data groups.

X. Conclusions reached

In addition to proving the valuable qualities of implementing art-based programs with homeless youth, my capstone illuminates how integrative arts-based programs in homeless shelters provide youth with opportunities that translate their natural, inherent abilities/qualities into behaviors that may otherwise be concealed or go unseen. In this regard, art-based programing not only offers youth opportunities to explore the expressive potential

of art, but also offers them a safe and creative environment to uncover old, and discover new, talents.

I believe that my project helped the youth beyond merely providing them with a non-verbal, expressive, and creative outlet. My capstone has proved how arts-based programming contributes to the youth's personal development. I am quite confident in saying that my capstone has, I believe, both nurtured and transformed the characters of these youth. While this project may not necessarily have helped the youth 'find their purpose,' I know (directly from the words of the youth themselves) that this project is an activity that the youth enjoy and look forward to. As a form of 'escape' from their daily tasks and realities of their homelessness situations, this project has helped students in the following areas: gain a sense of independence, develop the disposition to reflect on their interests, express themselves in nonverbal ways, and collaborate on a communal arts- based project.

Additionally, the combination of my fieldnotes and participant observations have illuminated the pressing need to provide homeless youth with alternative forms of reimagining their own identity, their own place within the larger scheme of things, and their overall development as a youth. While these youth at New Beginnings are living in a time of vulnerability, in terms of transitioning from instability into a shelter, it is vital to reconstruct and transform such instability into moments of stability. With this focus, I was intent on bringing the youth on photography expeditions on 'neutral' grounds; by freeing them from the boundaries of the shelter's physical constraints, I displaced the youth from their normal living situations. By doing so, the photographs that the youth ended up creating did not represent their 'homelessness' but rather a neutral artistic product. In this way, I was able to provide the youth with an opportunity to produce artwork that was not reflective of, or had any relation to,

their homelessness; I helped the youth to disassociate their photographs from their 'homeless identities.' While the photographs, on a more personal or deeper note, are more than likely connected to, or influenced by, the youth's current living situations, the physical locations of the depicted imagery preclude any direct connection to their homelessness. In this regard, my capstone allowed for the youth to creatively produce artwork that was separate from their homelessness—a title that often dominates their identity.

XI. Implications

My participant-observations, I believe, have huge implications for how arts-based programs with homeless youth most successfully work. By taking a step back and using a critical lens to objectively examine such programming, it is evident that ideas of reciprocity are vital—both in terms of the *ways* in which tasks are presented and *how* such projects are executed. I believe that this salient theme, which I have uncovered from my project, can be applied to other similar programs with homeless youth. Whether such programs are arts-based or not, or cater to low-income youth or youth from other SES level, this focus on mutuality is the fundamental basis of any effective form of relationships with homeless youth.

Thus, I believe that my capstone is paradigmatic of a successful, arts-based program for homeless youth that can be applied to other practices within homeless shelters. Even beyond arts-based practices, the salient themes of reciprocity/mutuality, varying degrees of support (depending on situation), and instilling feelings of passion and control within the youth, are relevant for all kind of work with homeless youth. The practices I employed with my capstone transcend any specific forms of programing. With this transferability of practice across all forms of work with homeless youth, it is thus apparent that any for programming needs to develop, and then work with, alternatives ways of 'cracking' the youth's outer,

protective façades. By guiding the youth along a path that, at times, threatens their comfort levels, I have disclosed a hidden 'gem' for productively and effectively working with homeless youth: by exhibiting to the youth a level of passion and interest that I hoped they would reciprocate, I was presented with behaviors that surpassed any semblance of my expectations. After experiencing such a successful project, I hope that any other individuals who work with such a particular population will also recognize the benefits of employing such similar approaches— practices that are youth-oriented and empowering.

XII. Overall Conclusion

My capstone has validated that extracurricular programming, specifically catering to the arts, grants youth a voice that translates to other avenues of their lives—elements that might have absolutely no relation to any forms of art-based ideas. Thus, by enriching the already-existing New Beginnings' programs, my project both expands the youth's opportunities to participate in artistic projects *and* helps them become more expressive and communicative. These youth, who have endured such varied and troubling backgrounds, are rarely granted the freedom to actively engage in activities that cater to their personal needs and desires. With this understanding, I was intent on instilling a sense of power within each and every youth with whom I worked. Continuously throughout our sessions together I would say to the youth "How do *you* want to go about pursuing this project?; what do *you* want to photograph?; where do *you* want to go to take images?" While at times I honestly felt like a broken record, I was so invested in using my project as a way to guide the youth in finding personally significant interests and passions. From my own personal experiences, I knew that if I was able to uncover and then sustain the youth's passion, I would be able to create a successful project. I am pleased to say that I think I accomplished such goals!

As noted above, in terms of additional research, while there is some literature on arts education that is particular to low-income youth and separate literature on arts-based programs with homeless youth, there is very little (if almost none) literature on arts education specifically targeted for low income homeless youth. While for my project I have worked on combining and synthesizing these tow categories of literature, it would be very beneficial for additional research to cater directly towards this narrow population. Considering that a child's background is manifested in his/her behaviors, emotions, interests, and overall identity, it would be interesting to study how such components influence a homeless youth's identity. While there is indeed a gap in the literature, I believe that I was able to integrate different studies, programs, theories, and practices in such a way that provided me with a strong foundation in terms of understanding the type of work I was doing at New Beginnings.

In conclusion, throughout the whole semester I have been cognizant of the power of the word *homelessness.* Society stigmatizes this identity marker in such a way that taints how *outsiders* view homeless people and how *homeless* individuals view themselves. Similar to recognizing the benefits of physically displacing the youth from the shelters for the photography journeys, I have also discovered the need to disassociate or discredit titles that, more often that not, belittle an individual's identity. My presentation at the Symposium was a tangible representation of the control and 'hold' that words have over people. When I created my presentation and was practicing my talk, I was imagining an audience comprised of my peers, professor, and other faculty and staff. Yet, when I arrived to the Symposium to give my presentation, my supervisor and one of the youths were sitting in the audience. At first caught off guard, yet equally excited, by their presence, I realized that I was going to need to improvise some sections of my talk—specifically removing the word 'homeless' or

'homelessness.' During the presentation I felt uncomfortable muttering such words considering that there *was* a homeless boy sitting right there in the audience. While I was familiar with the negative associations attached to the word homeless, and rarely used this word when I was working with the youth, this experience at the Symposium completely altered my thinking. As I was standing up at the podium speaking about my work, I found myself constantly staring out at the homeless boy in the back of the room. During the mere fifteen minutes of this presentation, I developed a newfound awareness of the power these eight letters—h-o-m-e-l-e-s-s –held over society at large, and specifically, over me. It was at this moment that I was truly able to step back, reflect, and appreciate how my capstone provided me with eye-opening experiences, even up until the final moments of my presentation. These lessons will forever be ingrained in my identity as an educational studies student and, someday, as an educator.

Extended Annotated Bibliography

1-Arts Education in General:

Seide, S., Tishman, S., Winner, E., Hetland, L., & Palmer, P. (2009). The Qualities of
Quality: Understanding Excellence in Arts Education. *Project Zero, Harvard
Graduate School of Education*, 1-121.

These researchers at Harvard's Project Zero discuss and examine the qualities of good K- 12

arts programs and determine that some of the best practices of arts education incorporate

ideas such as aesthetic awareness and personal growth. This article provided me with some

valuable, foundational understanding of arts education. These authors evaluate arts learning

experiences *in* and *out* of the classroom and explore what type of practices work best for arts

instruction depending on their respective, contextual environment. This report, a "stunning

and groundbreaking exploration into the complex factors, actors, and settings that must be

aligned to achieve quality in arts education" (I), is broken down into discrete sections that

explore the following ideas: 1- Envisioning and Experiencing Quality; 2- Achieving and

Sustaining Quality; and 3- Quality in Practice. The two most relevant and informative parts

were the following: the first section that distinguished between the seven purposes of arts

education (specifically #5- Arts education should provide a way for students to engage with

community, civic, and social issues; #6- Arts education should provide a venue for students to

express themselves; and #7-Arts education should help students develop as an individual) and

the part in the third section that displayed visual diagrams, for reflecting on visions and

actions, as tools for achieving and sustaining quality in arts education:

*I especially like this visual because it connects one's goals with one's actions. It essentially acts as an outline to help art educators productively, and successively, act on their goals.

2-Using Photography with Youths:

Rudkin, J.K., & Davis, A. (2007). Photography as a Tool for Understanding Youth
connections to Neighborhood. *Children, Youth and Environments, 17*(4), 107- 123.

This study offers a comparison analysis between photographic and questionnaire-based

approaches to understanding how youths relate to their communities. This texts builds on the

ideas of Caroline Wang and her colleagues' *Photovoice* as a term to describe the "method of

using photography to capture 'voices that ordinarily would not be heard and broadcast them into the halls of decision-making power" (109). Like the Photovoice article mentioned above, this text explores the connection between photography and youth's relationships within, and to, their communities. This article exposed me to the value of photography to offer insight into the often-unseen perspective of community insiders. For instance, does specific imagery that these youth decide to document relate to broader community-based issues? How does the imagery in the photographs elucidate, and bring to the forefront of people's attention, specific needs for intervention or community improvement? After reading this article I now have a better understanding of the importance in decoding *why* the youths chose to photograph specific objects/imagery and *what* such imagery reveals about the kids and their broader community.

3-Photography and Homeless Youth:

Gavin, M. (2003). Developing Positive Negatives: Youth on the Street Capture Images of
Their Lives with Help from Photo Voice. *Children, Youth and Environments, 13*(2),
254-259.

As the introduction of this article notes, documentary photography is a way of "enabling 'those who have traditionally been the subjects of such work, to become its creator" (254)." This article provides a thorough examination of a case study that involves PhotoVoice, a method that combines the art of photography with acts geared towards social change (*see annotations below for a longer description). This text explores a PhotoVoice project in a Bhutanese refuge cape in Nepal where Tiffany Fairey (one of the founders and advisors of PhotoVoice) taught 30 young people (ages 15-17) to use photography as a way to express themselves in innovative ways. Through this project, Fairey highlighted the role of photography as a tool for empowerment. This article sparked my interest in the PhotoVoice

program and led me to their website, which offered me an array of information that is very applicable to my project. As noted on the website, PhotoVoice's mission is to "build skills within disadvantaged and marginalised communities using innovative participatory photography and digital storytelling methods so that they have the opportunity to represent themselves and create tools for advocacy and communications to achieve positive social change" (http://www.photovoice.org/).

This article delineated the timeline of PhotoVoice's development; reading this helped me to understand the initial initiatives that sparked this widespread program within the realm of photojournalism and how it has developed in such a successful manner. I am now eager to continue investigating this organization's projects and discover some additional programming ideas for my work at New Beginnings, specifically in terms of approaches that emphasize both the technical aspects of photography and the dialogic discussions surrounding the works of art.

Hubbard, J. (1991). *Shooting back: A photographic view of life by homeless children*. San
Francisco: Chronicle.
Jim Hubbard began his career documenting the lives of homeless people and then eventually developed the "Shooting Back Education and Media Center" in D.C. to provide homeless children the opportunity to document themselves, and their lives, through photography. This book is a compilation of photographs taken by homeless children; these black and white images are stories, *made* by children and *about* the children themselves. This book provides the reader with an insight on how homeless children make sense of, and view their position within, the world around them. These photographs represent their lives, "shot back" in such a way where the viewer 'directly' experiences how these individuals constructed their photographs with "their eyes, [their] mind, [their] spirit." Like Photovoice, Hubbard and this

book question the dominant modes of visualizing poverty and homelessness by granting those experiencing homelessness the power of documentation; the children have artistic control over the photograph's imagery, setting, and content; in this regard, these images provide the viewer with visual imagery to learn a few things about these individuals. This book was very inspirational and I am planning on showing it to the youth at New Beginnings in the beginning phases of our project. I think the youth will love to see these photographs as examples of what they will eventually be producing with my project. I think the book's imagery, and the accompanied text, will help the youth visualize *what* their final outcomes will look like. Like the children in this book, I plan on giving the New Beginning youths the tools to "convey their vision of the world" through the powerful medium of photography.

Miller, C. (2006). Images from the Streets: Art for Social Change from the Homelessness Photography Project. *Social Justice, 33*(2), 122-134.

This article explores homelessness photographed by homeless people themselves. The text also highlights how the "act of rendering that landscape visible can foster social change" (122). While my intentions for my capstone project are not necessarily focused on social change, but rather the personal development of artistic expression, I found this article very informative in terms of understanding *how* homeless individuals decide on *what* to document—significant people, places, imagery. I now have a better understanding of how homeless people used their imagery as tools for personal communication; the photograph's symbolism represents something distinct and personal for each homeless individual. Interestingly, this article also notes the power of a photography project to create a sense of belonging among its participants. At New Beginnings I will attempt to mirror this idea and help the kids, who are so used to being alone and excluded, feel part of a small community in which they can share imagery that embodies, and embraces, their joint experiences.

Wang., C.C., Morrel-Samuels, S., Hutchinson, P.M., Bell, L., & Pestronk, R.M. (2004). Flint Photovoice: Community Building Among Youths, Adults, and Policymakers. *American Journal of Public Health, 94*(6), 911-913.

This article explores *Photovoice*, a participatory-action research methodology that has its participants photographically document their communities. From these resulting images, the participants discuss the imagery and then communicate with policymakers. In this regard, this program is a way for community members to pictorially document their communities; then, the community members can use these tangible representations of their 'concerns' to show policymakers, community leaders, donors, the media, and the general public specific issues they wish to discuss. This article was very interesting in terms of my capstone project because the authors summarize and reflect on the narrative quality of photographs in terms of *what* people document with photography and *how* they use such imagery to spark dialogues. I am planning on using some of the practices mentioned in this article to help me in the beginning stages of my training with the kids. I plan on adapting the practices that Photovoice used during their workshops (i.e. altering the questions they use for the their 'freewrite' sessions) when I guide the youth at New Beginnings to engage in dialogue regarding the artistic, creative practice of photography.

4-Art Therapy and Homeless Youth:

Feen-Calligan, H. (2008). Service-learning and Art Therapy in a Homeless Shelter. *The Arts in Psychotherapy* (35.1), 20-33.

This article explores the mutually beneficial impact of service-learning: both the children in the homeless shelter and the graduate art therapy students profited from this community partnership. Students' learning was assessed using 3 art therapy education standards: Cultural and Social Diversity, Human Growth and Development, and Studio Art. While this article mainly focused on the benefits of service learning for the *graduate students*, rather than the

homeless youth themselves, this text still provided me with a practical case study in which I learned about another type of art program implemented at a homeless shelter. Moreover, while a large part of the article focused on art *therapy*, I was influenced by a couple of these practices (i.e. the reflective process of drawing a self portrait) that I hope to adapt to my work at New Beginnings.

Metzger, J. (2012). "Transforming the Realities of Homeless Youth: Considerations for the Design and Implementation of an Adlerian Art Therapy Program." A Thesis Project Presented to The Faculty of the Adler Graduate School.

This thesis presentation focused on Adlerian Marriage and Family Therapy and Art Therapy. Again, like the Feen-Calligan article, this thesis mainly focused on art therapy practices—a very interesting topic, yet something that is not very applicable to my work at New Beginnings. Thus while this text was much more 'scientific' and 'psychological' than the type of literature I am looking for, I still believe that it offered me insightful information regarding the psychological components that need to be addressed when working with homeless youths. The most relevant and informative part of this source was the text that explored issues of trust and relationship-building; these are two topics that are very relevant for my work at New Beginnings and Metzger's work provided me with some relevant literature regarding successful approaches/strategies to building such trust and, thus, accessing the youth's inherent creativity.

Prescatt, M.V., Sekendur, B., Bailey, B., & Hoshino, J. (2008). Art Making as a Component and Facilitator of Resiliency With Homeless Youth. *Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association* (26.4), 156-63.

This article mainly focused on the need to shift treatment approached from a negative, 'damaged' model to one that focuses on youth's resiliency and strengths. These authors note the correlation between a person's engagement with a creative activity and his/her achievements, outside the realm specifically related to the arts. The participants of this study

engaged in interviews and art making sessions in order for the researchers to gather data on life achievements—accomplishments such as secure housing, substance cessation, return to school, employment, pro-social skills, taking initiatives, and art sales. Overall, this study was very helpful in illuminating the success of exposing homeless youth to art making. By offering numerical and narrative evidence for the power of art and creativity, the study's findings essentially validated the rewards of art making for homeless youth. I hope to be able to take what I have learned from this source — specifically in regards to the role of art making in terms of increasing youth's achievements— and apply it to my capstone project!

5-Art as a form of Activism:
Felshin, N. (1995). *But Is It Art?* Seattle, WA: Bay Press.
- Wolper, A. (1995). Making Art, Reclaiming The Artist and Homeless Collaborative. In N. Felshin, *But Is It Art?* (pp. 251-282). Seattle, WA: Bay Press.

This book is a collection of an array of essays that explore the diversity of activist art practices. I was mainly interested in Wolper's chapter, *Making Art, Reclaiming The Artist and Homeless Collaborative*, because it concentrates on the power of art: "If, as I believe, all human beings are born with the ability to sing, dance, and make art, the Artists and Homeless Collaborative may help reawaken what our oppressive, violent world most often puts in a state of dormancy." Out of curiosity, I skimmed through some of the other chapters and found myself extremely interested in the different author's activist art projects and how they contextualized their projects with specific art historical and biographical information. This book was very empowering and helped me to discover, and better understand, how my photography project at New Beginnings will not only provide these youth with a fun, exploratory project but also grant them a sense of activist- oriented agency. Overall, this book exposed me to the importance of helping the youth recognize the richness of their own experiences at the shelter; I now have a

better understanding of how I can help these kids construct artistic productions that respond to their personal, and collective, situations as homeless youth. Essentially, this book inspired me to solidify my goals for this project: to help these youth recognize the positive artistic potentials of their current situations, realities that are often associated with negative stigmas.

Neel, L., & Dentith, A.M. (2004). Art and the Politics of State Control *Finding Spaces that Nurture Voice among Homeless Women*. *Journal of the Association for Research on Mothering* (6.1), 157-167.

Neel and Dentith's article examine how the arts, and specifically art classes, provide homeless people with a liberating and expressive space for self-exploration, reflection, and shared experiences. This article notes one of the most fundamental 'powers' of art as a "means by which others can decode and re-code expression [and] to forge connections between discursive social practices and language and the aesthetic symbolization of experience and knowledge." The arts provide homeless individuals with a vehicle for expression—specifically regarding their backgrounds, personal interests, and goals. In this regard, I hope that youth's creative engagement with photography will both validate, and foster the development of, their own personal identities. Similarly, I hope that my photography project will nurture connections between, and among, the youth's personal and social identities. Moreover, the underlying theme of *voice*, which is embedded throughout the article, exposed me to key practices in terms of helping homeless individuals use photography to foster self-reflection, free of any imposing restrictions. Like the Homeless women discussed in this article, I hope the youth at New Beginnings will learn to view photography as both a form of verbal expression *and* a visual depiction of their personal lives.

6-Examples of Photography Projects, specifically Photovoice:

The following two articles explore *Photovoice*, a "process by which people can

identify, represent, and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique."
This project uses the power of photography and cameras to act as recorders, and catalysts for change. Like Felshin's book, which discusses the power of art as a form of activism, these articles discuss how Photovoice promotes action and also builds a sense of community among different groups of people Both of these ideas are extremely relevant to my capstone project; I am hoping to help the youth at New Beginnings develop a sense of personal agency and confidence as they use photography as a form of self-expression. Additionally, I hope this project helps the youth at New Beginnings develop a deeper, more intimate sense of community with the other youths at the shelter. While these youth all come varying backgrounds and are now living with distinct needs, New Beginnings presents these youth with a setting to develop relationships with other, similar youths; I plan on working with this 'community potential' and help these youth find points of connection in which they can both socially, and artistically, engage with one another. The most empowering parts of these sources were the author's focus on using photography as a 'true' form of documentation. Understanding that "people are experts on their own lives," Photovoice, like my project, allows those who have personally experienced homelessness to be in control of forms of documentation. In this regard, the follow three main goals for the Photovoice closely align with my objectives for my capstone project: "to enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns, to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important community issues through large and small group discussion of photographs, and to reach policy makers and people who can be mobilize for change." My hope is that my project will complement the goals of Photovoice by providing homeless individuals with: a medium in which they can express themselves, a way to creatively document *their* own lives, and a

platform to build community through facilitated participation.

Wang, C.,& Burris, M.A (1997): Photovoice: Concept, Methodology, and Use for Participatory Needs Assessment. *Health Education & Behavior* 24 (3), 369-87.

Wang, C., Cash, J., & Powers, L. (2000). Who knows the streets as well as the homeless? Promoting personal and community action through Photovoice. *Health Promotion Practice* 1(1), 81–89.

Additional References:

Chambliss, Daniel F., and Russell K. Schutt. *Making Sense of the Social World: Methods of Investigation*. Los Angeles: Pine Forge, 2010.

Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1995.

New Beginnings. (2012). *Annual Report 2012*. Retrieved from http://newbeginmaine.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/New-Beginnings-2012- Annual-Report.pdf

The National Center on Family Homelessness. *America's Youngest Outcasts: State Report Card on Child*. Retrieved from http://www.homelesschildrenamerica.org/pdf/rc_full_report.pdf

Mentorship: The Benefits of Support in Adolescents

Rociel Peña

Education 450 Senior Seminar in Education Studies
Final Report
Capstone Project

Patricia Buck, PhD.
Bates College Winter
2014

PROBLEM STATEMENT:

Within the state of Maine, there is a high high-school graduation rates. However, Maine has the lowest college attendance rate in all of New England. More specifically, Androscoggin County, the place in which Bates College is located, happens to have the lowest college attendance rate in the entire state of Maine.

According to the 2000 US census 24% of working- age adults living in Androscoggin county have at least an Associates Degree compared to all of Maine with 33% and New England with 34% . And as for Bachelor Degrees only 16% of working-adults have a bachelors degree in Androscoggin county, as compared to 25% in Maine and 34% in New England. Although there are people who are graduating from high-school, there is such a low number of those same people pursuing higher education. There is such a great inconsistency and the question about why this is happening must be examined. What are we are going to do about this issue? How can we push our high school grads to pursue higher education?

NATURE OF THE STUDY:

Last year this program was implemented in Lewiston Middle School, where I was a mentor. This year myself and another student were asked if we would be interested in bringing this program to Auburn. Clearly we jumped at the chance. So, this year, this program takes place every Thursday for 2 hours at Auburn Middle School as a part of their Community Learning Center (CLC). During our sessions, we discuss and explore the importance of college readiness, and helping these students think about their future. C.A.M.P.s curriculum focuses on three main ideas: passions, goals, and how to strive towards ones objectives in life.

In this project I unpacked the affects of Mentorship on the lives of youth in

mentoring programs. Throughout this project, I was a co-facilitator at a College Access Mentoring Program (C.A.M.P.) in the Auburn Middle School of. This school is also situated in the Androscoggin County. C.A.M.P. has paired a Bates college student mentor with a small group of 8th grade students. The Bates Mentors helped the students discuss and explore the importance of college readiness, and thinking on their future. C.A.M.P. focused its curriculum on three main ideas: passions, goals, and how to strive towards ones objectives in life.

Children who have had the opportunity to form an attachment with a caring adult have greater work ethics and have shown to have greater self-esteem than children who lack those support systems. Through observations at C.A.M.P. I have observed and document the effect of mentorship, as it relates to the motivation of a student in their academics as well as in their pursuit of higher education.

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY/HOW THE STUDY ADDRESSES THE IDENTIFIED PROBLEM:

A report published in 2007 by the Mitchell Institute which is a Portland base organization whose core mission is to raise the college aspiration for Maine's youth cited that college introduction programs by current college students was critical to addressing the social and cultural barriers to college. Because of this, C.A.M.P. will act as a verification of the impacts that occurs in the lives of students who are in mentoring programs.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Mentoring is of great benefit for youth that are dealing with self-esteem issues,

problems with peers, and academic issues (DuBois et. al., and Elman) Mentoring has proven itself to be essential for the multiple domains of development for youth. It can be used as a form of intervention strategy for the life of the youth, especially those who are dealing with various adverse experiences. In the past decade there have been an increase in mentoring programs geared towards youth that are deemed to be at risk or under- resourced (DuBois, and Rhodes 2008) With a heavy focus on the holistic development of the youth as it related to various realms of their lives. "Overall, findings support the effectiveness of mentoring for improving outcomes across behavioral, social, emotional, and academic domains of young people's development." (DuBois et. al., Thompson, and Zand) There is a plethora of approaches, applications and methods of mentoring programs have been enforced in mentoring programs today. Most of the findings indicate that the conditions under which the mentorship is most effective should be much more specific and specialized.

Youth mentoring relationship structures greatly shape the effectiveness of the mentorship. There is a specific model that is the most effective in formulating a bond between the mentor and the youth, and allowing for a progression within the relationship. It is important to understand that there are some tensions revolving around mentoring, for example, there are some negative outcomes to having an ineffective mentor; outcomes that can more detrimental than a youth who had no mentor. It is important to understand that the youth's ability or desire to bond with the mentor is greatly affected by past relationships these youth have had. Mentoring can serve to remediate any negative past experiences that student might have had (Thompson, and Zand). Moreover, these youth might have been selected to participate in a particular program out of necessity. Therefore, the way in which a mentor approaches the youth and formulates a relationship is of the utmost importance. That being

said, it is beneficial perhaps to have mentors that have dealt or are closely tied to the similar background of the youth that he or she will be mentoring. (Rhodes). It is important to note that the quality of the bond between the mentor and the youth can considerably predict the way in which the youth with hold future relationships with others, such as with peer, parents and ultimately with themselves (Thompson, and Zand).

Although there is a lot of information on the affects of mentoring for the students, I believe that there are some significant gaps in the finding for what happens to the mentor of the relationship. It is imperative that we begin to analyze how being a mentor impacts their lives, and how it perhaps changes their perspective on life, and in what particular ways. Furthermore, we there are little finding on the life-long affects of mentorship years after the relationship has ended.

METHODS:

The demographics of the students that I work with at C.A.M.P. are predominantly white. As of gender, out of the 12 or so mentees that attend the program there are about 7 females and 5 males. These children are around the age of 13 - 14 years old. All of these students are from the Lewiston/Auburn area. The sessions began on the January 21st and ended on April 3rd.

As a specific form of data collection the children of C.A.M.P. are given an opportunity to journal at the end of every session about their experience. These journals have gleaned what the children grasped from the exercises, but also what they learned from the overall experience. As for the mentors, they were able to express themselves as mentors also via

reflective journaling. As my research is more qualitative, I will also be using personal observations to better understand the impact of mentorship on the lives of students as it related to their socioemotional development.

C.A.M.P. was structured in a way that two to four 8th grader were mentored by one Bates Student Mentor. At these weekly meetings, the mentors conducted group activities and tasks targeting different aspects of the college process. This was in the hopes that they would begin to form a camaraderie that could be cultivated through C.A.M.P. The mentors ensured that the children that are being assisted feel supported and motivated to succeed. Re-enforcing that success is not limited to academics, but also to the betterment of the interpersonal and intrapersonal skills of the child.

Although C.A.M.P. will not directly focus on the improvement of academic achievement in students, the continuum of care that this program will instill will help encourage the self-esteem of the child and promote positivity surrounding their education. I look forward to helping these children acquire some soft-skills. These skills that are needed to successfully approach tasks that deal with aspects of: effective communication and task management. Guiding these children to think not only about striving towards academic improvement but also in becoming aware of the importance of hard work, dedication, and their significance in the world.

One of the challenges that I faced was thinking about how gender in the mentors affects the connections that were forged. For example, I felt that because there was only 1 male mentor and 8 female mentors, there might have been an issue between being able to created a connection when the genders of the mentor and mentee or dissimilar. One of the ethical concerns that has been a part of the program is being able to engage the students in

topics that are not necessarily about college aspirations, but are more targeted to emotional aspects of the child. I feel like the mentors have had to reign back when trying to build a relationship with students, because some students might want to share more than we anticipated. In terms of confidentiality all of the material that is submitted as a journal have the names omitted.

As mentioned previously, every week the mentors select the week's topic. For example anything from, goals, passions, hobbies, interview skills and resume writing. Mentors create a lesson plan for the session that is both engaging and informative. Another co-facilitator and myself meet with the mentors prior to the sessions to discuss the lesson plan for the day and give suggestions as to what they can improve upon.

Typically, our sessions start off with a fun game, to get the kids up and moving. This is followed by the core part of our session in which we discuss the topic, and usually at the end, the children are given a chance to reflect on their experience through journaling. One of the sessions that seemed to stick out to the kids was the jeopardy like game where we quizzed them about topics such as college, career and extracurricular activities One example of a question was:

Can you name at least 3 of the 5 aspects Colleges look for in an applicant? The answers were GPA, Standardized Test Scores, Extra Curricular, Applicant Essay and Letter of Recommendation. Questions such as these really trigger the students to start thinking more positively about what they have to look forward to in high school as they start to think about College. Having he mentors initiate these conversations really allows the child to see themselves pursuing those same goals as their mentors have.

RESEARCH QUESTION:

How does mentorship, scaffolding and support effect the overall perception of self in 8th graders in the pursuit of higher education?

BACKGROUND/CONTEXTUAL DESCRIPTION:

Last year this program was implemented in Lewiston Middle School, where I was a mentor. This year myself and another student were asked if we would be interested in bringing this program to Auburn. Clearly we jumped at the chance. So, this year, this program takes place every Thursday for 2 hours at Auburn Middle School as a part of their Community Learning Center (CLC). During our sessions, we discuss and explore the importance of college readiness, and helping these students think about their future. C.A.M.P.s curriculum focuses on three main ideas: passions, goals, and how to strive towards ones objectives in life.

As a community, if we can act as a support system for our youth then there is a higher chance that these children who are under-resourced and who might have little familial support, will be more inclined to thinking on the importance of attending college and following the path towards a successful career. Although parents, teachers and staff do a lot to help promote the betterment of the each child, it is be imperative that children have a non-parental mentor outside of the school to show support, give feedback and assist the students through their academic endeavors. There have been a series of studies supporting the needs and benefits of mentors in the lives of children. "Those who reported having had a mentoring relationship during adolescence exhibited significantly better outcomes within the domains of education and work (high- school completion, college attendance, employment)." (DuBois et. al., 2008)

Working with the 8th graders at Auburn Middle School as a part of their Community Learning Center (CLC) we would like to address the issue of college readiness as it related to the emotional aspect of striving towards a goal, and having that goal relate to their passions in life.

PRESENTATION OF DATA:

Below are some of the reflective journals of the mentors that have been working with

C.A.M.P.:

My volunteering experience with the C.A.M.P. program began as a requirement to pass my Perspectives of Education class and a way to complete the thirty required hours. I am so happy to find myself today in a position where I can safely say that I do not regret a single of those thirty hours and would do them all over again. In the beginning, I was unsure of what it entailed specifically. Once I was informed during our first meeting, I must admit I had my doubts about how purposeful and useful it would be to mentor a group of fourteen year olds, an age seemed too young to be thinking about matters like college and careers.

I was wrong. I have never met a group of more determined and committed kids. I honestly wish I had been more like them at that age and perhaps certain aspects of my life would have evolved differently, even though I am more than happy with where I am now. These kids are so mature. They have this picture fixed in their heads and are pursuing it fearlessly. They are trying to grasp hold of a future that seems appealing and they are actively doing so by attending CAMP. I think they have learned a lot. I think they know a lot more about the job they thought they knew, about how to pursue it and I think they have attained a better understanding of themselves.

As for me, I learned just as much as they did. This may sound silly but I benefited from the activities we did just as much as they did, if not more. I figured out things about myself, the present and the future. I learned how important it is for kids to have a strong support system and a group of individuals who can provide them with all the necessary information and guidance. I learned how it's never too early to begin

making a dream a reality and nothing should stop that, ranging from what school you attend to your socioeconomic status. The three kids in my mentoring group are now part of my life. I wholeheartedly wish they get everything they are reaching for and that they have benefited from C.A.M.P. as much as I think they have. – *Christina Felonis*

Being a mentor with the college access mentoring program has very much beeen one of the most rewarding experiences I have had at Bates College so far. Perhaps everyone feels this way about youth they work with, but I really do think the girls I worked with were some of the most incredible people I have ever met in my entire life. I was so impressed by their humbleness and their candor-I remember one of my girls telling me so honestly how she had so much stage fright and how she always wanted to certain people to like her with absolutely no shame. So many times I would come into the program feeling completely dead and tired and be so energized by being around the kids. Being part of CAMP has honestly been one of the best things about my semester. – *Charlotte Porter*

My mentorship experience has been very revealing and somewhat opposite of what I expected from the program. I went into the program thinking that I would be mentoring one or two students and that we would always do activities in our small mentor groups. However, the dynamics of the program turned out to be surprisingly different. Although we are all separated into our small mentor groups, we all have kind of become mentors for all of the children, which is one thing I love about the program. The mentees never feel limited to which mentor they have to connect with and this unique characteristic of the program really gives each mentee a chance to decide which mentors will be the most beneficial teacher and support for themselves. Some mentors may not feel comfortable with their mentees deciding to go off to another mentor but I have noticed that the mentees are more receptive to the information when they are hearing it from a specific mentor, whom may not always be their designated mentor. I have also noticed that over the weeks, the mentees have become very comfortable with expressing the activities they want to do or the information they want to learn about. As a mentor it was fulfilling to hear one of my

mentees tell me an activity that they would like to incorporate into the lesson I planned because I then felt like I could directly cater to the interests of one of my mentees and give the mentee information while doing an activity he/she would enjoy. Overall, I think the mentorship experience has been very beneficial for both the mentees and myself. Although the mentees have clashed during jeopardy and the mentors have had several debates about how to best give information to the mentees, the experience has made the mentees and mentors better leaders, listeners, and learners, as we have all had to play all three roles throughout the program. -Kyvonne Williams

As for the students, I have noticed the following changes in many of them. Some of the changes that I have noted are persistence, self-control, curiosity, conscientiousness and self-efficacy. Through many of the sessions, children have been persistent in that they have shown great interested in all of the topics and have tried really hard to engage with their mentors and with the activities themselves. Through their journaling the children documented mostly on topics related to the way in which the groups were structured and the interaction they were having with their mentors. The children mentioned a lot of times when they were able to relate to their mentors on topics such as music, movies or activities. Children that documented this in their journals were ones that rarely spoke out within the program, however, when it came to the more intimate group settings, they were able to forge that relationship with their mentors. Another thing that I noted that the students journaled about was the activated themselves. They noted how the activates were really engaging and that we tried to tie in the learning process through fun and yet informative games.

ANALYSIS OF DATA FINDINGS:

With a game like this, the mentees were placed into groups and challenged one another and they had to learn to work through the disagreements that they faces, and also, they have to experience building each other up to keep the positivity going. C.A.M.P. is a whole lot of fun. And throughout the course of the program I quickly saw how the mentees became so comfortable with their bates mentors and just wanted to engage with them and share about their own lives. But the mentees weren't the only ones that gained a lot out of the experience.

My findings have supported that mentoring does greatly support the emotional development in children. Both the mentors and the students have reported positively towards their experience and it has been reflected in their journaling.

CONCLUSIONS REACHED:

If we can have mentors that act as a support system for the youth then there is a higher chance that these children will be more inclined to thinking on the importance of attending college and following the path towards a successful career. Although parents, teachers and staff do a lot to help promote the betterment of the child, it is imperative that youth have a non-parental mentor outside of the school to show support, give feedback and assist students through their academic and socioemotional endeavors.

This idea of mentorship is tied with the idea of attachment as it relates to adverse childhood experiences. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) include being raised in an impoverished community, and having limited resources. The more ACEs that someone experiences the higher likelihood that they will be falling behind academically and socially

Young children's social and emotional development is the foundation for their cognitive

development. Children learn best in an environment where their psychological need are being met because they feel safe, valued as unique individuals, while they are actively engaged in acquiring skills and knowledge

IMPLICATIONS:

As a first generation college student who attended K-12 in East Harlem, a community that is low-income and has the highest crime rate in Manhattan. I was fortunate enough to have mentors through after school programs that were in my life that helped guide me through to this very institution. They were motivational, supportive but most of all they were there and they cared.

Affective mentors need to do various things to ensure that they are being good mentors to their mentors. First, they need to perpetuate positivity surrounding academics. Although C.A.M.P. is not directly focus on the improvement of academic achievement in students, the continuum of care that this program will instill will help encourage the self- esteem of the child and promote positivity as it related to their academic progression

Mentors should also show commitment to their mentee. The mentors should ensure that their mentee feels supported and motivated to succeed. Re enforcing that success is not limited to academics, but also to the maturation of the interpersonal and intrapersonal skills of the mentee.

Lastly, the mentors should encourage building on soft skills. These skills that are needed to successfully approach tasks that deal with aspects of: effective communication and task management. Soft skills are unlike cognitive skills in that they relate to how a child interacts with others and with themselves. This includes interpersonal and intrapersonal skills

that are needed to successfully approach tasks that deal with aspects of: emotions, effective communication, dealing with changes, and appropriately responding to others, as well as rationalizing ones own emotions.

OVERALL CONCLUSION:

As an education minor at Bates I have been involved in the lives of various students in and around the Lewiston/ Auburn area. I know that there is a great need for mentors who can motivate children to think about their futures. These mentors would be invaluable to these children, because they will be able to enforce positivity around the child's social and academic lives. Many of these students are faced with various issues, such has having to deal with certain adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). Mentors can promote positivity in these children and help them overcome by showing support and reinforcing the potential that is within these children.The children of C.A.M.P. have been able to show at least some form of attachment with their mentors, that have reached out to them and have wanted to gain their friendship, on multiple occasions, the children have asked for the contact information of their mentors, as they want to continue on to maintain the relationship that was cultivated through this program

Thompson and Zand state that, "The quality of the bond between the mentor and the youth can considerably predict the way in which the youth with hold future relationships with others, such as with peer, parents and ultimately with themselves." (Thompson, N.R., & Zand, D.H.) Mentors that show a dedication to their mentors are able to form a greater bond with them as they begin to rely on their mentors and trust in their commitment to them. Alternatively, mentees that experience having mentors that are less committed to them have

show to have an increase in distrust towards figures of authority and any future mentor that they might encounter. I saw this happen just 2 or three weeks into the program, Charlotte had gotten sick and one of her Mentees journaled about her wishing that Charlotte could get better and return, and that was just after 2 or three session. Those who reported having had a mentoring relationship during adolescence exhibited significantly better outcomes within the domains of education and work (high- school completion, college attendance, employment) (DuBois and Rhodes.)

With the guidance of mentors, these children can acknowledge that they are capable of achieving their dreams. I want my mentees to see college and success as an option. Recognizing that their success is not limited to academics, but also encompasses their social and emotional development. I expect to see them realize there potential and their value as motivated global citizens.

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Shared Space, Shared Knowledge: The Farwell Elementary School and Bates College Basic Concepts in Special Education Course Partnership

A Capstone Project in Educational Studies Bates College, Education 450 Lewiston, ME

Sarah Elizabeth Kornacki April 9, 2014

Introduction

My passion for education started while I was in elementary school. I adored my third grade teacher for her love of teaching and aspired to be a teacher like her. In third grade, my Christmas list did not include Barbie dolls or stuffed animals; I wanted a chalkboard, an overhead projector, and a laminator. During a family summer vacation to Maine, I begged my parents to stop at a local high school that was giving away free desks and chairs. Before my parents could say no, my father was packing school desks and chairs in the trunk of the Ford Explorer. Soon enough, with the help of my father, I transformed a section of my basement into a classroom. There was a chalkboard, white board, corkboards, posters, desks, and even the laminator and overhead projector I had always wished would make their way into my classroom. I assumed the position of teacher and soon began teaching invisible students, when I could not entice my younger neighbors to participate in lessons. This enthusiasm for being a teacher and having my own classroom soon faded. As I entered middle and high school, my basement classroom was replaced by a living room, and my parents began to give away my once prized classroom possessions.

Despite the depletion of my classroom, my love for education and my desire to become a teacher did not completely diminish. During high school, I was fortunate to have several dedicated teachers who helped me have many positive learning experiences. These teachers helped me realize school as a fun and exciting opportunity, not as a dreaded obligation. Although I recognized my true love for school, I entered Bates College undecided about my future focus of study and career path. When I did not receive my first choice of Short Term class during my first year, I was really disappointed. No other class really sparked my interest, until my mother suggested I take an education class. I had never taken an

education course at Bates, but thought I would give it a try even though my desire to become a teacher was not completely evident at the time. Despite my initial hesitation to take an education course, I can now say that my first education course at Bates, Literacy in the Community, helped me re-discover my love for schools and teaching. From that course forward, I have delved into the Educational Studies minor at Bates College and through several courses and other opportunities, I have been able to again find my passion and work towards a post-college teaching career.

The Educational Studies minor has been extremely valuable to me throughout my time at Bates College. My four years at Bates have allowed me to realize that I really do want to pursue a teaching career. This realization would not be possible without the Educational Studies minor that has prepared me in various ways for the teaching career I look forward to after I graduate in May. Although I contribute many aspects of the Educational Studies minor to my desire to become a teacher, I find that my placements in various local schools have provided a variety invaluable experiences that without them, I would not appreciate the minor as much as I do today.

I have assumed placements in multiple schools and two different after-school programs throughout my time at Bates. Above all, I credit my placements for the opportunity to involve myself in valuable "real-life" experiences. I believe that only so much can be learned from reading a textbook about teaching or articles about how schools operate. Thus, it is necessary to have experience in schools in order to see first-hand how individual classrooms function within the larger school community. My placements have allowed me to become involved in the classroom and be appreciated as an integral part to many students' learning. I have been a witness to student breakdowns as well as student achievements, which

have shown me the many sides of teaching. I feel as though a lot of the readings I have done in Bates courses about the current state of education have been depressing, but my time in the classroom working with young learners has given me hope for the future of education. Without these mandatory placements as part of the Educational Studies minor, I would have never been able to work directly with students and be witness to the highs and lows of being in a classroom.

My classroom placements have inevitability given me the opportunities to connect with students, teachers, and other important individuals in the education field. By connecting with these different groups of people, I have been able to better understand classroom management and daily routines of different classes. Although I feel I have made positive connections with all of the students and teachers I have worked with over the years, I believe my Basic Concepts in Special Education course allowed me to enhance my connections with many teachers at Farwell Elementary School. This course had me involved in an inclusive classroom placement and gave me the opportunity to connect with other special education teachers and professionals outside of my own placement during class time. I was able to hear many different perspectives and hear specific stories about being an educator for students with disabilities. I would not have had this opportunity to connect with so many individuals in the community if I did not invest in the Educational Studies minor. Most importantly, I would not have been able to enthusiastically complete this capstone project if I had not taken the Basic Concepts in Special Education course.

Although I credit my school placements through the Educational Studies minor with providing me the most valuable lessons in teaching and classroom management, I do recognize all the parts of the minor as helpful in strengthening my desire to become a teacher.

The education courses I have competed for the minor have taught me how to think about different types of education and reflect on my own educational experiences while talking about the education of others. My education professors have supported my enthusiasm for education and have guided me to a teaching profession for next year. In addition, my peers in my many education classes have shown me different perspectives on various topics in the field of education. Thus, I can contribute my learning in the Educational Studies minor to several aspects of the minor, which have all provided me with different expertise in education and made the Educational Studies minor a successful part of my Bates education.

The most important part of the Educational Studies minor to me is that it is not limited; the minor provides the opportunity to learn about a variety of topics in education from many texts, people, and experiences. I am fortunate to have taken several different courses in the Bates Education Department that have allowed me to understand the different aspects of education. All of the courses I have invested in as part of the minor have been similar in the lasting lessons they have relayed. Besides learning how to work with many different individuals in the community, I have learned the very valuable skill of time management. Because the Educational Studies minor is varied in what it offers, it was often difficult to balance coursework and placement time. I found myself wanting to be in the classroom at all times, but needed to manage my classroom time with my other commitments for the minor and my major.

This capstone project allowed me to take everything I learned from the limitless minor and apply it to a semester-long project in which I was particularly interested. Without the Educational Studies minor at Bates College, I would have never been able to take the Basic Concepts in Special Education course and become interested in the new model of education that the course offered. Therefore, I thank the Educational Studies minor for helping me re-

visit my passion for education and allowing me to pursue this capstone project with

dedication and excitement.

My basement classroom, 2000.   The Bates Education Symposium, 2014.
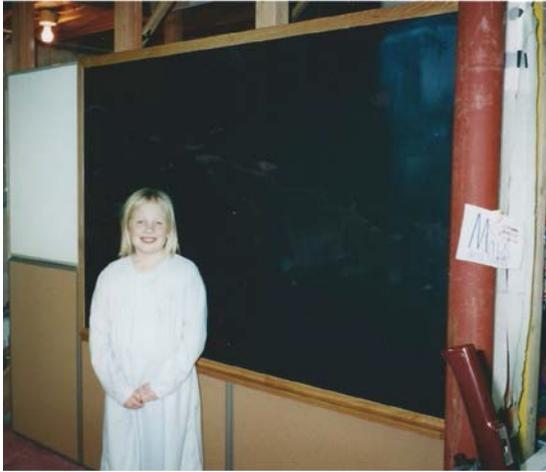
Abstract

This capstone project analyzes the strengths and challenges of the learning
partnership between the Farwell Elementary School (Lewiston, ME) special education
program and the Basic Concepts in Special Education course at Bates College. During the
fall of 2012 and 2013 this college course was held in a classroom at Farwell Elementary
School. This setting enabled interaction between Bates students and Farwell teachers, outside
of the designated service-learning time. Using surveys taken by Farwell teachers and Bates
students in the 2013 partnership, this project strives to uncover the feelings held by both
Farwell teachers and Bates students surrounding this model of teaching and learning. In
doing so, this project analyzes place-conscious education in addition to the politics of
knowledge; how knowledge is transferred and privileged in this unique educational
partnership. Finally, the project enhances the conversation about collaboration between
college courses and a local elementary school.

Problem Statement

There are several bodies of literature that suggest service learning in higher education
helps build connections between college students and the community in which they live.
Bringle and Hatcher (1996) suggest that service learning helps to both meet community needs
while allowing students to reflect on and better understand college course content. Service
learning/local classroom placement is a large component of education courses at Bates
College. Classroom placements help Bates students connect theory to practice.

This partnership model of education seeks to further connect theory to practice by
hosting a college course in an elementary school classroom. This model is not known to exist

outside of the Farwell-Bates partnership. There is neither a current study nor empirical information to guide the research for this capstone project. Thus, the issue this project seeks to address is the effectiveness of this model on knowledge exchange and learning of both Farwell teachers and Bates students. Theoretical frameworks that explain the partnership in terms of knowledge and space have been referenced in order to apply this partnership to existing literature.

<center>Nature of the Study</center>

This capstone project for the Educational Studies minor at Bates College assesses the strengths and challenges of the partnership between the special education program at Farwell Elementary School (Lewiston, ME) and the Basic Concepts in Special Education course at Bates College. The fall 2012 and 2013 Basic Concepts in Special Education classes were held at Farwell Elementary School in an effort to build a better relationship between Farwell teachers and Bates students. The goal of the partnership was to mutually benefit both parties by learning from each other. Thus, by working with Anita Charles, Professor of the Basic Concepts in Special Education course, and Althea Walker, Principal of Farwell Elementary School, I have analyzed the partnership and the impacts it has had on both Farwell teachers and Bates students.

It is important to note that this partnership was different than the service- learning component of many courses at Bates College. This course did have a required service-learning component, which was separate from the partnership discussed in this study. This study focuses on the partnership formed by having college course sessions in the elementary school setting. The service-learning component that was completed by each student is not

analyzed in this study.

Before the start of this Capstone Project, Professor Anita Charles collected some qualitative data in form of surveys from the Bates students who were involved in the fall 2013 partnership with Farwell Elementary School. In addition, Professor Anita Charles has collected survey responses from Farwell teachers, aides, and administrators. I have analyzed these survey results to see the extent of the impact of this partnership model, recognize the strengths and challenges of the partnership, and better understand where and how learning happens for both elementary school teachers and college students.

Rationale for the Study

The Farwell Elementary School and Bates College Basic Concepts in Special Education course partnership is a novel model of education. Although there is a plethora of literature that suggests undergraduate students participate in field work in local schools, there is no existing literature about college courses being held in an elementary school classroom and how this change in space affects the learning of the individuals involved in the partnership. Thus, this study sought to analyze this uncommon partnership and new model of education. The hope is that by analyzing this model more closely, this study could provide suggestions for similar models that may arise in the future.

Literature Review

Two theoretical frameworks, those of knowledge and space, have guided this project and provided background information in understanding the study's results. This project utilizes both information about knowledge and space and how knowledge is affected by

change of space. Therefore, an understanding of knowledge and space as separate entities is not enough to understand the operation of this partnership. Knowledge and space must be understood in unison to see how they each affect each other and contribute to the learning and success of everyone involved in the partnership.

In the text *Communities of Practice: Learning, Meaning, and Identity* (1998), author Etienne Wenger explains knowledge exchange through her definition of a community of practice. According to Wenger, a community of practice involves a group of people who are mutually engaged in a project not only to help exchange knowledge, but also to help form identities of the individuals in the group. The text *Cultivating Communities of Practice* (2002) by Wenger, McDermott and Snyder helps to expand upon Wenger's definition of a community of practice. Wenger, McDermott and Snyder recognize that interactions between people have value and different people in the community participate in interactions with others from specific perspectives. Thus, everyone in a community comes to the community with a unique perspective, yet everyone in the community shares a common knowledge and sense of identity.

The concept of a community of practice can be further explained by Wenger, McDermott and Snyder's discussion of degrees of community participation. A community of practice exists because multiple groups of people are interacting and learning from each other, but this does not mean that each group has equal participation with the other groups involved in the community. Therefore, Wenger, McDermott and Snyder discuss how there are degrees of community participation within the community of practice. These degrees include the core, coordinator, active, peripheral, and outsider positions. The members of the core group, which includes the coordinator are active participants in the community and take

on leadership roles as the community develops. The active group is similar to the core group but does not participate in the community as much as the core group. The peripheral group contains members who rarely participate and the outsiders are not members of the community, but maintain some interest in the community's existence and function.

Knowledge cannot be discussed without the discussion of space, the place in which knowledge is transferred. There are two important aspects of space that relate to knowledge exchange and education: situated learning and place-conscious education. Bronfenbrenner (1994) discusses situated learning. In his discussion, he recognizes that the environment in which growth, development and inevitably learning occurs needs to be considered because the environment has a large impact on learning. Bronfenbrenner's discussion of environments and what they provide for learning leads to a discussion of microsystems within the larger community. This author supports the fact that development depends upon the structure of the microsystem and its relationship with the community in which it operates.

A complementary point of research to situated learning is place-conscious education, which is explained by both Allen (1999) and Lefebvre (1991). Place- conscious education is a concept that recognizes that different knowledge is exchanged in different social spaces. There are a variety of social spaces that can impact education. Those who are conscious of the space in which one is receiving an education can comprehend the education differently than those who do not recognize space as an important factor in exchange of knowledge and learning.

My research ties together these research topics of knowledge and space and uses information about knowledge and space to help explain the partnership between Farwell Elementary School and the Bates College Basic Concepts in Special education course. By applying background information about knowledge and space to this model of education, the

definitions of knowledge and space and how they work together can be expanded to include aspects of this model of education. In addition, by using these two theoretical approaches in explaining this model of education, I can provide research and analysis on the first partnership model of this kind. In other words, my study will contribute to the literature on knowledge and space, but most importantly begin the literature about this specific type of learning partnership. This project will hopefully start the discussion of partnerships between college course and elementary schools and further these types of partnerships across the country.

Methods

Since I took the Basic Concepts in Special Education course, the concept of having a college class outside of a college classroom has always excited me. After engaging in thoughtful conversations with Farwell special education teachers during class time in addition to placement time, I began to realize the realities and benefits of the Bates-Farwell partnership. Although I thought the partnership was beneficial for my learning, I was unsure as to whether the partnership benefited other   students as well as Farwell teachers and if so, in what ways were these groups of people affected. Therefore, I joined onto Professor Anita Charles's research project to discover the impacts of the partnership on the many parties involved.

Before I joined Professor Charles, she surveyed the students of her fall 2013 Basic Concepts in Special Education class as well as the Farwell principal and many Farwell special education teachers and aides. She utilized Google Drive to create the surveys and collect responses. According to the Minister of Industry in *Survey Methods and Practices* (2010), by

limiting the survey to Bates students from her class, and Farwell teachers from the school in which the partnership existed, Professor Charles effectively identified the survey frame; the limits of the survey. In addition, she effectively chose the design making it appropriate for those who were going to be surveyed. I set out to do interviews with selected students and teachers involved in the partnership, but decided against doing interviews, as I needed to make some major shifts in my project and therefore lost time in the process. Thus, my job in the research project was to evaluate the responses Professor Charles collected from the surveys, which contained both multiple choice and free response questions. Although the responses led me to recognize several opinions on the partnership, I narrowed my evaluations by creating several themes in which many responses fit.

As explained previously, the data for this project was already collected before I joined the project, so my main job was to place this partnership in a theoretical framework, which included finding sources that discussed the framework in which I was working. Thus, I have been analyzing the data as the main piece of my work.

Even though I have made several conclusions, I must narrow the findings I present into some succinct themes relevant to the size of this project.

I do not believe I have encountered many ethical concerns throughout my project, because the survey responses are anonymous. Although this is the case, I have been able to tell which responses are from the principal, because she explicitly says she is the principal in her responses. I do know from Professor Charles that the principal was one of the biggest cheerleaders in this partnership and therefore her responses about the effectiveness of the partnership are overwhelmingly positive. The principal holds a very social different position than others surveyed.

I am not using empirical sources to back my research because there really has not been any research done specific to my research. Thus, I cannot compare my findings with those of scholars, but I can relate my project to several scholarly pieces about theoretical frameworks of my project. This helps show what some responses may mean about the partnership's effectiveness. The responses that I am analyzing are split into themes of my devising in order to better evaluate and understand certain responses. According to James Spradley (1980) in his book *Participant Observation,* I have reached the end of the ethnographic research cycle as I have defined a research problem, designed a research instrument (surveys), gathered data, analyzed the data, drew conclusions, and now am reporting the results.

I realize the data may not be as complete as it could be. Although Professor Charles sent out the original surveys to both the Bates students and Farwell teachers, I also know that she needed to send a reminder email to the teachers to complete the surveys. She was not receiving many responses in the beginning of the data collection. With any research project, it is always best to have more responses rather than fewer responses as more responses give a bigger data pool from which to make conclusions. I am happy I have many responses with which to work, but I think one of the limits to my data is that there could be more responses, perhaps creating slightly different results.

As I mentioned previously, I did run into challenges at the beginning of my project, because I was trying very hard to find empirical sources, but came to realize I needed to only use theoretical sources to structure my project. In addition, some of the survey data became detached from the survey questions, and through a complicated process, I needed to re-align the questions with the responses.

Although this posed as a challenge for me, I accepted the challenge and was able to correct the problem.

Research Question

The questions for my study are endless because this partnership model of education is so new and intriguing. The most important question of this study is: Is this partnership beneficial to Farwell teachers, Bates students or both parties?

There are also other questions that were considered in this capstone project. These questions include, "What are the strengths and challenges of the partnership?", "How does space contribute to the way knowledge is exchanged in the partnership?", and "To what extent does this partnership model contribute to Bates students' learning?"

Background

Farwell Elementary School is one of six elementary schools in Lewiston, Maine. According to the Maine Department of Education in Farwell's *School Improvement Plan* (2011), this elementary school serves 356 students in grades Kindergarten to sixth grade. 22% of Farwell students receive special education services in either of two resource rooms or three self-contained classrooms. Farwell Elementary School's self-contained classrooms for students with severe disabilities are open to any student in the Lewiston public school system.

The Bates-Farwell partnership started with the fall 2012 Basic Concepts in Special Education course. Professor Anita Charles of the Bates Education Department and Althea Walker, Principal of Farwell Elementary School collaborated before the start of the fall 2012 semester in hopes of creating a partnership that would benefit both Bates students and Farwell faculty and students. After positive feedback from the fall 2012 class, the partnership

continued with the fall 2013 class. This study assesses the fall 2013 class.

The Bates Education Department requires that for every education course, students complete a thirty-hour placement in a local classroom or after-school program. This is a commitment Bates students must undertake outside of regular class meetings. For the purposes of this study, this thirty-hour placement requirement is referred to as the "regular model."

This study is referred to as the "partnership model" because the Basic Concepts in Special Education course was held in a classroom at Farwell Elementary School. Bates students in this class were required to attend class meetings at Farwell Elementary School. The class met every Tuesday and Thursday from 8:00 to 9:20 a.m. Professor Anita Charles, with help from Ellen Alcorn and Darby Ray of the Bates Harward Center for Community Partnerships, arranged Bates shuttle drivers to drive students to Farwell at 7:45 a.m. and have a local school bus driver pick up students at the end of class and bring them back to Bates. As with every other education course at Bates, the students in this class still had the thirty-hour placement requirement. Every Bates student in this course was placed in a self- contained classroom or a mainstream classroom that served students of special needs. Prior to the start of this partnership, Bates students in other education courses were placed in Farwell Elementary School for their thirty-hour requirement, but did not have class at the elementary school.

Data

The student surveys have been analyzed separately from the teacher surveys in order to see the effects of the partnership on the students versus the effects of the partnership on the teachers. Although the students were given a survey at both the beginning and the end of the Basic Concepts in Special Education course in fall 2013, the teachers were only given a survey at the end of the fall 2013 semester. Thus, for purposes of accurate comparison, only the student surveys from the end of the semester are analyzed in conjunction with the teacher surveys that were also conducted at the end of the fall 2013 semester.

The surveys consist of several questions and thus it is neither feasible nor appropriate to focus on responses from every question that the survey offered. Thus, the specific data analyzed speaks to the research questions that this project sought answers. For the student and teacher surveys, data discussing how the project affected learning, how certain individuals were conveyors of academic expertise, and how this partnership model was different than the regular model was analyzed to reveal the effectiveness of this model on everyone involved in the partnership.

The student surveys reveal that this collaborative project with Farwell was essential to their learning. 64% of the eleven students finished the prompt, " I believe that our collaborative project (course structure) with the Farwell teachers…" with the response "was essential to my learning experience and knowledge." Although the teacher surveys did not ask the same question, 67% of the nine teachers surveyed agreed that the collaborative project "had a big impact on my teaching/learning." When asked for comments on this responses, one teacher remarked, "Having the Bates students embedded in our school is highly valuable to the student/staff/student relationship building, shared knowledge…" Another teacher said that through this collaborative project, "…teachers were able to access

new information from their Bates volunteers."

Both the student and teacher surveys questioned partnership participants on the effectiveness of others involved in the partnership. It is most beneficial to look at how the students affected the teachers and vice versa because the project seeks to see how this different model of education affects the student-teacher relationship and consequent learning. The student surveys suggest that most Farwell individuals were "conveyors of academic expertise." 91% of the students regard the Farwell teachers "very much so" "conveyors of academic expertise." In addition, 64% of students said the Farwell aides and the Farwell principal were "very much so" "conveyors of academic expertise." Even 73% of Bates students remarked that the Farwell students were "very much so" "conveyors of academic expertise." Bates students did not suggest that Farwell parents were conveyors of academic expertise because 45% responded that the Farwell teachers were "not at all" "conveyors of academic expertise."

Similar results were attained with the Farwell teachers reflecting on the Bates individuals as conveyors of knowledge. 44% of Farwell teachers found that the Bates students were "very much so" "conveyors of knowledge/expertise." In addition, 56% of Farwell teachers believed that Professor Anita Charles was "very much so" a "conveyor of knowledge/expertise."

Lastly, one of the most revealing themes of both the student and teacher surveys is in the responses that compare the partnership model to the regular model of holding the course at Bates and only having Bates students enter the elementary school for their placement hours on their own time. The Bates students were very positive towards the collaborative/partnership model in their responses. 64% of the students said that "In

comparison to having a regular Education course with a regular field placement, this collaborative structure/model of this course at Farwell…" "was significantly better than the regular model." When asked, "In what ways was the collaborative Farwell class different from just having our class at Bates with a regular field component at Farwell?" students replied with a variety of explanations for why they preferred the collaborative partnership model. One student noticed that this model, "…immersed our class into the Farwell community" and another student found that "the atmosphere of actually sitting in an elementary school classroom made everything see more relevant and grounded."

In assessing the collaborative model versus the regular model, Farwell teachers were only asked to address an open-ended question: "In what ways was the collaborative Farwell model different from just having Bates students with a regular field component at Farwell?" The responses to this question point to the partnership model as being more beneficial than the regular model. One teacher said, "…I feel that the Bates students feel more like a part of the Farwell community…" and another teacher replied with, "…I feel that we have created an environment that is beneficial to the Farwell students, the Bates students, and the Farwell staff." An additional teacher remarked, "Having the Bates students at our school allowed for educators to participate in the Bates course which was valuable in sharing knowledge and building relationships." Although these responses speak to the partnership model as it was intended, some other responses to questions about the model question whether teachers understood the model completely; "I love seeing the various ways in which Bates students choose to interact, teach, and help with each individual student."

I believe that this collaborative project (having the class at Farwell)..
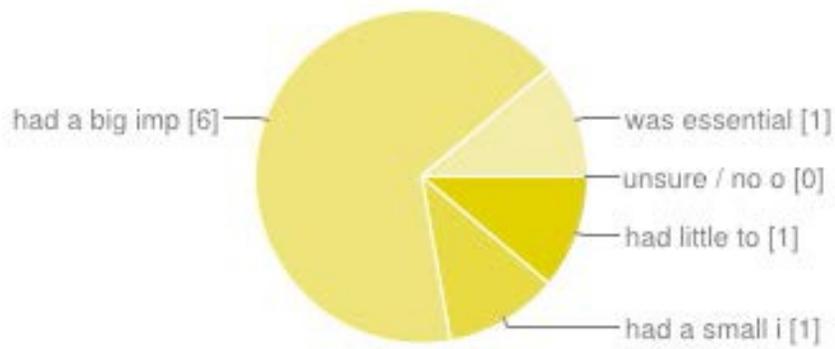

had little to no impact on my teaching/learning	1	11%
had a small impact on my teaching/learning.	1	11%
had a big impact on my teaching/learning.	6	67%
was essential to my teaching/learning.	1	11%
unsure / no opinion	0	0%

Bates Students [I believe that the following people WERE CONVEYORS (givers/"teachers") of knowledge/expertise TO the Bates class/students.]
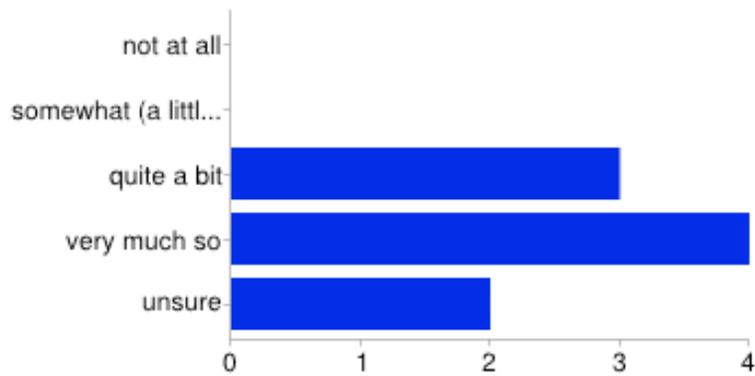
|		
not at all	0	0%
somewhat (a little bit)	0	0%
quite a bit	3	33%
very much so	4	44%
unsure	2	22%

Bates Instructor (Anita) [I believe that the following people WERE CONVEYORS (givers/"teachers") of knowledge/expertise TO the Bates class/students.]
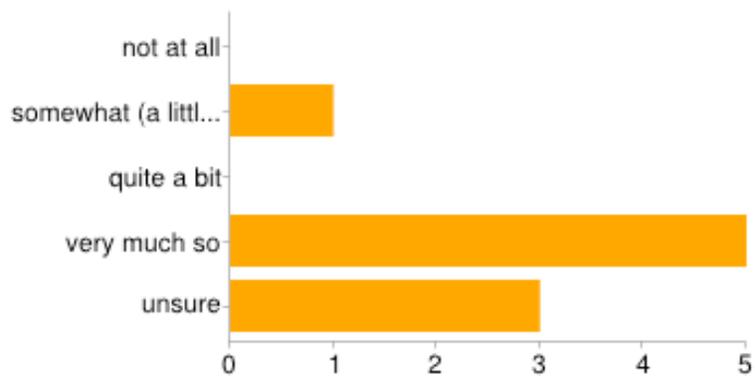
not at all	0	0%
somewhat (a little bit)	1	11%
quite a bit	0	0%
very much so	5	56%
unsure	3	33%

I believe that our collaborative project (course structure) with the Farwell teachers...
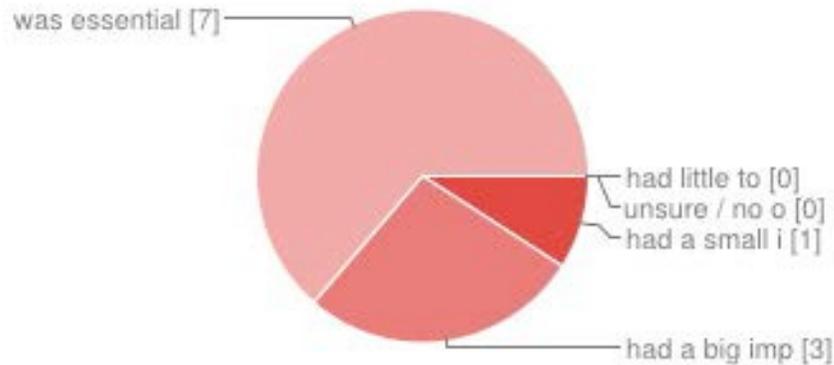
had little to no impact on my learning experience and knowledge.	0	0%
had a small impact on my learning experience and knowledge.	1	9%
had a big impact my learning experience and knowledge.	3	27%
was essential to my learning experience and knowledge.	7	64%
unsure / no opinion	0	0%

Farwell Teachers [I believe that the following people WERE CONVEYORS (givers/"teachers") of academic expertise TO our class.]
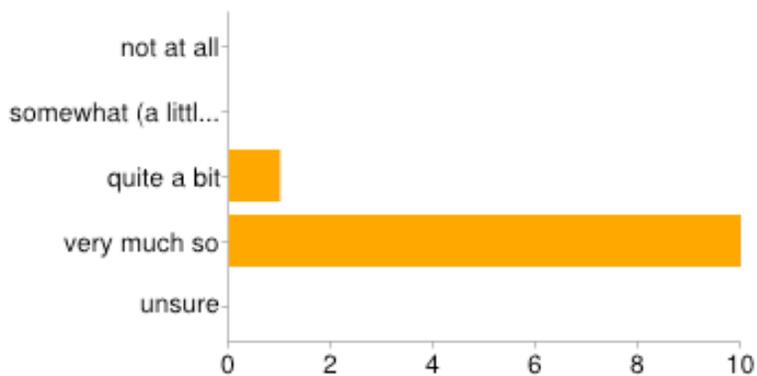
not at all	0	0%
somewhat (a little bit)	0	0%
quite a bit	1	9%
very much so	10	91%
unsure	0	0%

Farwell Aides [I believe that the following people WERE CONVEYORS (givers/"teachers") of academic expertise TO our class.]
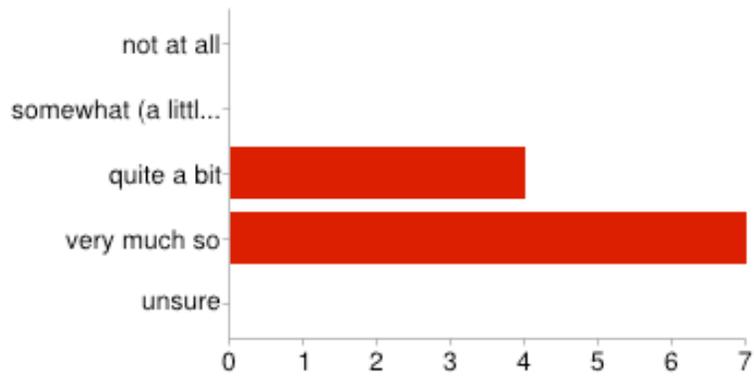
not at all	0	0%
somewhat (a little bit)	0	0%
quite a bit	4	36%
very much so	7	64%
unsure	0	0%

Farwell Principal [I believe that the following people WERE CONVEYORS (givers/"teachers") of academic expertise TO our class.]
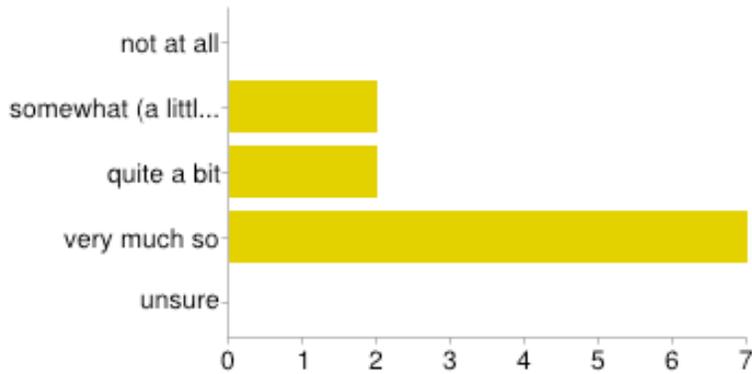
not at all	0	0%
somewhat (a little bit)	2	18%
quite a bit	2	18%
very much so	7	64%
unsure	0	0%

Farwell Students [I believe that the following people WERE CONVEYORS (givers/"teachers") of academic expertise TO our class.]
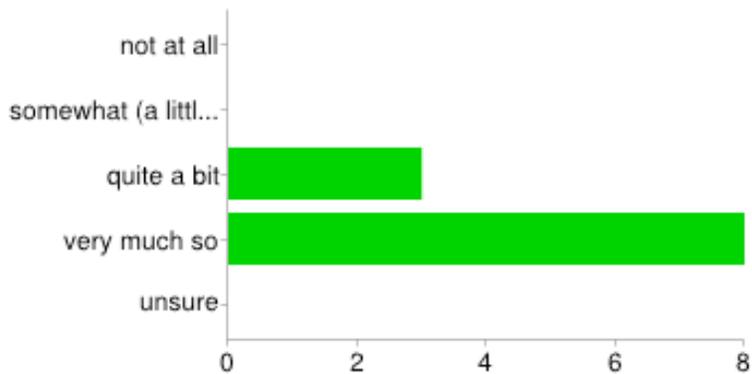

not at all	0	0%
somewhat (a little bit)	0	0%
quite a bit	3	27%
very much so	8	73%
unsure	0	0%

413

IN COMPARISON TO having a regular Education course with regular field placement, this collaborative structure/model of this course at Farwell...
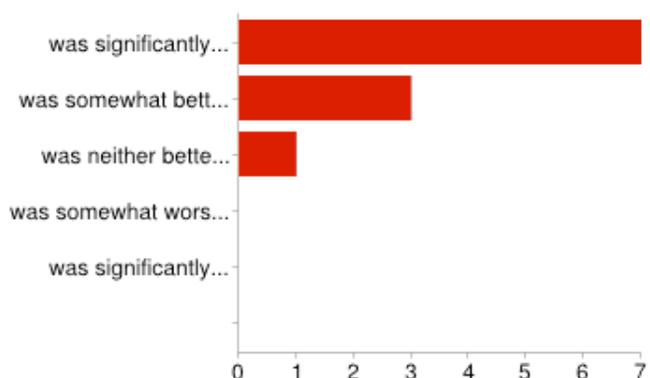
was significantly better than the regular model	7	64%
was somewhat better than the regular model	3	27%
was neither better nor worse than the regular model	1	9%
was somewhat worse than the regular model	0	0%
was significantly worse than the regular model	0	0%

Data Analysis

Both the student and teacher survey responses suggest that this partnership model of education allows for exchange of knowledge and therefore enhances learning for the teachers and Bates student students involved. The Bates students and Farwell teachers recognized that the partnership model had a positive impact on learning and teaching. Some Farwell teachers made references to Bronfenbrenner's (1994) detail of space and how certain environments are more conducive to development than others. The teacher that said, "Having the Bates students embedded in our school is highly valuable to student/staff/student relationship building, shared knowledge…" definitely understood that the environment helped build the relationships.

More than half of the Bates students surveyed recognize that the Farwell principal,

teachers, aides, and even the students were "conveyors of academic expertise." Thus, Bates students seemed to be aware of Wenger, McDermott and Snyder's (2002) concept of degrees of community participation and how people in all of these degrees of participation can affect all others in the partnership. In addition, by saying that the partnership model allowed for all Farwell individuals to be "very much so" "conveyors of academic expertise," Bates students recognized that the partnership model allowed for what Wenger (1998) calls a community of practice. Bates students realized the value of interactions with Farwell individuals by saying that the Farwell individuals conveyed academic expertise to the Bates students.

Similar to the Bates students' answers about teachers being conveyors of knowledge, the Farwell teachers understood both Professor Anita Charles and the Bates students as conveyors of knowledge. Thus, the knowledge was being exchanged in both directions, with both parties benefitting from the exchange. This recognizes the many degrees of community participation that Wenger, McDermott and Snyder (2002) suggest.

Finally, the answers for the survey questions that ask about comparing this partnership model to the regular model suggest participants' feelings about how the space in which class is conducted is what differs the partnership model from the regular model. Bates students' open-ended responses about this partnership model compared to the regular model show what Lefebvre (1991) explains as spatial recognition and spatial knowledge. One student even connected "the atmosphere of sitting in an elementary school classroom…" with "…everything seem(ing) more relevant and grounded." If "everything" is assumed to be class material, then it is easy to understand that this student recognized the change in space and what the change in space had on the knowledge that he or she was receiving and comprehending in class.

The Farwell teachers agreed with the Bates students in saying that this model of education was different than previous models, but beneficial for the teachers. According to Gruenewald (2003), there are spatial relationships that result from certain spaces. One Farwell teacher seemed to understand this concept by saying, "Having the Bates students at our school allowed for educators to participate in the Bates course which was valuable in sharing knowledge and building relationships." This teacher realized the benefit of relationship building in addition to the benefit of sharing knowledge when the Bates course was moved to the Farwell classroom.

The Bates students' recognition that the Farwell parents were not involved in the partnership speaks to degrees of community participation to show that the parents were probably outsiders, on the outskirts of the partnership. Wenger's (1998) description of the degrees of community participation recognizes that the positions in the community are fluid and thus, although the parents were outside of the partnership, they could move inside once some changes are made in the partnership's structure.

Conclusions

The majority of both Bates students' and Farwell teachers' responses suggest that this partnership model is beneficial to individuals at all degrees of community participation. The interaction of Bates students and Farwell members went both ways; Bates students as well as Farwell teachers were said to be conveyors of academic expertise. In addition, both students and teachers understood the connections between space and knowledge and agreed that this partnership model is a better model of learning than the regular model that all other education courses at Bates utilize. Thus, the interactions came full circle to create a positive reflection for the Bates students and Farwell teachers in the partnership.

Although most of the survey results point to a positive partnership, some survey results find that parents were not involved in the partnership and teachers may have not fully understood the partnership model as different from the regular model. These misunderstandings do not necessarily affect the results that say the partnership is beneficial, but could be fixed and clarified to make the partnership an even more positive experience.

Implications

This study helps draw together two bodies of literature, those of space and of knowledge. Although space and knowledge are related, this study helps to apply space and knowledge in a unique educational setting. In addition, this study starts the body of literature about conducting college courses in an elementary school classroom.

The results of this study are overwhelmingly positive and therefore suggest that this partnership should continue into its third year in the fall of 2014. Both students and teachers enjoyed the partnership and seemed excited about working with each other. Thus, this

assures that this partnership can continue and maybe partnerships like this one should make their way into other schools in the local Lewiston community. Because the partnership proved to be even in that it helped both the teachers and students involved, it will probably succeed for other education courses, and even maybe courses in other departments at Bates College.

Final Conclusion

The fall 2013 partnership between Farwell Elementary School's special education department and Bates College's Basic Concepts in Special Education course helps to exchange knowledge and enhance learning for both teachers and students involved in the partnership's community. This study has started the discussion around changing the space of a college course to affect the learning that occurs for individuals in the course and in the greater community of space in which the course is held. Students and teachers recognized the connections between space and knowledge exchange, realized the benefits of the partnership model, and highlighted that most people in the partnership are conveyors of knowledge. As the partnership continues into the fall of 2014, more research can be done to uncover further benefits of the partnership for Basic Concepts in Special Education participants and their Farwell counterparts.

Notes

I would like to thank Professor Anita Charles and Principal of Farwell Elementary

School, Althea Walker, for their help, dedication and overall excitement about this partnership

and capstone project.

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Narratives of School Lunch

Educational Studies Capstone Project

Lizzie Baird
April 22, 2014

ABSTRACT

This project uses multiple methods of inquiry to explore the unique dynamics of school lunch in the United States. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods, this project sheds light on the importance of school lunch and its implications within and beyond public education. This work aims to illuminate the complexity of school lunch while giving voice to individual students and communities so that they may have space to tell their stories. These stories are applied to a wider scope of implications based on racial dynamics, inequality, cultural and social divisions, school structures, and health. Personal narratives coupled with quantitative data serve to grant autonomy and validity to the individual while birthing wider implications for policy and practice.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The policies and practices surrounding feeding public school students in the US have become messy and racialized, often failing to provide accessible, healthy food the students who need it most.

NATURE OF THE STUDY

This study is an open-ended exploration of food in schools and alternative programs, drawing on quantitative data from a national survey completed in 2013 of high school graduates and qualitative data collected between 2013 and 2014 at programs in Lewiston, Maine.

RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY:

This work aims to illuminate the complexity of school lunch while giving voice to individual students and communities so that they may have space to tell their stories. These stories are applied to a wider scope of implications based on racial dynamics, inequality, cultural and social divisions, school structures, and health. Personal narratives of lunch coupled with quantitative data based in perceptions of stigma and the way that the NSLP reproduces structurally patterned diet-related health problems serve to grant autonomy and validity to the individual while birthing wider implications for policy and practice. A more comprehensive understanding of the shortcomings and successes of the NSLP is essential for the determination of what a more successful program would look like and this understanding is vital based on both economically and racially patterned prevalence of diet-related health problems in children and the opportunity that the NSLP represents for social cohesion, improving health, and combatting structural inequality.

LITERATURE REVIEW

National School Lunch Program:

School lunches have a bad reputation. Images of "mystery meat" and tater tots dash to the minds of my peers when I ask them about their school lunches, but the National School Lunch Program (NSLP) is actually considered one of the most effective social programs in the United States. It provides meals for about 32 million students every day ("National School Lunch Program"). The NSLP is a federally-run program granting reimbursement for public schools who provide a lunch in keeping with federal nutrition requirements set by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and offer free or reduced lunch options to eligible students (NSLP Fact Sheet 2012). Student eligibility for free or reduced school lunch is determined by household income, and the national standards state that any student whose household income falls at or below 130% of the poverty line qualifies for a free school lunch and household incomes between 130 and 180% of the poverty line must be granted a reduced lunch price at no more than 40 cents (NSLP Fact Sheet 2012). Full-priced lunch meals are also slightly subsidized and have an average price of $1.60 (Hinman, 2011, p. 18). Many schools also offer a free or reduced breakfast and/or after school snack through the NSLP.

Health

In order to understand the NSLP it is important to understand the health concerns that brought it about in the first place and continue to dictate its regulations. Federally-mandated availability of school lunches began with an act passed by Congress in 1946 which classified childhood nutrition as "A measure of national security" (Hinman, 2011, p.17). Today, American youth are both stuffed and starved which affects not only overall health, but also the ability for students to learn and develop (Poppendieck, 2010, p.164). Underfed children are at

risk not only for individual developmental problems and interference with schoolwork and

learning, but also have a negative impact on their peer' learning.

> Not only do rumbling stomachs distract children from their lessons, not only does fasting interfere with concentration, not only does inadequate nourishment make a child vulnerable to infection and thus to missing school, but poorly fed children are more likely to be disruptive in the classroom. Children who are made irritable or angry from hunger, interfere with their classmates' learning as well as their own (Poppendieck 2010, p. 165).

Hunger, and malnourishment often visible in overweight children, thus becomes an

overarching, rather than individual problem.

Inequality

Diet-related health problems are tied inextricably to the quality of food that is accessible.

In the United States a 2010 report by the National Center for Health Statistics found that "the

prevalence of obesity increases as income decreases" (6). Access to healthy, fresh foods is

patterned, and felt unequally across students from different backgrounds (Juby & Meyer, 2010,

376). Various studies claim that this inequality is caused by USDA-sponsored farm subsidies for

'commodity foods' largely linked to farmers cultivating foods which are grown for usage in

high-calorie, low nutrient, processed foods (Juby & Meyer 2010). These subsidies cause

limitations in availability of fruits and vegetables due to lack of farmer incentives to grow them.

These shortages cause prices to escalate, making these essential foods inaccessible to people of

low SES (Juby & Meyer 2010). It is important to note that the complexity with which race and

socioeconomic status in the United States are intertwined creates a dual-layered structural

inequality which is difficult to tease out (Lui, Robles, et al 2006). For the purpose of this study,

inequality across racial lines is particularly relevant.

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Racial Dynamics

Structural inequality in the United States demands that patterned access be analyzed through the lens of race, however race holds implications beyond economics. Social dynamics in school related to race are often analyzed and critiqued (Tatum 1997). School lunch, as one of few unstructured moments during the school day, is a particularly interesting setting during which to study racial dynamics. Beverly Tatum's research for *Why are all the Black Kids Sitting Together in the Cafeteria?* came out of being asked that question time and again when talking with educators (1997). "Although legally desegregated, social and physical segregation is still highly visible in most American communities (Tatum, 1997, p.4). The implications of this are that "most of the early information we receive about 'others'—people racially, religiously, or socioeconomically different from ourselves—does not come as the result of first hand experience. The second hand information we do receive has often been distorted, shaped by cultural stereotypes, and left incomplete" (Tatum 1997, p. 4). The way to break down these stereotypes and the permanent racism that they perpetuate, Tatum claims, is through productive, structured interaction and discussion of race and other, traditionally segregating, facets of identity (Tatum 2007). Tatum (1997) defines racism as "a system of advantage based on race" (p. 7), clarifying that an important aspect of this definition is the word *system*. Her use of this framework explains that racism extends beyond prejudice to encapsulate a wider system of oppression "involving cultural messages and institutional policies and practices as well as the beliefs and actions of individuals" (p.7). This framework prompts exploration within the realm of public education, and within that, school lunch functions in this work as the focal point. There are cultural and racial implications in what food is served, who has access to it, and how it is paid for along with social divisions and

implications of who sits where and what they eat. <u>Immigrant Food Relationships in the US</u>

Beyond structures inequalities in healthy food access and education along racial and socioeconomic lines, the added dimension of immigrant status also impacts diet profoundly in many cases (Guarnaccia, Vivar et al, 2011). Although existing literature does not tap into specifics for the population which this study works with, there are trends from literature studying different immigrant groups in the United States with applicable themes. The transcending theme of immigrant health studies related to diet are based in the dietary change which happens when location changes. This has been studied as a form of acculturation meaning that immigrants assimilate their diets to the dominant culture around them (Guarnaccia, Vivar et al, 2011). If this diet is nutritionally-deficient and otherwise unhealthy, that becomes the fate of that immigrant group. Without nutrition education, many unknown foods are seen as normal without regards to their nutritional status.

In addition to new or unknown foods, many immigrants and refugees are located in larger urban areas in which healthy food access can be substantially limited (Guarnaccia et al, 2011). Multiple studies analyze the transition of Latin American immigrants and their food choices and options in the United States (Stephen 2007, Larson, Story and Nelson, 2009, Guarnaccia et al., 2011). These studies discuss dietary change as an expression of cultural, political, and ethnic transitions. This dietary acculturation

> "entails processes of transformation that occur in food-ways as people from one culture come intoccontact with people from another culture in their adopted country. The concept of acculturation acknowledges influences in both directions and the role of social forces in shaping how the diets of migrants change. Changes in eating habits result from a number of micro0-and macro-level characters that we call the 'ecology and economy of dietary change" (Guarnaccia et al, 2011, p. 106)

Immigrants in the United States often experience a health decline which is beyond the stresses of their transition and socioeconomic status, as it appears that immigrants who have spent longer in the United States or were born in the United States often have poorer health than those who recently immigrated (Guarnaccia et al, 2011). Food availability and access pose challenges in Urban areas across the country, however the dramatic shift in diet along with the lack of education about new food groups and lack of availability of fresh, healthy foods all pose a unique health concern for immigrant families. School lunch provides an opportunity to lessen this dietary decline in immigrant youth as low SES students qualify for a free or reduced meal; however, the food at school is often unhealthy and actually contributes to dietary acculturation of unhealthy foods (Guarnaccia et al, 2011).

Recent adaptations to school lunch regulations attempt to provide access to healthier foods at school lunch, however they come with a reform that includes calorie restrictions. These calorie restrictions are meant to combat issues of obesity and diabetes, however they disproportionately affect students coming from low SES families who had previously counted on school meals as the source of the majority of their daily caloric intake.

METHODOLOGY

Over the past year, my coursework has led me to explore the intersections of food and education in a variety of realms. Data for this study was collected through several projects with different goals. This report aims to synthesize two previous projects, consolidating them into a cohesive study. The previous two studies had distinct purposes which tapped at different issues/areas within the arena of feeding American public school students and were conducted in 2013. This study relies on the data sets and analyses from the previous project along with participant-observation of school lunch at an elementary school conducted two days a week for five weeks. During the lunch period, I sat with a mixed-age group of students

and observe their food options, choices, and conversations. I also occasionally engaged in a more targeted conversation with the students related to food issues, asking them questions about the names of particular foods they have selected, whether they eat similar food at home, and what their favorites are. None of these questions strayed far from their standard lunch conversations, but were slightly more guided due to my presence as an adult and outsider during the lunch period. The most recent data collection adds additional depth to previous investigations.

The first of the previous studies was an exploratory, non-evaluative research project with qualitative data collected through observational field notes. These field notes were collected twice weekly during a period of four months at a kindergarten class' lunch period when I sat with students and engaged in conversations with the students about their food choices and offerings made at school, very similar to the data I collected more recently. I also collected field notes at a Middle School Cooking Club after school. The cooking club serves as a contrast to the more traditional setting of the cafeteria school lunch. Field notes were coupled with an analysis of national alternative programs through case study research as well as a local case study which I conducted through participant observation at an after school program's cooking club run at a Middle School. The population of students studied in this research largely live below the poverty line and qualify for free lunch. They are racially, culturally, and ethnically very diverse. Many are English Language Learners.

The second study was collected through an anonymous online survey of public high school graduates aged 18-25. This age range allowed me to sample recent graduates who retain enough memory of their experiences in public school to answer my questions based on their experience and who attended school during a time when there were a limited number of

reforms in order to avoid biases and differences based on the respondent's graduation year. This proved successful as there were no correlations between graduation year and the variables studied. The study aimed to answer the question "Do barriers to participation in the National School Lunch Program reproduce stratified healthy food access in schoolchildren?" I conducted the survey with a population of students who attended schools with a lunch program, however the students had not necessarily participated in the program, as it was a study of perceptions of the program. I collected 165 responses from students across the country, choosing survey research because of its ability to provide generalizable, standardized, versatile data (Chambliss & Schutt, 2010, p. 163). The data collected in the survey was both quantitative and qualitative, with multiple-choice and open-ended questions. Each applicable question, whether qualitative or quantitative, had a comment field for respondents to share more information. Questions aimed at the key concepts of stigma, structural factors impacting access, perceptions of the National School Lunch Program, and competitive food options. I measured these factors with multiple choice quantitative questions about attitudes and perceptions of the NSLP, answerable with only personal experience and allowing space for elaboration.

These methods will allow me to create a synthesized investigation into school lunch with both breadth and depth. The goal of this project is to shed light on the importance of school lunch, and the main problems surrounding it today. All participants are either anonymous or confidential and data was collected either with participants who were over 18 or who were participating as a part of the regular school day. I recognize that as an outsider, my presence at school lunch or in a cooking class may alter the conversations that happen, however in each setting I had already formed relationships with the students before my

research began and continued well afterwards. I went into each of these projects with different goals, but with an overarching a desire to learn about the complexity of feeding America's schoolchildren. The survey data has structural limitations due to a higher response rate of female students than male, more white respondents than people of color, and more students who did not qualify for free or reduced lunch in high school, however the observational data is collected with opposite demographics and so the combination of these populations can give a more rounded perception into what school lunch is really like.

RESEARCH QUESTION

What is the racial salience of school lunch in the United States?

BACKGROUND/CONTEXTUAL DESCRIPTION

Quantitative data for this study comes from a national sample of public high school graduates whose backgrounds were not exhaustively described in the survey that they completed. The qualitative data in this study, however, comes from the community of Lewiston, Maine. Lewiston is an economically-challenged city in Maine with a unique population and demographics. The city has had a couple of large waves of immigration in the last century. First came an influx of French Canadian immigrants in the mid 1900s and more recently the city has become home to a new population of East African immigrants and refugees. Lewiston's population is about 85% caucasian and schools have a growing population of English Language Learners as 20% of the city's households speak a language other than English at home (*"State and County Quick," n.d.).* The melding of these populations is unique, especially in the state of Maine which is 96% Caucasian (*"State and County Quick," n.d.).* In such a unique and diverse location, it is important to maintain a lens of equity as well as a focus on community-building and social cohesion because the population is ever-changing and many students come from families who have not had the chance to interact with people who come

from such different backgrounds. Structured social interaction and conversations are essential for building a collaborative and just community across lines of cultural and racial difference (Tatum, 2007).

ANALYSIS & EVIDENCE

Based on my research question and past scholarly work along with my own past work,, I set out to find a synthesized manner in which to explain and explore the racial salience of school lunch in the United States. I found, through the combination of these methods, that the structural inequality around healthy food access and healthy food relationships is replicated through the NSLP. Food access and food relationships are related, but separate. And I will discuss each below.

Students at Longley Elementary come directly from the surrounding neighborhood, one of the most economically challenged neighborhoods in Lewiston. Students and their families come from a wide range of racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, however the population is largely impoverished and 96% qualify for free lunch. Many of the students come from immigrant an refugee families, and so their poverty is confounded and inseparable from a multitude of other factors implicating immigrant and refugee families, these extend far beyond the food-related topics explored in this paper.

Students' lack of knowledge of plant-based food is apparent at school lunch. Many students attempt to avoid the schools salad bar. This bar offers a variety of fruit and vegetable choices, and was put in last year when the school received gang funding. While the salad bar was put in attempt to create a healthier option for students, many students take only as muchas they know they must and leave it on their plates. The offerings are largely raw and unappealing. Raw broccoli, carrot sticks, fruit salad in syrup, iceberg lettuce The students opt for chocolate milk and their main course in place of these foods. There the issues are both lack

of relationship with healthy food and the attractiveness of the food available. Access is less of an issue as Longley is lucky to have these options available. But many of the foods are foreign. The students don't eat them at home, they don't know what they are. This was apparent to me as I spent time at lunch asking students to name the foods on their plates. Many students attempted to answer, calling broccoli a pickle or raisins beans, but most students really had no idea what the food was that they were being asked to eat. There is no education around food and no structure to school lunch, ands my presence became a learning opportunity, students would ask me what different foods were called often, and were amazed and excited to learn. At the middle school cooking club, these trends continued. Students had to opt into the class and so there was inherent differences in interest as well as age between the two samples, but these students often were learning the names of the fruits and vegetables as well. In both settings this seemed to be partially confounded by he fact that many students were English Language Learners; however, it was still clear that there was no education around this subject area at school. While the kindergarten class was excited to discuss new food groups, he middle school students were slightly more resistant. The foods we were using turned into simple recipes which were very unfamiliar to the majority of the students. We used fruits and vegetables every day that some students would state that they had never seen before. This clarified the lack of healthy food access for these students and their families in Lewiston.

The students in the survey population were much older and came from a very different SES on average than the students in the Lewiston programs. The survey largely generated responses from white students who did not qualify for free or reduced lunch,. Most of them remed to have at least a basic understanding of nutrition and healthy food as they commented on the lack of availability of healthy food and fresh food at their schools. In the survey, I

sought to find whether the food provided in the school meals was health and nutritions and thus whether it had the potential to combat or exacerbate diet-related health problems in those who eat the hot lunch at school. i was particularly interested in this because I understood that students who qualified for free or reduced lunch would be more likely to eat the hot lunch option at school, and thus the food provided has important ramifications on structural health inequality.

Through the survey, I discovered that student perceptions of the food being served at school and those who ate it played into stigma, racialization, and stereotypes. The survey produced statistically significant results proving that stigma, nutrition of the food provided, and qualifying for free or reduced lunch all impacted how often students would eat the inch at school. Interestingly, the social stigma was most significant. Students who believed that there was a large difference between students who ate the lunch and did not were more likely to skip school lunch and head off campus, while students who thought there was no difference in participants made their choices based on health, what their friends were doing, or how attractive the food was. 68% of students said that they chose not to eat school lunch some days because it did not seem nutritionally adequate, showing that knowledge of nutrition, or at least perceived knowledge of nutrition, was a major factor.

Another factor measured in the survey was whether or not the food served at school was similar to the food served at home. This produced a significant relationship where students who saw food at school that looked more like the food they ate at home were more likely to eat the food at school. This taps at both ingrained food cultures and food relationships, as students appeared to be more comfortable eating food that looked familiar. There was also a significant relationship between there being visible differences in between

students who ate the NSLP lunch and those who did not. Often students commented that these differences were not only racial, but also related to health and weight. Of the students who noted that there was a difference in participants, 64% stated that there was sa stigma associated with eating school lunch, while where there was no difference, 96.4% said that there was no stigma.

Students who responded to the survey reported a wide-range of factors influencing whether or not they ate the NSLP food, and a wide range of factors came up as significant with stigma's presence. Students who showed that there was similar food at home and at school reported higher rates or good or excellent nutritional quality of the hot lunch that those who felt the food was very different. this is possibly the result of students eating healthy food at home, but could also be the result of students perceptions of nutrition based on their family's eating habits. Students tended to perceive healthier food as more attractive. This has proven true in my experience in Lewiston schools as well. Most students talk about the school lunch as inedible or disgusting, while they do not perceive it as unhealthy. Others like the food and do not complain, however they are in the minority. Most students note, when prompted, that they hare simply happy to have lunch provided for them, while others complain that the food is not good or is making them tired or feel sick.

The food provided at home had a large influence on the students perceptions of the food provided at school in each data set. It was apparent that stigma is racialized due to assumptions made about students and what they are eating, however these are often more cultural than racial in Lewiston whereas survey respondents in more homogeneously white schools commented that "only the black kids eat school lunch" or "people thought that those who at the hot lunches were gross and fat" or "I always felt ashamed if I ate the hot lunch

option."

Based on the above evidence, I believe that both access and nutrition need to be addressed, however they must be accompanied with building healthy food relationships and healthy peer relationships. Students at Longley who are provided a relatively nutritious option every day do not opt in, largely due to lack of understanding or experience with foods. These foods would also be more "fun" for the students and they report that they would taste them more often if they were displayed more creative or accompanied with sauces or cooked into recipes rather than placed alone and raw. The Cooking Club at the Middle School makes it clear that his is indeed true, as students' relationships with the food provided change drastically over the course of the program. While students begin the program curious, they often will not try the food until they are more familiar with it and have had the opportunity to touch it or cook it. These healthy food relationships are incredibly important for all students, however they are a step more important for immigrant students who are in the midst of a dramatic shift in eating style and a most vulnerable food insecurity and lack of healthy food access outside of school.

CONCLUSIONS

This work aimed to illuminate the complexity of school lunch. After interpreting this combination of data, I have discovered the seemingly obvious fact that lunch is *messy*. It is messy beyond the ketchup on the floor and the raisins stuck on teeth. Beyond the screams and dropped trays and grimy fingers holding sloppy joes. It's messy because it is incredibly politically intwined. Because every decision made about school lunch impacts the 232 million children who sati t every day, their families, and well beyond. It is messy because there is stigma attached to it. It starts in kindergarten at Longley when Stephanie tells everyone to look at Jeremy while he pours dips his pizza in ranch dressing, but continues to high school

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students worried about their appearances—physically, socially, and economically. School lunch is also messy because it is incredibly *racialized.* Racial and cultural inequity which comes from not fitting in with dominant cultural or racial group is replicated when the food doesn't look familiar, when lunchrooms are polarized, when cultural norming and assimilation is outwardly or silently normalized.

Health inequalities in the United States are structurally created, and my research leads me to believer hat they are replicated in the NSLP. Students who are of low SES (here measure using FRL) are more likely to eat the school lunches more often and the food provided was found in al methods of inquiry to be neither healthy nor attractive. These factors create a stigmatization of students who do not have the means to find alternate lunch sources in high school and therefore eat the hot lunch option they get for free at school. These stigmatizations are present only in the budding forms at Longley Elementary. I believe this is due to the socioeconomic homogeneity there as well as the age and developmental status of the students. One respondent in the survey wrote "Unless it becomes healthier, it does not benefit the students who have FRL". This program is considered one of the most successful social programs in the country; however it is systematically providing disadvantaged students with unhealthy foods. The low participation rates among survey respondents not only feeds into stigma, which spirals into lower participation and then more stigma, but also reduce the amount of reimbursement that schools get for the food they provide sand therefore lose money. This structural problem requires a structural solution. the NSLP is already in place and provides food to millions of children every day. This program offers a unique and effective mechanism to improve the health of the country, and the way that it currently functions both loses money, and perpetuates rather than combats, structural inequality and diet-related health

problems.

LIMITATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

The populations for the different bodies of research feeding into this project were incredibly different, and so conclusions must be understood both as individual for each body of research and as cohesive and synthesized as many trends transcended these differences. The quantitative study had a set of limitations related to the population it was able to reach as well ass the inherent possibilities for biases in online surveys. The sample was largely suburban, female, white, from the northeast, and did not qualify for free or reduced lunch, however the stigmas and social barrieres were still strongly associated in results, this leads me to believe that there is much more research to be done in this area. Additionally, the observation data was collected only once or twice per week, and while I was present at each cooking class, I was not present every day at school lunch at Longley, and only was able to work with Kindergarteners there, and so my results could be biased due to age and social developmental differences along with the day of the week that I was present.

Based on my findings, it is important that policymakers look at the NSLP participation rates as a product of a cultural background that is based around food. Reforms to the NSLP need to look into the needs of specific communities and address the needs of that location with a localized implementation method. Reforms need to focus on making food more appealing and healthier whole getting ride of off campus options. Increased community engagement and education around nutrition are essential elements of a more cohesive and effective NSLP reform. Programs which help students to cultivate relationships with healthy food will help increase their willingness to try new things and help to break down ingrained junk-food cultures.

OVERALL CONCLUSION

This work aimed to illuminate the complexity of school lunch. After interpreting this combination of data, I have discovered the seemingly obvious fact that lunch is *messy*. It is messy physically, politically, socially, and racially. The NSLP replicates and enforces these issues rather than using its capacity to address them. Programs like the after school cooking club work to re-create students relationships with healthy foods and combat external forces of separation by encouraging collaboration and understanding. Further research should be aimed at breaking down these social barrieres and developing students relationships with health food options.

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Do Grants Mean Change: An Analysis of a School Improvement Grant's influence on a School's Academic Environment

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Abstract

This paper will look critically at the implementation of funding provided by the School Improvement grant program in Maine. The School Improvement Grant Program was altered and re-authorized as a part of the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. This paper will look specifically at the use of a SIG grant in Longley Elementary School in 2009 in Lewiston Maine. I aim to understand the goals of the grant from different stakeholders at the school, district and state level. I would like to see how different members of the community perceived the grant. I will use participatory-based research methods to conduct research over the course of the semester.

Problem Statement:

In 2009, the state of Maine adopted and implemented a federally funded grant program called the School Improvement Grant program. The program was intended to target and help low performing schools within the state of Maine. In the same year, Longley B. Elementary School in Lewiston Maine received a School Improvement Grant of $1.9 million over a three-year period. It is believed that there are varying perspectives about the success of the grant, and stakeholders of different positions regard the grant and its impact differently.

Nature of the Study:

In this study, I will interview stakeholders at the state, district and school level about the SIG grant Longley received and its impact on the school.

Rational for the Study:

This study addresses the various perspectives of different stakeholders within the field of education policy by speaking with stakeholders at specific levels. I am particularly interested in determining how each stakeholder describes the success and impact of the grant. This work aims to identify how perspectives on education policy and reform alter based on positionality of stakeholders.

Literature Review:

There has been little academic research into the School Improvement Grant Programs and the federal and state role in School improvement Grant Programs. This literature review will look specifically at the implementation of multiple federal educational funding programs over the past two decades. It reveals there have been large shifts in the role of the federal government in education reform and funding, each shift in funding aims to assert the role of the federal government in state education systems. This literature review will discuss the role of the government in education reform, describe the three reforms the government has overseen, and explain how its most recent competitive grant reform is structured differently than those previous.

In this literature review, scholars shared a similar view of the federal government's role in education. Vergari writes, "federal education policy implementation is shaped by the interests and capacities of agencies and administrators at all three levels of government" (2011 p.18). The ability of the federal government to influence public education is dependent on how school districts respond financially and educationally to intergovernmental grants (Fisher & Papke 2011). The federal role in state education systems has grown in the past two decades, yet the federal government still does not possess the ability to oversee and implement reforms in each state correctly (Vergari 2011). School systems vary across the country thus federal reforms put in the place will be interpreted and implemented differently across schools, without the oversight of the federal government (Trujillo 3013).

During the early 1990's school funding was allocated as a part of Title I under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. This funding was given to low income high poverty schools on a needs based system (Trujillo 2013). However, there were little to no

requirements and guidelines attached to the funding (Kolbe & Rice 2012). Policy makers

began to implement guidelines starting with The America's Schools Act and Goals 2000 and

Education America Act in 1994 because they were unhappy with the lack of progress made in

these schools (Kolbe & Rice 2012). The reorganization of Title I funding requirements

demonstrates the first shift to stricter requirements and guidelines in education reform.

This movement to direct requirements was evident the re-authorization of ESEA

under a new title, No Child Left Behind in 2002. This reform demonstrated a new style of

policy in which "high stakes accountability initiatives have become a primary lever for

policy-makers seeking dramatic improvements on school performance" (Malen & Rice 2004

p. 632). The Bush administration wanted to change schools dramatically and increased the

federal role in public education. The reform aimed to develop accountability measures for

states related to student progress and improve the academic performance of disadvantaged

youth. However, academic literature point to many shortcomings in the reform.

> NCLB forced states to change many of their educational practices but political
>
> resistance and capacity gaps at the state level meant that these changes where
>
> often more superficial than substantive. As a result the law did not generate as
>
> much meaningful school improvement or progress in closing student
>
> achievement gaps as was originally hoped (McGuin 2011 p. 138).

Similarly, Vergari argues that NCLB relied heavily on strong state governance of education,

which doesn't exist. "If state agencies are not effective implementers of federal policy, it is

difficult for schools to get it right" (2011 p. 18). This emphasizes the disconnect between

federal policy makers and state governments and schools as they implement reform. The most

recent funding reform was made in 2009 by President Barrack Obama and allocated $4.35

billion to public education. Scholars agree that this competitive grant program "responds to the perceived failings of NCLB, and Title I more generally, to achieve federal priorities for public education and represents a change in the federal government's way of investing in public education." (Kolbe & Rice 2012 p.188). Race to the Top is a competitive grant program, McGuin writes, "Secretary Duncan's decision to use a competitive grant process to allocate money to states is significant and unusual in the broader context of education policy" (McGuin 2011 p.139). It differs from NCLB because "Unlike NCLB, which provided funding to every state by formula, Race to the Top was a competitive grant states have to apply for RTT funding and were either granted or denied funds" (Rhodes 2012 p. 176). RTTT focused on "creating political cover for state education reformers to innovate and helped states construct the administrative capacity to implement these innovations effectively" (McGuin 2011 p. 137). The School Improvement Grant program was developed alongside Race to the Top and offered a similar competitive state-by-state funding program. The United States Department of Education states that School Improvement Grants are authorized under section 1003(g) of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Title I or ESEA), are grants to State educational agencies (SEAs) that SEAs use to make competitive subgrants to local educational agencies (LEAs) that demonstrate the greatest need for the funds and the strongest commitment to use the funds to provide adequate resources in order to raise substantially the achievement of students in their lowest-performing schools. (14 February 2014) The grant system gives states local control over education reform and resources to address the needs of low performing schools.

The state of Maine has applied for Race to the Top funding twice since the program was announced in 2009 and failed to get funding (Nicholson-Crotty 2012). It is important to

note there is limited academic literature written about the state and its education policies. The state has recently decided to forgo RTTT funding under the leadership of Governor LePage. In an article in the Bangor Daily in 2013, Samantha Warren a representative of the Maine Department of Education stated "What we've heard is that with that [Race to the Top] funding comes incredibly tight restrictions that prevent [the development team] from being as flexible as they need to be to serve the children of the state and not the demands of the federal government, We did not at the department level feel that this was something worth applying for at this time." The state has decided to develop independent school reforms best suited to the issues of Maine. The School Improvement Grant system allows the Maine Department of Education to address the needs of low-performing schools more independently.

In conclusion, this academic literature reviewed revealed that there is a gap between the federal government and state governments in implementing education reform. There is a lack of literature that formally critiques and analyzes Race to the Top and the effect of competitive grant programs on schools and student achievement. One should consider looking at the direct impact of funding on students and identify areas of success and challenges with this new education policy. Maine's decision to go without RTTT funds is also significant and warrants further critical analysis.

Methods

Project Foundation:

   I am interested in understanding how education policy is interpreted and implemented in schools across the United States. I have taken education courses over my time at Bates that explore the motivations behind education reform and policy and also analyze and critique the effect of these reforms. My seminar project will allow me to continue to study the relationship between intention and implementation at James B. Longley Elementary School in Lewiston. Over the course of the semester, I will conduct interviews with members of the Lewiston Public School community, teachers and administrators at Longley Elementary School and at the Maine Department of Education.

Research Question:

How do different stakeholders view the impact and reform changes made at Longley Elementary School with its School Improvement Grant?

Background/Contextual Information:

   Longley Elementary School serves a unique population of students in the downtown area of Lewiston, which influences the learning environment of the school. The school serves many English language learners. During the 2012-2013 school year, sixty-two percent of students were considered ELL (Maine Department of Education). In addition to this, almost all students at Longley qualify for free or reduced lunch. During the 2013-2014 school year about ninety-three percent of students receive free or reduced lunch within the school which indicates a large number of students are living at or below the poverty line (Maine Department of Education).

These statistics in particular demonstrate the complex and challenging learning environment that students and teachers face on a daily basis. Longley was not making adequate yearly progress on Maine standardized tests between the years of 2006 and 2009 and was considered one of the lowest performing schools within the state.

The Maine Department of Education implemented a School Improvement Grant Program in Longley Elementary School received a School Improvement Grant in 2009 as a part of the first set of schools in Maine to receive funding. The school adopted a turnaround reform model and over the past four years has replaced the principal, replaced fifty percent of the staff, developed curriculum reform, extended the school day and made changes to improve the socio- emotional environment of the school. The school will finish their funding this year and is in a transition period.

Participatory Research Methods and Timeline:

I will focus on participatory research methods during this project, and use interviews as my main method of data collection. Interviews "have the potential for drawing out useful, relevant knowledge and because they invited the involvement of all parties or stakeholders, in identifying, defining and struggling to solve the problem" (Strand, Cutforth, Stoeker & Donohue 2003 p. 12). Interviews serve as an effective way to gather information because they "discern the voice and perspective of participants… [through] informal interviews and open ended questions" (Strand, Cutforth, Stoeker & Donohue 2003 p. 12) I will also through these interviews be able to "collect rich stories as well as some basic data" (Strand, Cutforth, Stoeker & Donohue 2003 p 106) about Longley Elementary School and Lewiston that will inform and influence my findings. I will consider issues of privacy and confidentiality as I write my final report. Minkler argues it is important to consider the ethical impact of sharing

information collected in research projects. I will be sensitive in the use of names and titles in my final report, and also in sharing these findings with other audiences.

Ethical Considerations:

Throughout the semester I have been concerned about confidentiality and privacy with this project. Each interview I have conducted have been so rich and informative because the interviewees were very candid and honest with me about their personal opinions and perspectives on Longley and SIG funding however they hold distinct positions in the Lewiston and Maine community. I have been very careful about using only the titles of each interviewee in this final report. In addition, I have been vey conscious of the quotes and information I am selecting to use in the paper. I want to make sure I am representing the opinions and thoughts of each interviewee in a productive way that does not lead to mischaracterization. In my Education Symposium presentation I was extremely cautious about how I expressed the findings of my project in order to honor the participants privacy.

Challenges and Limitations of Project:

As this project continues I am beginning to realize why reform and implementation of reform is so complex within schools. Each interview I have conducted is with a different stakeholder within the grand scheme of school reform, which influences their interpretation of how SIG funding has been used within the school, and the success of these changes. Implementation of reform is complex in nature because the goals of the reform change at each level of perspective. As I work through and organize my data I would like to draw conclusions about the expectations of the funding based on the positions and perspectives of those interviewed.

Organizing my interviews has become easier, because I have begun to record interviews in segments, however, one challenge I faced was transcribing and working through my longer interviews.

As I review my findings and organize my interviews, I have realized that I am a bit limited because I have only been able to conduct interviews with one person at each level of school/community spectrum. If the project were to continue, I would want to reach out to a larger pool of participants in order to have a range of interviews among similar groups of school administrators, teachers, and community members. Confidentiality issues might be reduced if I have more participants with similar job titles and community positions.

Findings:

Interviewing each stakeholder involved with the School Improvement Grant that Longley Elementary School received was a very interesting process. Each interview provided me with a great deal of information related to the funding and the environment of Longley itself. After reviewing and transcribing each interview I was able to generate one major finding and several smaller finding that supported my larger finding about the funding. It became clear that there are multiple perspectives about the impact of the SIG funding that Longley received, and these perspectives are tied to the positionality and role of each stakeholder.

Each stakeholder had a different opinion about the state of Longley before funding started. Administrators at the district level and state level believed the school needed to undergo a significant restructuring process, in which administrators and teachers would be replaced. A stakeholder at the district level says "Longley was a failing school, they were flat, they were not making any growth" (Lewiston School District Chief Academic Officer, 2/7/14,

interview) Similarly a stakeholder at the state level states, "Longley was in the bottom five percent of schools in the state of Maine. They needed a significant education reform model to start making progress towards proficiency" (Maine Department of Education Chief Academic Officer, 3/27/14, interview). Each of these stakeholders believed that a transformational or turn-around reform model would suit the school. Teacher retention according to a stakeholder at the district level was "disruptive at first but in the long run was a great thing for the school. Working in Lewiston is extremely challenging and we have strict guidelines for our teacher contracts" (Lewiston School District Chief Academic Officer, 2/7/14, interview). The stakeholder believed that teachers needed to be replaced within the school and the transition period though challenging was essential in improving the environment of the school.

In interviews with stakeholders at the school level, stakeholders described demographics as a challenge in achieving proficiency and growth. A stakeholder at the administrative level in the school states, "Lewiston in general faces challenges because of the ELL population. At Longley specifically, many families are brand new to the country. They are living in poverty in the downtown area. Families move around a lot and the schools' transient nature has been challenging" (Longley Elementary School Data/Math Coach, 3/11/14, interview). Students at the school face issues as they assimilate and adjust to the United States and Maine. There are also a series of factors associated with poverty that can change the learning environment of a school. A stakeholder at the school level believes "there were a lot of factors they don't take into consideration. Mostly the high population of English Language learners and the transient nature of the school. So most of the kids I've felt like here I have started in the beginning with and done really well with…As their families gain more stability and get more confident they are able to gain jobs and access to the town they often will move

to a better neighborhood. That mirrors in my mind, a lot of proficiency levels of the kids. You work with this child and they have 563% growth and then they move to a nicer neighborhood and we don't get to credit for that on my caseload, which is a big problem" (Longley Elementary School ELL Teacher, 2/12/14, Interview). Students living in poverty and in this environment move between schools frequently which impacts the schools performance on standardized tests

The stakeholder I spoke with at the district level expressed similar sentiments as she says "If you go to the Department of Maine Website, you will see that 40% of students in Maine are on Free or Reduced Lunch, In Lewiston, Longley has 99% Montello has 80%. Um so that socioeconomic piece is huge, the other huge piece is that Longley is in the center of downtown; housing around there is pretty bad. So um there's a lot of transience of kids and we just have this internal frustration that if we could be held accountable for every kid that spent time at Longley and then left, it would be a whole different situation"(Lewiston School District Chief Academic Officer, 2/7/14, interview). Students at Longley are transient because parents want to move out of the downtown area, "they do this little circle between Auburn, Turner, Lewiston…. They are more focused on having a roof over their head, then how their child is doing in school" (Lewiston School District Chief Academic Officer, 2/7/14, interview) says a stakeholder at the district level.

Stakeholders have different opinions as to why Longley needed to receive a SIG grant and also for the issues that existed within the school before the grant started. It is important to note the stakeholder at the district level recognized how demographics influenced the school's overall low performance.

Stakeholders also had differing perspectives on the implementation of specific

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changes within the school. As a part of the turnaround model schools replace fifty percent of their teachers, which came up in a few interviews with stakeholders. A stakeholder at the state level says, "Larger district immediately chose a larger model. They have the ability to do a review and transfer teachers within the district. They need to make some shifts with the culture and climate of the school" (Maine Department of Education Chief Academic Officer, 3/27/14, interview). However these changes to staffing influence the culture and environment of the school. A stakeholder at the school level states, " a lot of the staff had worked here for twenty plus years. The staff that worked here had their sleeves rolled up and were really committed to this school and chose to be here. It had that feel when I came and I loved it. It was hard work, I worked all the time, like the day when they got those pink slips and the principal transferred and those meetings. I mean the minute you just said that my brain immediately went to those days when all those teachers were crying in the hallways. I could start crying thinking about it. It was terrible. Because the school wasn't performing, but I didn't think it was because of the teachers" (Longley Elementary School ELL Teacher, 2/12/14, interview). It was challenging to transition to a new staff of teacher and work with them.

As funding began at Longley, the school administration began to provide training for new and returning teachers. An administrator at the school level immediately began to work with teachers "to increase their understanding of the standards. Teachers needed to understand what the standards were and how to teach them to students." This type of work continued with the implementation of professional development within school. Many of the teachers were new and benefited from the trainings.

Professional development and curriculum changes at Longley began with the

creation of literacy and math coaches. The SIG funding went towards the salaries of the literacy coach, the math coach. A stakeholder at the administrative level of the school says, "We as coaches, have extensive ELL experience. The work we did with teacher integrated ELL teaching techniques into everyday lesson plans. I really worked with teachers on backwards lesson planning. It was important that teachers understood what their learning goals were, and then worked on how to teach each learning objective by integrating projects."(Longley Elementary School Data/Math Coach, 3/11/14, interview). This work was aimed to help new and old teachers within the school. In addition to the coaches' daily work with teachers, they developed a professional development program for teachers. A stakeholder at the administrative level within the schools says "Teachers were given three hours a week of PD in math and literacy. During the second year, the grades flipped so grades K through second got the same professional development" (Longley Elementary School Data/Math Coach, 3/11/14, interview). These changes were intended to give teachers skills they needed to improve their instruction and lesson planning, however some has not regarded the changes that way.

Throughout interviews, stakeholders at different levels expressed concern about changes made within the school. A stakeholder within Longley expressed concern about the structure of trainings within the school. She says, "There's been very little explicit training regarding ELLs here. I felt like we were given a good opportunity to have that training and have teachers get certified in it. Because at Longley you are pretty much an ELL teacher if you are a classroom teacher. In fact, I teach ELL but a lot of the kids I teach are not typical ELL they are more special ed. ELL is more what you see in the classroom. Their monitor status, but if they were in Cape Elizabeth they would be pulled out" (Longley Elementary

School ELL Teacher, 2/12/14, Interview). There was a clear disconnect in the effects and impact of trainings and professional development at the school between administrators and teachers.

In addition to this, stakeholders within the school felt overwhelmed by new data collection systems. A stakeholder says, "I was on the data team before SIG. and I was very responsible before the grant. I feel a little less responsible over my data because I am inundated with data now. To the point where look I have all these tests to give. Which one do I give to whom? I used to just know that solidly and know that and study it. There's so much now that my brain just swims in it. There are so many different ways to look at kids with data points and while that's fine, I just believe less is more in terms of data" (Longley Elementary School ELL Teacher, 2/12/14, Interview). This particular reform has created stress for teachers. It has changed the moral and environment of the school itself.

Stakeholders at the state level express concern about the overall use of funding within the school. A stakeholder says, "My overall believe districts bite off way more than they can chew. They had a huge chunk of change, although you can certainly put activities into place making sure they are helpful is a challenge" (Maine Department of Education Chief Academic Officer, 3/27/14, interview). This stakeholder elaborated on her claim, stating that schools often request the largest amount of funding possible without considering how and why the money will be used and effective. Schools are expected to use all the funding without knowing if changes made will be valuable.

As stakeholders began to express their concerns about the funding, it became evident there is little communication between stakeholders at each level, pre-SIG and during SIG funding. During the process of writing the grant, a stakeholder at the district level was not

directly involved in the process. She says during the Longley grant application process, "I was ELL director so I was less involved in the development of that one. I mean I was part of the team, but I was less involved. So my job is basically to work with people to make sure we are meeting all the requirements, tracking data. The principles work directly with the coaches and we have a district literacy curriculum committee and a math committee. They are a part of that district piece and I oversee that too" (Lewiston School District Chief Academic Officer, 2/7/14, interview). At the school level, the administrator I spoke with did not mention or discuss communication with Lewiston School District officers. She states "the senior leadership team at Longley makes decisions about curriculum changes based on data and conversations with teachers." In addition to the limited communication between the school and the district, the Maine Department of Education plays a smaller role in supporting SIG funded schools. A stakeholder at the state level says, "Schools are not expected to develop an assessment system to track the use and success of reforms made in the school. There is check-ins with the school over the three-year period however Maine is local control. We wouldn't be in there in a participatory nature unless they invited us" (Maine Department of Education Chief Academic Officer, 3/27/14, interview). Each school can choose how to involve the department of education over the three-year grant period, which can limit the amount of support and dialogue there is between the school and the Department of Education. Each interviewee mentioned their role over the three-year period, however there was limited collaboration and communication across these roles.

Analysis of Findings

This project revealed that each stakeholder has different opinions in relation to Longley before and during the SIG funding of the school. The divergence of opinions between stakeholders is tied to positionality. The expectations and pressures on each stakeholder influence how they view the funding and its effectiveness in the school. There were differences in perspective from those at the state and district level in comparison to stakeholders in the school. Additionally, there is a clear difference between the perspectives of teacher and administrators within the school itself. Teachers have had to make the most significant changes in how they teach and what they teach, and the frustration and adjustment process is reflected in their answers in this project.

The differences between stakeholders are evident in how each interviewee described the challenges that exist at Longley. Stakeholders at the school level describe how the demographics of the school created a challenging learning environment for students and teachers, while state- level stakeholders only considered the academic performance of students. The reforms and changes made with the SIG funding addressed academic changes directly, while providing minimal socio-emotional health resources for the school. Moving forward stakeholders at the school level and district level should work together to address the demographics of Longley. Redistricting within Lewiston could serve the students and teachers at Longley and its neighboring schools well because it would distribute of ELL students and students living in poverty across classrooms in the district and create a less homogeneous learning environment. Students would be able to interact across language levels and socioeconomic levels to create a diverse and balanced classroom. Stakeholders at the district and school level would have to collaborate in order to redistrict Lewiston schools.

The process though challenging, would benefit students at Longley and across the district greatly.

It became evident that stakeholders had different perspectives during the course of this project and had limited communication as well. School and district stakeholders collaborated occasionally but not regularly, while stakeholders at the state level had minimal interaction with district and school stakeholders. In the future, I would suggest stronger communication and collaboration between stakeholders at all three levels. School level stakeholders should be communicating about lesson plans, professional development and best practices in teaching within the school. District stakeholders and school stakeholders should be working together to develop and implement changes within the school, as district stakeholders have experience and information about best practices in surrounding schools. State level stakeholders have limited interaction with the school because Maine is a local control state, however I believe it would be beneficial for the Department of Education to play a larger role during the three-year funding period. Stakeholders at the state-level have the experience and expertise to advise and guide schools and should be involved in holding the school accountable during the funding period.

It is also important to consider whether the School Improvement Grant program is successful in Maine. Local control is critical in how the state's education system functions; however this system doesn't benefit the School Improvement Grant program well because the Department of Education does not work closely with districts across the state. Moving forward, I would suggest that the DOE evaluates its roles and responsibilities in supporting and working with schools. It would be interesting to explore the success and impact of SIG funding in different schools across Maine to determine the impact of the program overall. It

would also be important to explore the impact of the SIG program in Maine to others across the country.

Implications:

Stakeholders have different perspectives on the impact of SIG funding at Longley Elementary School and view the school through completely different lenses. This limits the impact and power of SIG funding because there is no collaboration. Stakeholders within the school, district, and at the state level should be working together to solve issues that arise during the three-year period in order to strengthen the environment of the school. Constant communication is vital in restructuring the academic curriculum, providing professional development, and improving the social environment of the school. Stakeholders should collaborate in the future to implement reforms across the school.

Conclusion:

Overall this research project revealed that the perspectives of different stakeholders in education reform are influenced by the positions of the stakeholders themselves. Each person I interviewed had a very different outlook on the impact of SIG funding at Longley Elementary School. The project demonstrated that education reform is complex because there is many stakeholders involved in each reform, each who value specific outcomes.

In addition to the discoveries made in this project, it will be important to continue to explore the impact of the School Improvement Grant Program. One could expand this project by interviewing a larger group of stakeholders, of similar positions and additional stakeholders at different levels in relation to Longley. One could expand the scope of the project and explore the impact of SIG across Maine and across the country. It would be important to continue to critique ad reflect on the grant program in order to develop effective

reforms in the future.

In conclusion, this project and similar projects are critical in the field of education. Education policy and reform dictates how schools change and evolve over time. It is important to analyze and reflect on how reform happens, and evaluate the effects and impacts of education reforms made in the past, and present in order to shape policy and reform for the future.

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Piloting an Outdoor Education Program at Tree Street Youth

Clara Maeder and Matt Mosca

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Seminar in Educational Studies

Capstone Project Final Report

Introduction

In the era of accountability and testing many schools have begun to eliminate recess and other daily outdoor opportunities in favor of more metric-based education reform. As a result, more and more students lack the opportunities to safely play and learn out of doors. This can be especially true in urban areas. We see the application of outdoor, experiential, and place-based education philosophies and practices in schools and community centers as a possible answer to these issues. Our work investigates this possibility, asking: What are the philosophical underpinnings and best practices in experiential, place-based, and outdoor education? And, how can these be applied to the context of an afterschool program? In this paper we will report on our action-based research project in which we investigated these questions through piloting an outdoor education program at Tree Street Youth Center (Tree Street), an after school center in Lewiston, Maine. The pilot program involves ten youth from sixth to ninth grade. The group of students meets each week to work together to plan and prepare for two culminating excursions: first to the Androscoggin River, and then to the Morse Mountain Conservation Area and Seawall Beach. Excursions and meetings are multidisciplinary in nature, incorporating writing, art, leadership, local ecology, outdoor skills, and reflection.

This report documents the development of this project. We begin with a discussion of the specific Lewiston and Tree Street context and subsequent need for an outdoor education program and how we became involved in this project. Next, we will present the theoretical underpinnings of our work. Then, we will get into the details of how we actually carried out the work of piloting an outdoor education program at an after school center, and what it looked like at the time of implementation. We will conclude with a look forward towards how the

program may take shape in the coming years.

Tree Street Youth Center and Lewiston, Maine

In 2011, two Bates College graduates, Julia Sleeper and Kim Sullivan, co-founded Tree Street in an effort to serve the surrounding community beyond simply providing homework help. Central to the realization of this mission was securing a location in the heart of the downtown Lewiston residential neighborhood with close proximity to a local elementary school, and within walking distance to both the middle and high schools. By eliminating transportation concerns -- nearly all Tree Street students walk to the center -- and offering after school support free of charge, Tree Street has become a nurturing environment for Lewiston's low-income youth. Tree Street's mission is to provide a "safe space that encourages healthy physical, social, emotional, and academic development while building unity across lines of difference" (www.treestreetyouth.org). However, as an after school community center Tree Street is also limited by its location in downtown Lewiston, which makes it difficult for outdoor oriented activities to occur on a regular basis.

This issue, a lack of opportunities to play and learn outside, is a problem that students also face at school. With federal and state governments and local school boards all pushing for higher test scores, many American elementary schools have decided to eliminate or reduce outdoor activities such as recess and field trips. This reduction in time spent outdoors, student-directed learning, and place-based lessons all seem to contradict the pedagogy of education studies philosophers and scholars. What compounds the fact that outdoor education is on the decline in many public schools is the limited access to outdoor opportunities and experiential learning in many urban environments.

The Need for Opportunities to Learn and Play Outdoors

Our project addresses these problems by expanding the programming offered by Tree Street and creating a new opportunity for Lewiston youth at Tree Street to learn, play, and grow outside. We have identified field trip model, complemented by pre- trip and post- trip meetings for planning, preparation, and reflection as an effective way to combat these issues of lack of outdoor, hands-on, and/or experiential education opportunities in schools and after school programs. Scarce (1997) describes field trips saying that they "may best be seen as an example of short-term experiential education" (291). The goal of our project is to create opportunities for students to:

(1) go outside,

(2) connect with the environment surrounding their community,

(3) develop greater self-awareness, and

(4) build confidence in taking on leadership roles.

These goals are broad enough for students' interests and passions to play a critical role in the planning of specific activities, but at the same time articulate a specific mission that we see as fulfilling the student needs we have identified.

A permanent outdoor education program such as this one at Tree Street will enhance the center's mission, and provide the youth of Lewiston with a unique source for healthy physical, social, emotional, and academic development. The pilot program we have established this semester has laid the groundwork for future implementation, with room for the development of the program in terms of scale and significance.

Our Stories

We became interested in outdoor education and Tree Street through our own learning and work experiences. As Education minors we have participated in a variety of field placements, which have served to reinforce the vital role of "out of the classroom" learning experiences. We were first connected with Tree Street our sophomore years as homework help volunteers. These experiences offered the opportunity for us to get to know Tree Street students and allowed us to identify Tree Street as the ideal place for a pilot outdoor education program this year.

Matt's passion for outdoor and experiential education began to develop when he participated in a course titled Creating Educational Experiences at Morse Mountain. Through this course he and his classmates used the Understanding by Design framework to plan field trips for third, fourth, and fifth grade students. In the process they discussed experiential education theory, visited and taught brief lessons to their students, and led day-long trips into the Morse Mountain conservation area.

Clara's passion for outdoor education grew from her own hands-on, outdoor learning experiences. Each of her education courses throughout her time at Bates has prepared her for this project in different ways. For example, in Perspectives on Education, she learned about the Understanding by Design framework for planning lessons. Through every field placement she has learned more about the Lewiston community. Similar to Matt's experience, last year she planned and led environmental studies and ecology based educational field trips for elementary aged students.

We see Tree Street as more than simply a site of "homework help" for students in the Lewiston downtown, but a safe space for play, self-expression, mentor/mentee relationships,

and community development. Although we have each worked with students younger than the group of students we will be working with at Tree Street, we think these past experiences will greatly inform the ways we think about teaching and guiding a group of students outside.

We are very excited that this project has allowed us to rekindle our relationships with Tree Street. We hope that piloting this program will prepare us for future work as educators. Both of us plan to incorporate experiential and place-based education practices and philosophy into our future careers as educators. Matt's dream is to one day operate a student-directed elementary school, where time outdoors, student discovery, and individual interests and independence are emphasized. Clara plans to pursue teaching at the high school level after she leaves Bates, and thinks this project will greatly inform her approach to teaching in the classroom, and challenge her to think creatively about ways to take learning out of the classroom,

Outdoor, Experiential, and Place-Based Education

Review of Relevant Literature

The fields of outdoor, experiential, and place-based education has evolved over the years as an extensive and diverse mixture of pedagogy. Each of these terms has evolved in definition, and new names for these types of education have been termed. As Bisson (1996) explains, "explaining what outdoor experiential education is can be problematic, as a variety of terms are being used to identify a wide range of outdoor experiential learning methods" (42). He continues by identifying experiential education as the "canopy" of the "outdoor education umbrella" (43). With this in mind, we will begin with the theoretical underpinnings of experiential education.

Education philosophers such as John Dewey and Kurt Hahn, are widely regarded as the forefathers of contemporary experiential education (Smith & Knapp, 2011; Woodhouse & Knapp, 2000). Dewey believed that education ought to incorporate frequent hands-on activities, and should connect children with the real world whenever possible (Seaman, 2010). Embedded in Dewey's philosophy was the fact that education is a reciprocal process of social and individual change, which highlights the importance of place and culture within a given student's educational experience. Dewey advocated specifically for an experiential approach to student learning grounded in the local environment, which he believed would result in ecological and cultural sustainability (Woodhouse & Knapp, 2000). Kurt Hahn, through his own work, identified the various "declines" that many adolescents encounter as a direct result of poorly structured school systems and society more generally. Hahn's passion for developing the character and morality of youngsters caused him to create multiple innovative outdoor oriented education programs, including Outward Bound (Pace, 2011).

Since these early developments in experiential education, a plethora of philosophies and practices have come to encompass experiential learning models, such as outdoor education, place-based education, project-based learning, environmental education, and adventure programming. Experiential education, outdoor education, and place-based education seem to be the most widely described and defined. The Association for Experiential Education defines experiential education as involving the "process through which a learner constructs knowledge, skill, and value from direct experiences" (AEE, 1995, 1). Experiential education occurs, according to the AEE, when "carefully chosen experiences are supported by reflection, critical analysis, and synthesis" (AEE, 1995, 1). Outdoor education is defined more specifically as including "all activities and processes which rely, at least in part, on the natural

environment" (Hanna, 1991, 4). Quay and Seaman (2013) further emphasize the "out of doors" component of this type of education, saying, "to be involved in out-door education one had to exit a literal door into the schoolyard, the school garden, the community past the school fence, and perhaps even the woods beyond" (5). Place-based education draws upon the same themes as experiential and outdoor education, but articulates a specific purpose as opposed to articulating a specific learning method (experiential) or location (outdoor): "place-based education seeks to connect learners to local environments through a variety of strategies that increase environmental awareness and connectedness to particular parts of the world" (Hutson, 2011, 19; Sobel, 2004).

Scholars have identified innumerable benefits of these types of learning. Scarce (1997) articulates the most basic benefit of experiential education experiences (including outdoor and place-based learning) saying they, "offer the sort of enriching experiences that…[are] so central to successful education endeavors because they are experiences, lived social events that become ways of knowing" (p. 219). Other scholars agree that these "lived events" benefit students by:

(1) Engaging students in practical application of their learning (Broda, 2002; Doddington 2013; Hamilton, 1980; Sobel, 2004),

(2) Promoting heightened engagement and achievement in learning (Bartosh et al., 2006; Ferreira, Grueber, & Yarema, 2012; Manzo, 2008; Mayes, 2007; Reeves & Emeagwali, 2010),

(3) Fostering personal growth (Doddington 2013), and

(4) Providing experiences through which students create strong ties to their home environment and their community (Doddington 2013; Eckert et al., 1997; Ferreira,

Grueber, & Yarema, 2012; Howley et al., 2011; Woodhouse & Knapp, 2000). The fourth benefit, providing connections to home environments, communities, and schools, is particularly important as theorists have suggested that these bonds represent a need of all people because they "provide stability in personal identity and in understanding our notions of self" (Hutson, 2011, p. 21). It is to say, outdoor experiential education programs that equip students with opportunities to connect with their locality, their place, will support students holistically, in their development of understandings of self, and the practical application of what they learn.

Through exploring literature on outdoor, experiential, and place-based education we have found extensive research on how these types of programs can be used in schools and linked to classroom learning. However, there is less research available on the role of outdoor, place-based education in afterschool and community center programming. Our project at Tree Street will be informed by the current literature and the tree streets community's unique funds of knowledge. The program can subsequently shed light on how similar experiential, outdoor, and place-based education programs can benefit students in the community center setting of Tree Street Youth.

What We Mean By "Outdoor Education" at Tree Street Youth

We chose to name our project "Piloting an Outdoor Education Program at Tree Street Youth." However, the project will be informed by each of the three types of education defined above: experiential education, outdoor education, and place-based education. We chose to refer to our program at Tree Street as "outdoor education" because of the term is easily recognized, and because it does encompass the nature of the program -- occurring outside of Tree Street's

walls. However, outdoor, experiential, and place-

based education each have equally influenced our

thinking about the form the program will take

(see Figure 1).

Figure 5: The education philosophy behind our program at Tree Street

These collaboratively planned trips will be

outdoors and provide opportunities for students to

construct knowledge, skill, and value from

experiences. They will also be focused on the

Lewiston and Maine context with the purpose of

connecting learners to the environment surrounding their community. Each trip will be

bookended by meetings about preparing for and reflecting on the experience including time for

critical analysis and synthesis.

Methodology

Activities Pursued

In the process of carrying out this project we have (1) reviewed the literature available on outdoor and experiential education, (2) contacted and conducted visits and phone conversations with local outdoor and experiential education-focused schools and programs, (3) gotten to know the Tree Street students we will be working with (ten students in sixth, seventh, and eighth grade), and (4) explored options for locations for Tree Street trips. In addition to the final project report and symposium presentation, our project will result in a sustainable outdoor education program at Tree Street that will be run by Education Department interns in future years.

This methodology of investigating experiential, outdoor, and place-based education -- researching the theory and then creating our own pilot program -- is experiential and hands-on in itself, and therefore is best suited to the nature of our project. Since beginning our meetings with students, we have reflected on and thought critically about our own learning and planning processes and how we will move forward. Kolb's Model of Experiential Learning has informed the way we understand this learning process as it describes the circularity of experiential learning in which concrete experiences inform and are informed by reflecting, observing, and thinking critically about learning experiences (Cone and Harris, 1996, 33).

A past Environmental Studies capstone project has been helpful to our work and process. This project proposed many relevant curriculum and program ideas that can facilitate concepts of place, community, and environment into Lewiston-based education. Some of these programs were actually piloted by the Environmental Studies major students, which they later reflected on and recommended based on how Lewiston students received each

activity. We have already used some of the conversation topics/questions suggested by this past group of Environmental Studies major students during our visits to Tree Street, and suggest that future outdoor education interns also utilize this resource.

Timeline

Week 1-4: January 12- February 8. We reviewed the available literature on outdoor, experiential, and place-based education and by researching experiential and outdoor education institutions, organizations, and programs that will serve as potential "models" for our program. We also met with Julia Sleeper and other Tree Street staff to discuss our project ideas and plans for moving forward. We completed a Crafts Grant application for funding for our excursions.

Week 5-6: February 9- February 15. We learned our Crafts Grant proposal was denied, but received the suggestion to apply for a Papaioanou Grant. However, we continued to move forward in researching locations for the excursions in and around Lewiston, such as Thorncrag, and closer to the ocean, such as Morse Mountain and Seawall Beach.

Week 7-12: February 23- April 12. On February 26th we had our first meeting with Tree Street students, and have met with them every Wednesday afternoon since then. We will continue meeting with students each Wednesday until our first excursion to the Androscoggin River, which is scheduled for April 10.

During Short Term. Once we return to Lewiston from April break we will have a follow up meeting with the students and prepare for a trip to the Morse Mountain Conservation Area/Seawall Beach.

Ethical Concerns

Our project will involve taking students under the age of 18 outside of the classroom setting and their afterschool program. Both liability and "buy in" to what we are doing are very important to consider. We will need to make sure students have permission from their parents or guardians to participate in the program and that students are choosing to participate in the program themselves. Since the activities will not be school-sponsored or "required," it is important that students are excited about and willing to participate in all of the activities for them to be successful.

We will also need to be aware of how our own values of the environment and thoughts about how and what students should be learning influence the program and the decisions we make about activities, trips, and projects. Our goal is to enhance students' learning in the classroom and at home and to create opportunities at Tree Street for students to learn about things they might not have an opportunity to learn in their classrooms and visit places they might not be able to visit by themselves. However, we will approach this experience as learners as well, open to learning more about Lewiston and surrounding environments as well as expanding our perspectives on the city and environment. As Dunlap (2000) suggests, "it is important that you realize that you are as much a learner within the new community environment as you are a community servant or teacher" (54). We will recognize that we, and each of the participating students, come to this experience with unique "cognitive filters or ideas" (54) and we will work to create a respectful and open learning environment in which everyone can learn from one another.

The Tree Street Outing Club

Program Participants

This semester sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students have participated in the outdoor program. Julia Sleeper recommended this particular age group, citing these students as: "not too busy with school work" and eager to try new things and rise to a challenge. She anticipates a high potential for enduring learning experiences to take place. Our program aims to connect these youngsters with Lewiston, in particular the Androscoggin River, and critically engage them with Tree Street's mission.

The majority of the students who comprise our outdoor program are Somali, and have moved to Lewiston during the last decade. It is important for this particular demographic to reflect on their new home, and feel comfortable in the surrounding neighborhoods. Because of this context, it is important for each of us to approach this project with a "well-informed and open mind" and a "commit[ment] to learning more" (Dunlap, 2000, 144).

While Tree Street certainly provides a safe and supportive space during afterschool hours, it is limited by its location in downtown Lewiston, making it difficult for outdoor oriented activities to occur on a regular basis. This Lewiston-based outdoor education program will connect students with their local environment, and prepare them to live as active and engaged citizens proud of the place they call home.

Weekly Meetings

"Before" and "after" meetings are essential to our program model. Outdoor, place-based education researchers emphasize the importance of linking outdoor experiences with classroom learning and reflection. Doddington (2013), in particular, highlights that,

"reflection, through 'expression' and 'sharing' that helps move that [outdoor] experience into having lasting effect, being influential and ultimately being somatically and educationally worthwhile" (p. 10). Educators suggest varying ways to do this. Dustin (1981) discusses the value of a classroom to experience to classroom model in which a learning activity outdoors is complemented by initial preparation and closing reflection. Zmudy et al. (2009) further articulates the importance of complementing outdoor programs with activities that acquaint students with one another and their surroundings, building communication, problem solving, and trust building skills. These understandings of the value of creating "before" and "after" experiences for outdoor learning draw from Kolb's (1984) experiential learning cycle, which links abstract con ceptualization to active experimentation to concrete experience, and, finally, to reflective observation.

This semester, an integral part of our project has been meeting with our pilot group of ten students each week. These meetings offer an opportunity for us to get to know one another as a group and collaboratively plan and prepare for the first two field trips this year. In future years we hope the outdoor program will take on the model of a preparation meeting, a trip, and then a reflection meeting. However, we have met with this specific group continuously this semester because we hope that this group will play an integral role in the future of the outdoor program.

At our first meeting this semester we did a "life map" activity with the group in which we each illustrated a "map" of how we had arrived at Tree Street that day (See Appendix 1). The maps varied from life stories imposed on a drawing of the United States or the World to comic strip-like drawings of each of the most notable events of that day. They served as a great way for us all to get to know each other through a creative project. Next, students paired

up to write down three things they knew about Lewiston and Maine in general and three

questions they had in order to demonstrate their previous knowledge as well as their

curiosities (See Appendix 2). At this first meeting we also showed pictures of the

Androscoggin River, Seawall Beach, and Morse Mountain to get the group excited about the

possibilities.

The next week we brought in a list of possible activities to do on our excursions and

had the group discuss the ideas, add a few other ideas to the list, and pick three to vote as their

favorites (See Appendix 3). We also played telephone pictionary with the theme of places in

Lewiston. In this game each student began with a piece of paper and drew a place in Lewiston

and then passed their paper to the right. The next person identified the place by the picture,

writing down where they thought it was. They then folded the paper over the drawing so that

just what they wrote was visible and passed the paper to the right again. That next person then

had to draw a picture of the place that the previous person had written down, fold the paper

over the previous person's writing so that just the new image was showing and pass the paper

again. The game was really fun and the results were very silly as it was difficult to truly

identify the names of some of the places students depicted.

In the following meetings we scheduled tentative times and dates for the first trips and

discussed the results of the activity vote. To illustrate to the students that we had officially

recorded their responses about which activities were most interesting to them, we made the a

graph to illustrate the results (see Appendix 4).

As we got closer to the date of the first trip to the Androscoggin River we planned our

walking route to and around the parks next to the river on maps. This was especially exciting

as the students were able to see where we would actually be going, and think about how it was

near or far from places they had been before (See Appendix 5). We also have discussed the leadership roles that will need to be filled while on our trip including our own list and students' additions. We collaboratively came up with a list and students have begun to choose which roles they would like to fill (See Appendix 6).

An exciting milestone was that when we received our grant we were able to purchase "field notebooks" for the students, which they have used to write about what they are excited about doing on our first trips. At one student's request we have begun to respond to each students entries. Each meeting has built upon the previous, consistently looking forward to the planned excursions.

Planned Trips and Activities

The Androscoggin River (scheduled for April 10)

We aim to leave Tree Street at 3:30pm Thursday afternoon, and begin walking towards the Androscoggin River. We will have discussed the history of Lewiston in the meeting the day before. During this walk we plan to stop briefly in Kennedy Park (the park our students are most familiar with) and discuss the great aspects of the park, using an assets-based approach. After these preliminary discussions we will pose questions to the students, asking them to think critically about what could be improved in the next parks we visit, especially in terms of Lewiston citizens' relationships to the Androscoggin, how the river and these relationships could be improved, and how their "ideal" Lewiston or Androscoggin River might look like.

After leaving Kennedy Park, we will then continue walking towards the river, highlighting old mill buildings as we pass them, asking students to jot down words that come

to mind when looking at the fenced off canals, and finally arriving in Simard-Payne Park. To raise student energy we will play a fun game together, depending on student interest. Next, we will walk across the pedestrian railroad bridge into Auburn and encourage the students to explore the smaller yet interesting Bonney Park space. Students will walk across the bridge individually (about ten feet apart) and in silence in order to use all of their senses to explore the surrounding area.

When the entire group is reunited on the other side of the river, in Bonney Park, we will encourage students to explore the park and draw detailed maps of both Simard- Payne Park and Bonney Park, keeping the parks assets and what they might wish were there in mind. Students will use these maps to draw improvement plans for the parks in the reflection meeting following the trip.

Next, we hope to walk along the Androscoggin up to the Great Falls, dependent on time, where students will be broken up according to their interests---some may choose to sketch the rocky falls, others may wish to consider the nearby stores, restaurants, and parking structures, and still others may desire a better view of the river and falls from the grassy hilltop. Students will be encouraged to use some sort of creative medium to document their observations, be it drawing, writing, or discussing it with a partner.

At the end of the excursion we plan on reserving time for the students to participate in one final "movement" activity on the Simard-Payne Park field---tag, relay race, soccer, etc. This will offer students an opportunity to take in their surroundings as well as have fun in a park that they have probably never explored before. Constantly cognizant of the time, we will make sure to begin our walk back to Tree Street by 5:30pm, which will allow us to return to the center no later than 6:00pm. In the reflection meeting, as mentioned, we will use the

students' maps to draw improvement plans for the parks. If student interest exists, we will research ways in which the students can communicate their desires about the parks to the city government so that they can use their ideas to influence change.

The Morse Mountain Conservation Area/Seawall Beach (sometime during Short Term)

This trip itinerary has not yet been fully developed for a number of reasons: (1) during the first week of Short Term we will return to Tree Street to survey particular topics of student interest, and begin to plan our trip together with the youngsters (2) a preliminary trip to Morse Mountain might be useful to asses the vernal pools, develop items for a scavenger hunt, etc. (3) we hope to collaborate with Emily and Hannah, who will also be leading trips at Morse Mountain during Short Term; together we can provide inspiration and activity ideas for one and other. Based on initial discussions with the Tree Street students it is clear that all of them are interested in seeing if not wading into the ocean. Therefore it is likely that our forest ecology and vernal pool activities will have to remain time efficient---it takes about one hour (down and back) to walk to the ocean.

Because we were able to secure grant money for lunches, it is our plan to provide students with a packed lunch to eat during this trip. A few logistical items that need further consideration: will all our students be available to go on this trip during a weekend day? Julia has repeatedly suggested that Tree Street will maintain liability during this longer trip, who from Tree Street will be driving the van?

Student Responses

The process of collaboratively planning this pilot outdoor program at Tree Street

as well as two pilot trips has been exciting and rewarding for each of us. Student responses have also been generally positive. Students definitely seem more excited about the final trips than the opportunity to plan the trips themselves, however, each time we have solicited their opinions and advice they have shared enthusiastic ideas about what we should do. Some excerpts from their written answers to the question "What are you most excited about doing on our trips to the Androscoggin River and to Seawall Beach?" include:

- "When we go to the beach I would like to play soccer, swim or volleyball if we can."
- "When we are at the river I would like to play soccer and race and read and we should go swimming at the beach."
- "I'm most excited to feel the wind through my hair and the sunshine on my face."
- "Since I love to write poetry, I want to write a poem about the ocean and it's beauty. I also love fun so I hope I can race and beat everyone."
- "I think we should play soccer and race people."

In the process of planning the trips we are including both students requests and our own ideas for what our students might be excited about doing. All of our ideas have been guided by student responses and ideas.

Future Internship

In addition to the final project report and symposium presentation our project will result in a sustainable outdoor education program at Tree Street that will be run by Education Department interns in future years. The program will begin by working with seventh, eighth, and ninth grade students, but this age focus could be reevaluated or expanded in future years. The internship description is as follows:

The intern(s) will be responsible for planning and leading outdoor education programming at Tree Street Youth.

The goal of the outdoor education program at Tree Street is to create opportunities for students to: (1) go outside, (2) connect with the environment surrounding their community, and (3) build confidence in taking on leadership roles. However, the interns(s) could interpret these goals broadly, drawing upon their own strengths and interests. In the past, middle school students have participated in the program, but interns would work with Tree Street staff to identify interested students.

This intern will be responsible for connecting with an interested group of Tree Street students, identifying trip sites, securing necessary funding, and designing fun, engaging, and empowering activities for field trips and pre- and post- meetings at Tree Street.

This internship will involve program planning as well as regular volunteering at Tree Street to get to know Tree Street youth. The intern must be available to work on site at Tree Street Youth *at least* one afternoons a week from 3:00-5:00 as well as coordinate other times for outdoor education program meetings with students, outside planning time, and the field trips.

Schedules will be coordinated with TSY staff.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

During our preliminary visit to Tree Street in which we promoted our outdoor program for the first time we ended up with a room full of quasi-interested students of all ages. This proved problematic for numerous reasons: older kids did not want to be with younger kids, some students were genuinely interested while others were not, it was difficult to lead a discussion with such diverse aged group of students, etc. In addition, we had originally planned to work with seventh through ninth grade students and had prepared for this age group. The following week we asked Julia and Meaghan to help us gather a more interested group of students from our targeted age group. However, Meaghan explained that she had found that older students seemed less enthusiastic than younger students and suggested we re-assess our age-group expectations. For our next meeting we successfully gathered a group of ten sixth, seventh, and eighth graders that were interested and dedicated to the project, and our classroom session significantly improved. With Julia and Meaghan's help with identified students that were indeed interested and excited about participating and working with one another. This experience was greatly informed by Dunlap's (2000) practical tips for beginning community work, including, "try not to take things personally," "allow time for adjusting," and "when in doubt, get advice" (57-58).

Because we were piloting an entirely new program at Tree Street, it was somewhat difficult to develop sustained student interest. While the majority of students that have participated in our weekly meeting sessions have remained engaged, student attendance has been somewhat sporadic---snow storms, athletics, and school field trips were all reasons that

caused students to miss meetings. We believe that after our first trip to the Androscoggin River the outdoor education program will gain further legitimacy.

Students will understand that this program does make it possible for fun outdoor excursions to occur during the Tree Street hours. Hopefully, following our trip to Morse Mountain, students will share their experience with friends and family members and there will be genuine interest sparked throughout Tree Street.

Another challenge that we had not initially anticipated was the brutally cold Maine winter. While organizations like *Winter Kids* provide encouraging examples for getting students outside during the winter months, it provided more difficult to put a trip together at an afterschool center like Tree Street---the lack of daylight being the greatest obstacle. In future years, once the outdoor education program has become more established, it might be possible for trip leaders to take interested students to Lost Valley to experience nordic and/or alpine skiing. Snowshoeing at Thorncrag Bird Sanctuary could provide another winter activity.

One final roadblock we encountered this semester was securing funding for our project through various grants. Staying persistent, and realizing how formal and thorough grant writing must be are important lessons that we've both learned. Drafting multiple grant proposals forced us to consider the various concerns voiced by the Harward Center and create a much more complete project with trip locations and potential activities. Our most recent Papaioanou Grant proposal was accepted, and we are excited to take the Tree Street students to Morse Mountain this Short Term!

Overall Conclusion

As educators we are well aware of the diminishing outdoor opportunities offered to students during the both the school day and in the afterschool setting. This reality is especially pertinent in urban areas, where issues of safety and access to green space often emerge. This report has highlighted the potential for outdoor, experiential, and place- based education philosophies to encourage students to learn, play and grow outside. As a part of our Senior Seminar in Education Studies we have been able to pilot one such outdoor education program at a local afterschool center in downtown Lewiston. This program will enhance Tree Street's mission, and ideally will be continued and developed further in the coming years through the guidance of Bates College Education Interns.

Our particular piloted program has included ten youth from sixth to ninth grade. Each week this group of students has met to work together to plan for the upcoming outdoor trips. Our first trip will occur Thursday April 10th, and will be Lewiston-based, during which we will carefully consider three different park spaces while walking to the Androscoggin River. The second excursion will occur during Short Term, and will involve a day long trip to Morse Mountain Conservation Area and Seawall Beach. Greatly informed by student input these trips will be multidisciplinary in nature, encouraging students to (1) go outside (2) connect with the environment surrounding their community (3) develop greater self-awareness and (4) build confidence in taking on leadership roles.

In talking with faculty in the Education Department, and a fellow group of senior Education Studies minor students, we have become hopeful that our piloted outdoor education program at Tree Street will be sustained next year by two Education Interns--- one lead intern, and one entry level intern, which will allow the experienced entry level intern to lead the

program the following year. These interns will be able to build off of our pilot program,

utilizing their own unique interests and skills to collaborate with future students in designing

new field trips.

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Appendix 1: Life Map Activity Images
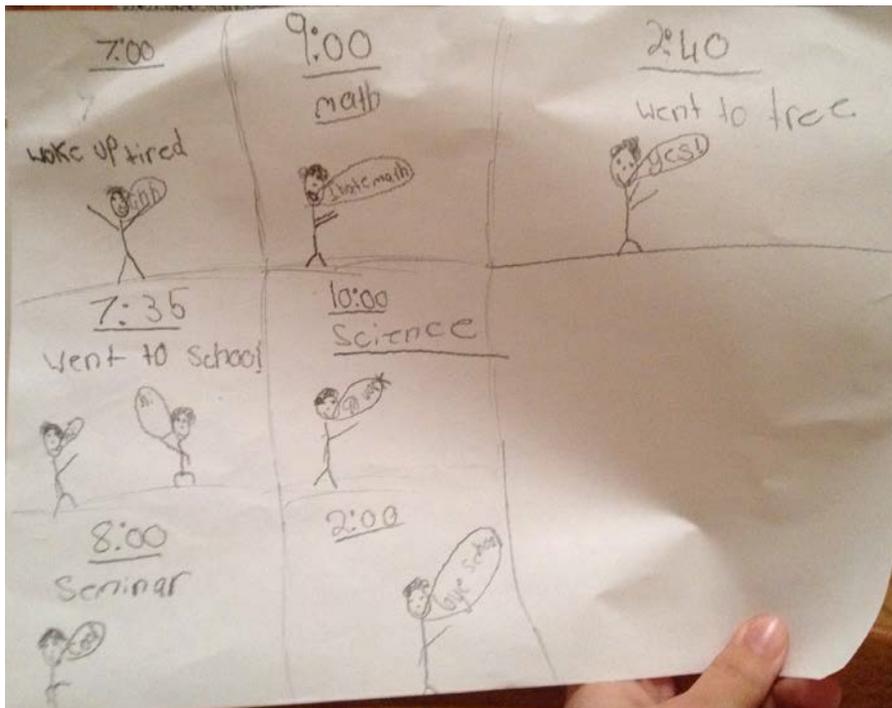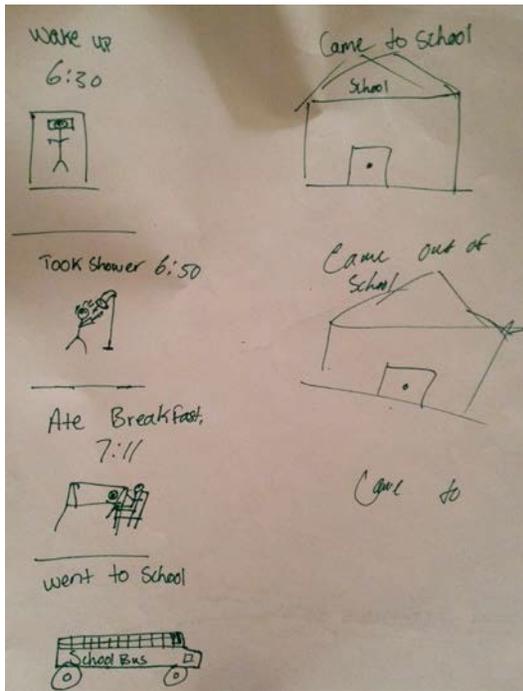
Appendix 2: 3 Facts and 3 Questions Activity

Maine is in the New England territory.

Maine is Big

Lewiston is (the) most populated city in Maine.

Facts: 3

Questions: 2

1: Why isn't there a beach in Lewiston.?

2: Why is maine so big.?

3: Which city is bigger Auburn or Lewiston?

1. Lewiston is 2nd most populated city in Maine.
2. Lewiston has eh Shorter summers.
3. Lewiston has longer winters.

1. Is Lewiston Rich?
2. How many live in Lewiston?
3. Is Lewiston bigger than Auburn?

What WE Know   JoHoro /   Question

no Earthequakes   Deos lewistion
No Tornado   Uoah   Have shorter summer?
Their is SNow   Did a war Happen
Lewistion is a   her?
City
Native American
Live Her befor
Americans
Lewistion have
Diffrent belives

Appendix 3: Types of Activities List and Voting
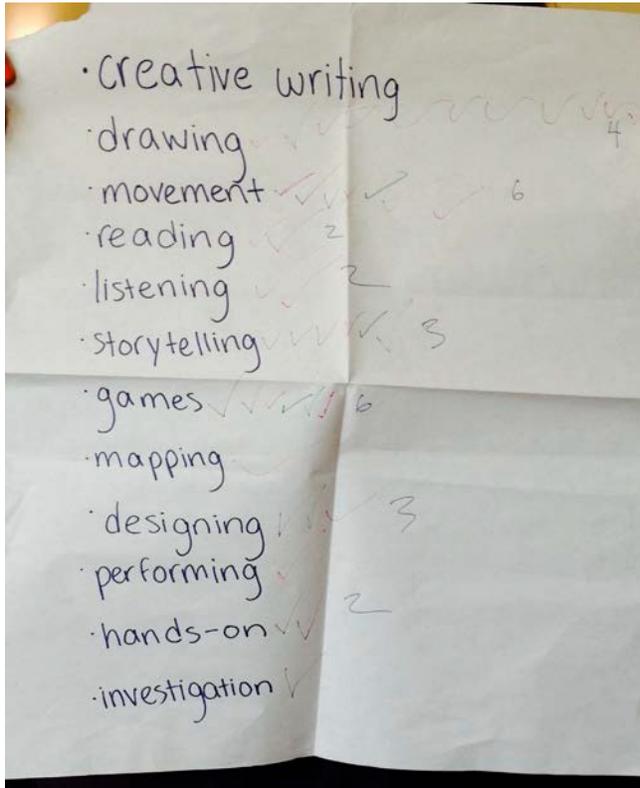
Appendix 4: Activity Voting Results

Drawing	Movement	Storytelling	Games	Reading	Listening	Designing	Hands-On
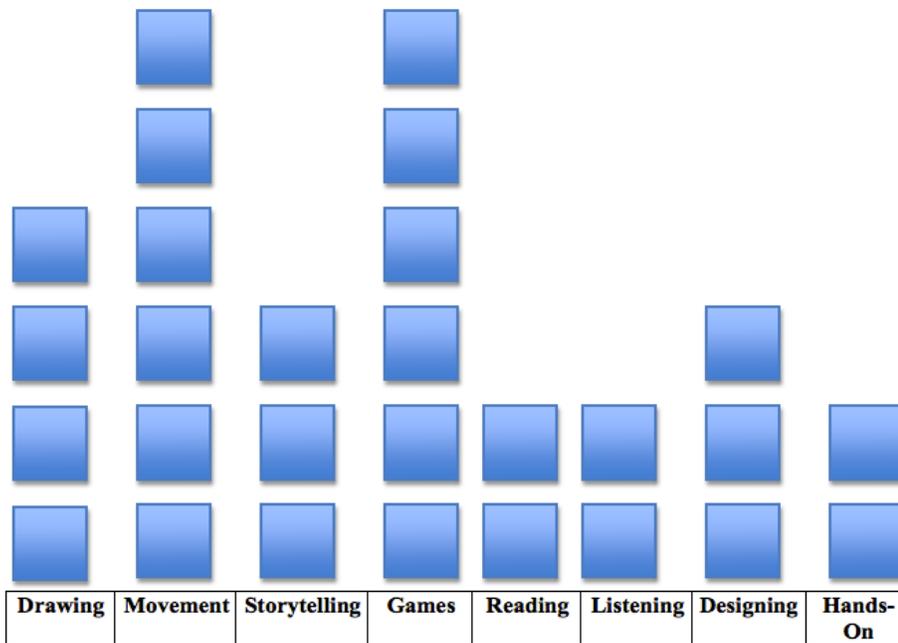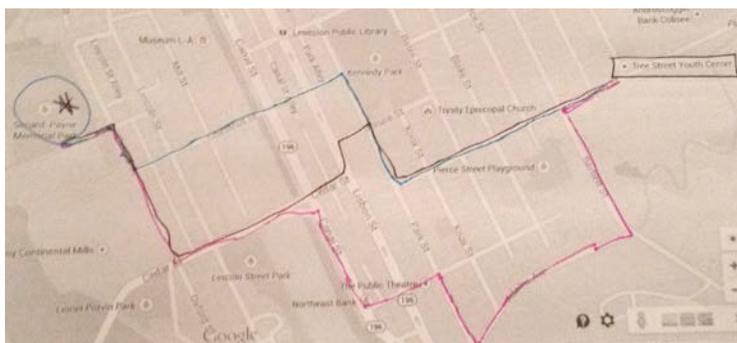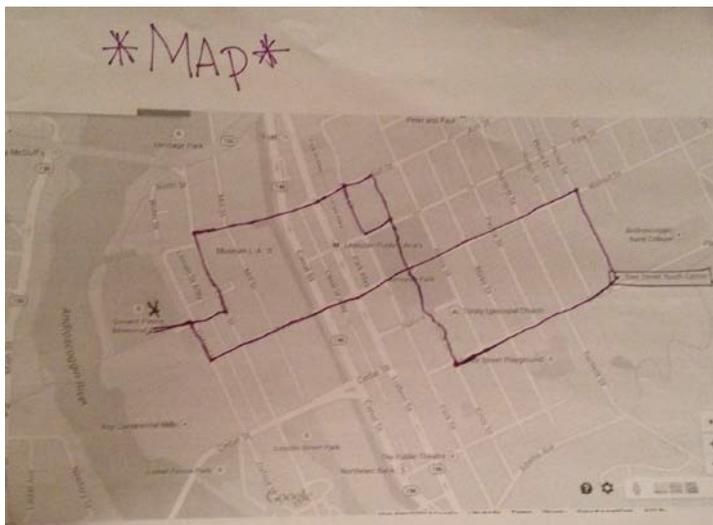
Appendix 5: Maps
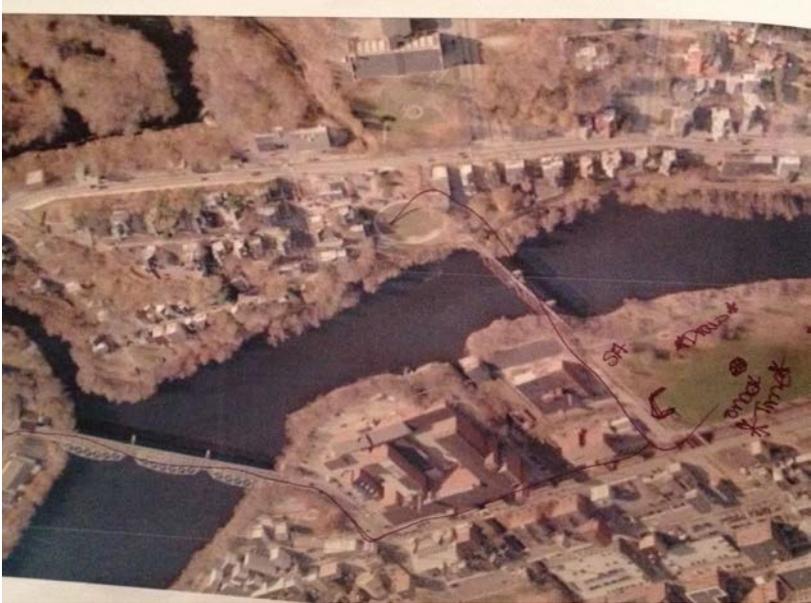
Appendix 6: Leadership Roles

April 10 at 3:30

Navigator
Cheerleader
Time Keeper

Art, activity leader
and Singing :)

movement activity leader

photographer
Logan

storytelling leader

journalist
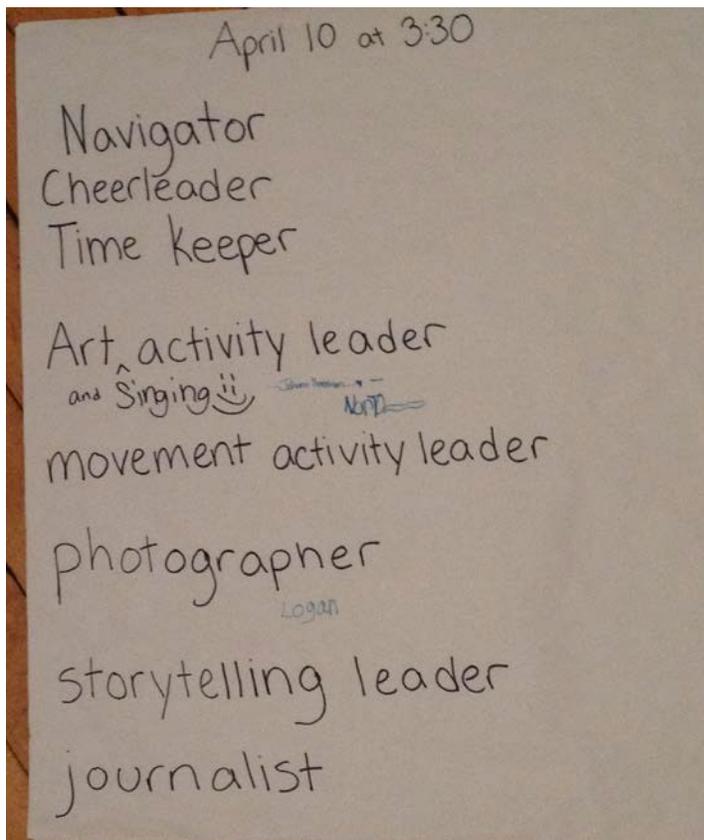
Rodney Galvao
Rgalv9@gmail.com
Professor Patti Buck
Education Seminar

The Relationship between Music Preferences and Behavior amongst Students
at Tree Street Youth

In this project I want to tackle issues such as the role of race and gender in how students receive messages from music. My project is mainly research based, but I plan to include a community-informed chapter based on conversations I hope to have with youth at Tree Street. Knowing that Tree Street is more urban and has Somali refugees definitely plays a significant role when it comes to the students. With them having parents that can barely speak English it is a struggle for the students to look at their parents for help in certain situations. You can tell which students receive help and you can see which students struggle to seek it. Furthermore, you can tell that many of the Black students who come to Tree Street identify with hip-hop because the people who they see in music videos look like them and seem to come from the same neighborhoods as they do

Along with race I figured the best way to do this project is by incorporating music and how the students associate with it. I know that they love music and that this project will definitely grab their attention and motivate them to participate in things such as my survey that I plan on doing. With the different lifestyles that they live, I want to talk about what music means to different groups. Young people identify with their choice of music and how music affects their lifestyle. On top of that I would like to know what music means to a subculture, identity, class, and race dissent. Part of the student's behavior issues comes from the music that they listen to and it ends up playing a significant role in the student's lives. What they listen to motivates them in both negative and positive ways.

I feel that music contributes to student's lives. I know while at Tree Street the students continue to think that they are affiliated with the rap artist gang by wearing red and using profanity all the time. They seem to think that they are living a rapper's lifestyle and would rather focus on that instead of their grades. This clearly shows a relationship between music

and student's perceptions of whom they can and should become. Today there has been too much violence in the urban community and many teens start to become sexually active at a young age.

Literature Review

Studies show that music does effect black male youth in urban society. Some effects that are well known are that violence occurs more often in the urban communities, males start to sexually assault young women and they start to become drug dealers. They do these things to mimic the lifestyles of the hip-hop artist. They see their success and copy their every move in attempt to follow the rappers lifestyle. They value crime as a means for attaining wealth and status, a status that   is reinforced in some forms of rap music.

Hernandez, Weinstein and Laboy examine the outcome of Youth's behavior once associated with rap music. They speak on the hip-hop culture and how youth are correlated with violence. They state that, "hip-hop's depictions of violence, has often been blamed for the prevalence and persistence of violence in urban, low income communities." (Page 588)

Both Brandt and Viki also blame it on hip-hop, where they believe that hip- hop has influenced youth violence. They credit that because of this music genre,   "the rise of gangs and gang related crimes" have increased and how the violence mostly occurs in black neighborhoods. While Hernandez focuses on New York City's inner city violence, Brandt and Viki speak on black communities as a whole and how, "black communities is a street culture that values crime as a means for attaining wealth and status, a culture that is reinforced in some forms of rap music.

Not only do both of these articles agree on the fact that hip-hop has an influence on youth violence, they both bring up the element that misogyny occurs with youth males because of degrading rap lyrics. They state that sexual activity and sexual violence occurs in urban communities because of hip-hop. Males listen to these rap lyrics and feel that it is ok to disrespect young women. They mention that male partners perpetrate most homicides against women.

Scholars like Kimberle Crenshaw and Patricia Collins have argued that Black women face double oppression because their race and gender work to marginalize their community. Black women must deal with the legacy of slavery as well as patriarchy in order to move ahead in society. M. Shawn Copeland goes on to argue that rap culture continues to "disrespect and disfigure Black women's bodies, sex, and sexuality", and that we should challenge how we receive this music and praise the industry. As someone who listens to rap on a daily basis and understands the role that it plays in shaping attitudes amongst young people of color, Crenshaw and Collins's arguments for how we think about privilege has made me look critically at the industry and the messages it sends to larger society about Black people, and specifically Black women.

One article that does agree that hip-hop does have an effect on sexual activity is Kistler and Lee's, Does Exposure to Sexual Videos Influence the Sexual Attitudes of College Students. Although they do blame it on hip-hop their target isn't the actual song lyrics, but more so the music videos. They believe that hip-hop music videos contain a lot of sexual activity and indeed, "has become heavily influential on young people's views on sexuality." (Page 68) This is one of the most common problems for females. Studies show that young

females dress the way they do because of female rap artist and video vixens. They watch video vixens/artist receive a lot of attention from rappers and feel a need to dress like them in order to receive attention from boys. As a result because of the way they present their selves young teens start to have sex at a young age.

After reading all of the articles, they all agree to the fact that this specific music genre does have an effect on youth. The only difference is the type of negative effect that it has on them. While some seem to think that it is the actual song lyrics, others seem to think that it is the actual music videos of the songs. At the end of the day, it is the music that has some youth acting the way they do. They are busy trying to live somebody else's lifestyle and aren't focusing enough on their future. As a result they end up getting into trouble, lose focus on what's important in life and end up living the life of a criminal.

Background

Tree Street is an afterschool program in which focuses on academic enrichment. They help the kids stay active by providing dance classes and have started to offer art and cooking classes for the students. They have a college access program where they help students with their college process and help them get into institutions. I have been volunteering at Tree Street ever since freshman year and have encountered a lot. One thing that I seemed to realize were some of the older student's attitudes. How some sagged their pants, wore colors affiliated with gangs that do not exist in Maine, and used derogatory language in their everyday vocabulary. I always wondered why and I finally figured out that some of these students act this way because of the music that they listen to. Once putting the two together I figured that I should focus my education project and also my thesis on this topic.

Methods

For this project I decided to go to Tree Street Youth and talk to some of the students about music. I wanted to get their perspectives on music and wanted to see if they think that music has an effect on youth including themselves. I spoke to a group of 18 years or older students and I had them take a survey where I asked them a list of questions regarding to what kind of music they listen to. I personally chose hip-hop knowing that it is one of the most popular genres at tree street and also because it has the most effect on the urban community. Before having the students do the survey and talk amongst one another about music and how it plays a big role in their lives I had to be sure and give them a consent form so that they can sign for permission and be sure to read what the project is about. The consent form stated…

Thank you for checking out this survey.

Please read this consent form and agree to it before you start the survey.

You must be 18 years or older to complete this survey. It will take about 10-15 minutes to complete.

The purpose of this survey is to identify how music affects youth. Furthermore, to identify the ways in which music contributes to the student's everyday lives. You may be asked questions of how you see music as both a negative and positive factor.

You may only complete this survey once.

All information will be kept confidential and the data will be used for research and educational purposes only. You may discontinue the survey at any point.

By signing this form, you are acknowledging that you are 18 years or older and consent to participation.

Full Name _____

Signature   _____

Email: _____

Phone #: _____

Thank you for your time and if you have any questions feel free to contact Rodney Galvao (rgalvao@bates.edu)

After they signed the form they were able to participate and I had them take this survey. While some didn't put a lot of effort into answering the questions, I still managed to get great responses. With the help of both Kim Sullivan and Julia Sleeper they gave me a perfect amount of students. At first I had too many boys taking the survey, but once asking Kim for more girls she was able to get me more in which ended up being close to the amount of boys that participated. In total I had about 20 Tree Street Students and even asked some of the

employees of Tree Street to participate in the survey because I was curious to hear their responses. I wanted to see how they saw things at Tree Street and was wondering if they think music plays a big role in the student's lives. The survey in which they took looked like this…

1.   What Kind of Music do you like listening to? Why? (i.e. What is your favorite music genre?)

2.   How often do you listen to music each day? (i.e. 1-2 times, 3-4 times or more)

3.   Who is your favorite artist and give a brief explanation why?

4.   Have you ever received any negative messages while listening to music, if so how did it affect your lives?

5.   Have you ever received any positive messages while listening to music, if so how did it affect your lives?

6.   Do you see music having a different effect on men rather than women and vice versa and if so please state a difference?

7.   If this applies to you, how has music changed your view in life?

8.   Do your parents know the type of music that you listen to? How do they feel about your choice in music?

9.   Please name one artist, who you believe sends out negative messages to youth like yourselves.

10.   Please name one artist, who you believe sends out positive messages to youth like yourselves.

11.   Is there a particular genre of music that you think sends negative messages to youth about the types of behavior they should be engaging in?

12.   Is there a particular genre of music that you think sends positive messages to youth

about the types of behavior they should be engaging in?

Data/Results

After talking to youth, I received a lot of interesting information, some that I already knew and other material that surprised me. One that I was well aware of was the artist that the students feel like send out negative messages. Out of all 20 surveys, every student wrote down either, Chief Keef, Lil Wayne or Wiz Khalifa.

All three are hip-hop artist that are known for bad behavior. Chief Keef born and raised in the dangerous streets of Chicago always talks about violence in his music. He sags his pants in all of his music videos where he shows off his boxers and raps lyrics that people can't understand. What people seem to do understand are his hand movements while rapping. He continuously pretends to shoot a gun and always talks about killing somebody. Lil Wayne was born in New Orleans and is known for his unique style of rapping and clothing in the hip-hop culture. He verbally talks about women and disrespects them by calling them names and mentioning things that he will do to girls during sex. He is disrespectful to women, but yet still ends up talking to a lot. What he is known for the most is his affiliation with the gang named bloods. He always mentions how he is a blood and how he knows people that will do whatever to survive in the streets. To show that he is affiliated with the gang he constantly wears red and has a red bandana hanging from his back pocket. Wiz Khalifa is known to be one of the most negative rappers. Although he doesn't talk about violence in majority of his songs, he loves to talk about the illegal substance, marijuana. Literally in all of his songs he talks about smoking and how he is under the influence. These rappers have a huge effect on the youth today and it causes youth to go out in the real world and commit crimes such as

killing, smoking and etc.

When asking the questions one young lady stated that, "Wiz Khalifa is terrible because all of his songs are about smoking marijuana, so teens would believe that weed and smoking is cool which it's not" and another student mentions, "Chief Keef and how he is constantly disrespecting women and rapping about committing crimes." The data that I was shocked about the most, was how both the boys and girls had different perspectives. I asked them the question "Do you see music having a different effect on men of Tree Street rather than the women and vice versa?" Literally all of the boys felt that it had more effect on the young ladies, while the girls felt that it had more of an effect on the men. One male student writes, "I say it affects the women more than the men because when girls listen to rap or see how female artist wear clothes, they think it's cool and they try to dress like that." One of the female students writes, "I think music does have more effect on men than women because a lot of the men want to be like all the rappers and singers that they see. They look up to them and they follow everything they do." Each group supported one another and felt strongly about their opinion.

One female artist that the students felt was a negative role model was Nicki Minaj an artist raised in Queens, New York. She is a known Black female artist who continues to send messages that objectification is not something to be concerned about in her music is Nicki Minaj. One student writes how in her most recent video, "Freaks" she wears an outfit where stars are covering her breasts while they are completely hanging out. She quotes "Way my body shape, all the boys wanna freak her Brag and I boast, they be doin the most If I look at his friend, he'll be grippin the toaster So I took him to the crib to kill him with it Put my legs

behind my head, I hit the ceiling with it" Her lyrics talk about men penetrating her and taking control of her body. She meets a random guy and her first reaction is to have a sexual encounter with him. After reading these lyrics I realized that they send the message that the exploitation of women is not something we need to be concerned with, and that women are good only for their bodies. With listeners accepting these discriminating lyrics society will continue to down grade black women and treat them with disrespect. This is how some of the boys at Tree Street think when it comes to women.

One artist, however that more than half of the students wrote down as a positive artist was K-Naan. K-Naan is a Somalian rapper that talks about politics, religion and a lot of other positive things. All of the students that mentioned him gave the reason that they can relate to him. Knowing that he is Somalian, they feel that he as a rapper understands what they are going through as Somalian Youth and they can relate to his messages being sung.

Another question that I asked was how does music effect students at Tree Streets attitude and education? Many of them had interesting answers, however one that stuck out the most was when the student said that, "It makes them unaware of what they are saying and the majority of them try to imitate the negative messages that they hear in the music. Specifically they try to act tough and listen to rap while making profanity in the music a part of their everyday usage. Since most of the kids are immigrant, their behavior is strictly based of the messages from the music they listen to especially the use of the n-word. It negatively affects the majority of the kids because they are unaware of their behavior."

Analysis

In all of the surveys I asked the students if their parents know the type of music they listen to and they all answered no. Some mentioned that they are scared in getting caught by their parents for the type of music that they listen too. They feel that they will get into a lot of trouble knowing that their parents do not approve of music that uses a lot of profanity. While the students felt that way some mentioned that their parents only look at hip-hop as negative music and aren't aware that there are positive rap songs in the music industry. They all said that they hide it from their parents while some say that their parents don't know what they listen to because they do not understand the lyrics. A lot of the parents that have moved here still struggle to learn English because they have other priorities, but with them not knowing what their children are listening to is the biggest problem.

Parents should have a say in their child's life. A lot of the students at Tree Street are listening to this music mimicking the lifestyle of rappers and parents wonder why they get into trouble at school and etc. They have no clue of what type of music that they are listening to and that it is the music that is playing a big role in their child's life and is motivating them to act a certain way. I feel that we need to explicitly talk with youth and parents. We need to show them the type of music that is brainwashing their kids and have them talk to them so we won't have to see the child's life being ruined partially because of music.