The unheard partner in adapted physical activity Community Service Learning

by

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Abstract

Adapted physical activity (APA) has historically used disability-related Community Service Learning (CSL) or practicum placements in undergraduate education (Connolly, 1994; Hodge, Tannehill, & Kluge, 2003). CSL is a tool used to benefit students through enhanced academic learning, increased civic engagement, and the application of theory to practice (Richards, Eberline, Padaruth, & Templin, 2015). CSL contexts are based upon the principles of reciprocity, diversity, and collaboration to create mutually beneficial relationships among students and members of the community (Mintz & Hesser, 1996). The voices of community members are remarkably absent from the CSL literature, however (Blouin & Perry, 2009). This may be because people experiencing disability are rarely viewed as experts in their own lives (Goodwin & Rossow-Kimball, 2012). To learn about disability experiences in a CSL context, the research question was: How do members of the disability community experience an undergraduate adapted physical activity community service learning program? A qualitative interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) research approach was undertaken to provide a systematic framework for describing and interpreting day-to-day interactions and relationships in the context of the CSL experiences (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). The CSL context was a student supported, disability focused exercise program. Nine adults (female = 2, male =7, mean age = 50) living with neurological and mobility impairments, completed individual audio-recorded, face-to-face, semi-structured interviews. Follow-up focus group interviews were also conducted. Observational and reflective field notes of the CSL sessions were documented. The interview and focus group data were thematically analyzed and interpreted using the conceptual framework of Relational Ethics (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005). The analysis revealed four themes (a) yes, we will be partners in CSL, (b) but…we're in the dark, (c) subjected to being subjects, and (d) always engage through relationships. The participants revealed that relationship building contributed significantly to how they experienced CSL, although they did not fully engage in reciprocal and collaborative activities. Without community collaboration, it becomes difficult to optimize the pedagogical strategies of CSL that encourage reciprocity and engagement, running the risk of perpetuating assumptive and harmful discourses of disability.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Rebecca Marsh. The research project, of which this thesis is a part, received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Project Name “Why Didn’t They Ask Me About My Disability?: Views of Community Services Learning”, No. Pro00064773, on Thursday, June 23, 2016.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Adapted physical activity scholars have wrestled with the definition of the field over the last two decades. In 2008, Sherrill & Hutzler defined adapted physical activity as:

> ...research, theory and practice directed toward persons of all ages underserved by the general sport sciences, disadvantaged in resources, or lacking power to access equal physical activity opportunities and rights. APA services and supports are provided in all kinds of settings. Thus, research, theory and practice relate to the needs and rights in inclusive as well as separate APA programs. (p. 91)

Recently, Goodwin & Howe (2016) suggested the field use the term adapt*ive* physical activity, as "it is more in line with a reflective stance in which practitioners should continually engage" (p. 44). The authors explained that adapted means an adaptation has taken place, while adaptive means what "practitioners are able to do or are doing" (p. 44). Adapt*ive* places the responsibility on the practitioner to address barriers, rather than placing the problem on the individual. An individual problem-based approach reflects the medical model, which focuses on interventions to alleviate or cure disability (Withers, 2012). The medical model of disability assumes a 'knowledge expert.' Expertism in disability contexts can promote ableistic ways of thinking. Ableism is a belief that there is a standard way of being and anything that deviates from the standard is deemed abnormal or less than (Campbell, 2001). A common critique of this model is that professionals do not view individuals experiencing disability as humans with interests and perspectives, but rather as subjects to cure (Haegele & Hodge, 2016). In efforts to break down ableistic ways of thinking and behaving, undergraduate students have engaged in community service learning activities, a pedagogical strategy of self-reflection (Connolly, 1994).

Community Service Learning (CSL), a tool used to enhance academic learning and

promote civic engagement, combines classroom theory with community practice (Jacoby, 1996; Richards, Eberline, Padaruth, & Templin, 2015; Roper & Santiago, 2014). Historically, adapted physical activity (APA) and pre-service teacher education have used disability-related CSL to prepare students for professional practice in inclusive environments (Connolly, 1994; DePauw, 2000; Hodge & Jansma, 1999; Hodge, Tannehill, & Kluge 2003). The premise of CSL is that students begin their placements with attitudes and assumptions reminiscent of ableistic or medical model frames of mind, but go through transformational learning processes by having their habits of mind or assumptions challenged, leading to new ways of thinking about and understanding disability (Connolly, 1994; Hodge, Tannehill, & Kluge, 2003; Standal & Rugseth, 2014).

CSL contexts are based upon community collaboration, reciprocal relationships, and appreciation for diversity (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996; Jacoby, 1996; Mintz & Hesser, 1996). Documented guidelines and strategies for implementing CSL are available, however evidence of the importance of engaged and mutual partnerships with community members is extremely limited (Blouin & Perry, 2009). Community members can play an influential role as co-educators in the community by expressing their perspectives, goals, and concerns, thereby creating a collaborative, mutually beneficial, and power balanced relationship with students and the partnering organization (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005; Jacoby, 1996).

My experience as a student engaging in CSL placements often left me with an uneasy feeling. I was nervous to say or do the wrong thing, and never took the time to ask participants for advice on how to assist, what they desired, or what I should know about them - which I now regret. I believe my nervousness often stemmed from expectations established in my university courses, such as what language to use and how I should think about disability. I have discovered

over time that I learned the most from the relationships I established. My perspective evolved from feeling like I was an expert, knew everything about disability, to seeking to understand and giving value to each human life I encountered.

My research is grounded in a moment of reflection I had as a student in a disability-focused CSL course in adapted physical activity. A partnering member from the disability community asked me a question that I have reflected on frequently. She asked, “Why didn’t they ask me about my disability?” As students, we are taught to never ask about disability or impairment, as that action may define the person by difference and or may be invasive to their personhood. Not asking about disability raised questions for me about creating shared and reciprocal understandings and the importance of relationship building. The adapted physical activity practicums in which I have been involved focused on student experiences. I couldn’t help but wonder about the experiences of the community members.

Shortly after completing my undergraduate degree, I became a graduate student research assistant studying the experiences of undergraduate students in CSL. The stories the students told about their experiences in CSL resonated with my own experiences of nervousness and curiosity, combined with a shift in my attitudes and assumptions. I subsequently became a teaching assistant for a CSL adapted physical activity course, which gave me yet another perspective on disability-focused CSL programs, leaving me with ongoing questions about the importance of relationship building in CSL contexts.

Without collaboration with the community, will we continue to further ableistic approaches to adapted physical activity practice and research? Goodwin & Howe (2016) questioned, “how can we resolve the criticism that knowledge in APA in generated from a non-disability power base, which perpetuates a colonialist ethic?” and “who are the meaning and

sense-makers in storytelling regarding disability experiences and how might that influence interpretation and perpetuation of the Other?" (p. 51). These questions highlight the need to engage with the disability community, especially when preparing professionals to work with the community in adapted physical activity.

With the lack of research existing regarding the voice of the community in APA CSL (and CSL in general), and the call to reflect on APA professional practices more deeply the research question I sought to answer was: How do members of the disability community experience an undergraduate adapted physical activity community service learning program?

My thesis is paper-based in format. Chapter two is a literature review, providing context for the chapters to follow. Chapter three is an in-depth reflection and overview of the methods used for examining the participants' experiences. Chapter four is the full paper version of the research study, and Chapter five is the conclusion, limitations, and final thoughts about the research study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter provides an overview of the literature pertaining to Community Service Learning (CSL), its use in adapted physical activity, and the rationale for the importance of the study. It concludes with a statement of the research question.

Community Service Learning

CSL is grounded in the concept of Dewey's (1938) experiential learning theory, with the belief that effective education is created through real life experience (Moorman & Arellano-Unruh, 2002; Richards, Eberline, Padaruth, & Templin, 2015; Richards, Wilson, Eubank, 2012; Standal & Rugseth, 2014). In 1979, Sigmon defined service-learning as experiential education that is steeped in reciprocity, meaning both the students and those with whom they are engaging in the community are giving and receiving in a mutual process. In later years, researchers defined Community Service Learning (CSL) as engagement with the community combined with academic outcomes (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995; Erickson & Anderson, 2005; Jacoby, 1996). CSL is credit-bearing for students, and ideally balances academic outcomes and benefits to students with needs defined by the community (Jacoby, 2003). The 'community' can include local groups, neighborhoods, the province, the country, and global communities (Jacoby, 2003).

Most often, field-based or practicum placements have an intentional focus on student learning and hands-on technical experiences, without taking into account the recipients of service or reflection around the practice (Furco, 1996). CSL is preferred over traditional field-based or practicum placements, because although practicums provide hands-on experience in the community, CSL also encompasses the goal of service-oriented outcomes, such as community collaboration, social concerns, and public needs, which practicums may not (Domangue & Carson, 2008; Richards et al., 2015). Furthermore, CSL contrasts traditional approaches to

practicums in that it is not a one-way, paternalistic approach which assumes a group needs resources they may lacking (Jacoby, 2003). Ideal service learning implementation will create knowledge "*with*, rather than *for*, the community" (d'Arlach, Sanchez & Feuer, 2009, p. 5).

Theories behind CSL. Jacoby (2003) noted that service learning is based on the work of theorists focused on learning, such as Jean Piaget, John Dewey, Donald Schon, and David Kolb, who purported that learning is most effective when combined with action and reflection. Piaget (1936) coined the theory of cognitive development, which has a focus on children (rather than all learners). He explained that children construct understandings of the world around them by combining what they have already learned with what they learn from real life environments. Essentially, children learn most effectively through experiencing and actively engaging with the world around them.

Dewey (1938) suggested the theory of progressive learning. Central to the theory is that individuals don't just learn from educational knowledge, but through a combination of previous life experiences and knowledge, and therefore it is the educator's responsibility to create quality opportunities for real-world experiences. However, the educator must provide opportunities for students to interact with the world, followed by structured opportunity for students to connect with what they have learned in the world through reflection (Dewey, 1938). Dewey (1993) defined reflection as "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it and further consideration to which it tends" (p. 76).

Schon (1983) developed ideas around reflective learning further when students are placed in real-world experiences, and introduced the concepts reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action. *Reflection-in-action* is reflecting in real-world time, during an experience, and *reflection-*

on-action is reflection that takes place after an experience has ended. By reflecting-in-action, an individual may be able to benefit the environment while it is still taking place, rather than after. Reflecting-on-action enables individuals to reflect on previous experiences, and determine what actions or thoughts resulted in unexpected outcomes during the experience.

Kolb (1984) proposed a four-stage model for experiential learning involving (a) concrete experiences, (b) reflective observation, (c) abstract conceptualization, and (d) active experimentation. *Concrete experiences* mean that learners are actively involved in a real-life experience. *Reflective observation* means that learners review and reflect upon their concrete experiences. *Abstract conceptualization* denotes that learners possess the skills to conceptualize and learn from what they have reflected on, and *active experimentation* means learners apply their learnings in real life situations (Kolb, 2015). What becomes evident through a review of the theories behind CSL is that each theory involves components of relationship building. Individuals, groups of people, and larger communities exist within real-world environments in which students are engaged. This can include interacting with instructors, other peers, organizational staff, members of the community, and larger social and political systems.

A Kaleidoscope of CSL

A more contemporary model of CSL was introduced by Mintz & Hesser (1996). They presented a CSL framework they coined 'the kaleidoscope,' which is marked by three "lenses of the service-learning kaleidoscope [by] which to assess the ongoing interactions of principles and practice" (p. 34) - collaboration, reciprocity, and diversity. The model is based on the interrelationship of the academy (the university), the student, and the community, with each partner coming to service-learning with their own experiences, expectations, and attitudes. The authors developed this framework through reviewing multiple different CSL guidelines in the

literature, combined with professional practice experience.

Collaboration. In a collaborative environment, all partners' interests, concerns, expectations and knowledge are acknowledged and given equal status and voice. Mintz & Hesser (1996) noted that collaboration amongst service-learning partners fosters an environment of trust, community building, inclusivity, and reciprocity. Collaboration can be built by providing structured opportunities to reflect critically on CSL experiences, clearly articulating service and learning goals for everyone involved, and engaging all partners in developing actions for the common good (Mintz & Hesser, 1996).

Reciprocity. Reciprocity means that each partner involved in CSL is both the teacher and the learner. Furthermore, each participant assumes the status of colleague, rather than server or client. With the risk of power inequities, it is imperative to share control among all partners, with the belief that combined perspectives are more meaningful than just one. By focusing solely on student learning and the agenda of the academy, "there is a real risk of exploiting or coercing both the community and the student" (Mintz & Hesser, 1996, p. 36). The authors suggested CSL users to enable those who require service to define the service, identify the responsibilities of each person involved, expect genuine and active commitment, and match service provision with service needs amidst changing circumstances (Mintz & Hesser, 1996).

Diversity. The diversity lens, which involves race, ethnicity, gender, age, class, sexual orientation, and ability, is a way of viewing "all forms of human difference are appropriately highlighted" and appreciated by all service-learning partners (Mintz & Hesser, 1996, p. 37). The author suggested including training and support to meet service and learning goals, ensuring the time commitment for CSL is appropriate and flexible to accommodate the best interests of all parties, and committing to program participation by and with diverse populations (Mintz &

Hesser, 1996).

In summary, Mintz & Hesser (1996) suggested that viewing CSL lenses of collaboration, reciprocity, and diversity through the kaleidoscope lens enables all partners to be actively involved in service-learning. “Using the kaleidoscope constantly reminds all partners that the relationships among academy, students, and community are shifting, unpredictable, and delicate, requiring regular and ongoing communication” (p. 40). This dynamic model was helpful in formulating my thinking about the interview guide that I used for the study, critiquing guidelines in the literature, and provided a comprehensive and inclusive framework for thinking about how CSL was experienced by the study participants. Furthermore, using a kaleidoscope lens enabled me to consider each partners’ perspective, not just my own (Mintz & Hesser, 1996).

Benefits of CSL

The student benefits of CSL are well documented, and include increased learning, achievement, performance, and engagement in the classroom (Astin et al., 2000; Domangue & Carson, 2012; Furco & Root, 2010; Richards et al., 2015). Holsapple (2012) reported in his review of CSL articles, that negative student attitudes and beliefs toward the groups they worked with were reduced through participation in service-learning placements. Through CSL opportunities, students may become more aware of their own social and personal values, as well as the structures of the world around them (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000; Furco & Root, 2010). Further, students practically apply what they learn in their classroom while learning about career possibilities (Bishop & Driver, 2007; Domangue & Carson, 2012).

A commonly cited community benefit of CSL is the free human resources students provide (Bishop & Driver, 2007; Blouin & Perry, 2009). Additional community benefits include

improving university-community relations and community development. Yet, Groh, Stallwood, and Daniels (2011) argue that although community service learning is a reciprocal process, the benefit to the agencies and community partners has not clearly been identified. Blouin and Perry (2009) agree that much of the research has focused on the "pedagogical and personal benefits of the student" (p. 121) with much less emphasis given to the benefits (or lack thereof) to the community. In 2006, Sandy and Holland found that there was "few published studies documenting the perspectives of community members in partnership with universities, and the field acknowledges that this area continues to be under-represented in the overall service-learning literature" (p. 30).

Guidelines & Implementation of CSL

Guidelines and strategies for creating and implementing CSL range from strictly student focused, to striving for collaboration and reciprocity with the community. For example, Williams and Lankford's (1999) guidelines are cited in the physical activity and recreation literature. Their guidelines include (a) the service-learning experience should be directly related to the academic subject matter (*student-focused)*, (b) service-learning enables students to contribute in a positive way to the community in which they live – they learn to serve (*community-focused)*, and (c) students reflect on what is going on around them, what they are doing, and what is all means – they serve to learn (*student-community focused)* (Moorman & Arellano-Unruh, 2002; Roper & Santiago, 2014; Williams & Lankford, 1999). Strategies on *how* to implement these guidelines in however, are limited. An exception is Moorman and Arellano-Unruh (2002). They suggested the following strategies to implement William & Lankford's (1999) guidelines: (a) discussing service-learning with students and arranging a brainstorming session; (b) brainstorming with students to provide ownership; (c) researching local agencies or their interest and willingness to

participate; and (d) planning for the future, such as considering implications of popularity. However, I would argue that Moorman and Arellano-Unruh's (2002) strategies have a distinct commitment to students, and don't address how to positively contribute to the *community* they serve, or provide reflection opportunities between *students and the community* as suggested in Williams & Lankford's (1999) guidelines.

Similarly, Bishop and Driver (2007) focused on strategies for implementing community service learning, but specifically for disability-related CSL contexts. Their strategies included (a) identifying learning goals (b) contacting CSL centres at their universities (c) contacting community agencies, and (d) conducting necessary paperwork. Missing from Bishop and Driver's (2007) strategies is the idea of collaboration. There is an intense focus on the instructor's agenda, academic goals of the student, dismissal of the need to consult with community partners, and perhaps most importantly, an assumption that community members are in need or want CSL services. Limited attention was given to the involvement of the community members in the principles designed to build and foster reciprocal relationships between students, institution, community organization and community members.

VanSickle and Schaumleffel (2015) noted that although articles on CSL may be plentiful, "none have discussed how to create a partnership with a community organization, the foundation for a mutually beneficial service-learning or service engagement project" (p. 24). They provided alternative strategies to implementing CSL (a) identify your goals, (b) get to know local organizations, (c) identify and choose the right community partner, and (d) choose a project and create a memorandum of understanding. The authors of this model stressed the collaboration with the community in the choosing and creating a CSL project. Similarly, Bringle & Hatcher (1996) suggested relationship building, mutual benefit, and collaboration for implementing CSL,

which has been used in kinesiology literature (e.g., Richards et al., 2012; Richards et al., 2015). The authors proposed three CSL principles, the first of which is including community members in the planning phase to ensure that the service is relevant and meaningful to the community. They question who that representative should be however, organizations, community members, or government? While staff members might be good organizational representatives, it marginalizes the perspectives community members, who are the true the recipients of the service.

The second and third principles Bringle & Hatcher (1996) proposed were enhanced academic learning, and purposeful civic engagement. The principle of academic learning is consistent with others (e.g., Darby et al., 2016; Jacoby, 1996; Richards et al., 2015; Roper & Santiago, 2014). Civic engagement as an implementation strategy aligns well with reciprocity, collaboration and diversity of Mintz & Hesser (1996). Levesque-Bristol and Cornelius-White (2012) defined civic learning in their quest for a public affairs mission by including three components (1) community engagement, (2) cultural competence, and (3) ethical leadership. Community engagement refers to "recognizing the needs in the communities within which an individual belongs, and the contributing knowledge and working with the community to meet those needs" (p. 698). Community engagement has an emphasis on working together with the community, or through collaboration (Levesque-Bristol & Cornelius-White, 2012; Mintz & Hesser, 1996). Cultural competence is a self-awareness, respect and ability to interact with multiple perspectives, knowledge, and skills throughout many cultures, similar to diversity (Levesque-Bristol & Cornelius-White, 2012; Mintz & Hesser, 1996). Ethical leadership "means striving for excellence and integrity as an individual continually develops ethical and moral reasoning while contributing the common good" (p. 698). Through including civic learning as a component of CSL (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996), there is potential for an emphasis on

interdependency between the institution, students, community organizations and the community members, providing increased equality in power and control, or reciprocity, for all parties (Levesque-Bristol & Cornelius-White, 2012; Mintz & Hesser, 1996).

Student Experiences in Adapted Physical Activity CSL

Adapted physical activity and pre-service teacher education have historically used disability-related CSL or practicum placements to prepare students for inclusive environments (Connolly, 1994; Ellis, Lepore, & Liebermann, 2012; DePauw, 2000; Hodge & Jansma, 1999; Hodge, Tannehill, & Kluge, 2003; Standal & Rugseth, 2014). Several researchers have concluded that practicum experiences promote positive attitude changes towards people experiencing disability, increase students' perceived competence, and promote inclusion in the classroom (Ellis, Lepore, & Liebermann, 2012; Folsom-Meek, Nearing, Grotesluschen, & Krampf, 1999; Hodge, Davis, Woodward, & Sherill, 2002; Hodge & Jansma, 1999; Kozub & Lienert, 2003). To date, researchers in APA literature have focused extensively on how practicums and CSL serve as pedagogical tools for student learning in post-secondary education. The majority of this research addresses attitudes and assumptions in teacher preparation.

Moorman and Arellano-Unruh (2007) stated, for example that because of CSL in APA, students "can feel good about themselves, because of the people they have helped, the things they have accomplished, and the problems they have helped solve" (p. 42). While this may be true, I would argue that within CSL, an altruistic model might place the needs of the community second to the pedagogical goals of the instructor. Alignment of what the instructor, community, and students are providing, accomplishing, and solving with student support is needed. It is not yet clear if the *helping, accomplishing,* and *problem solving* are similarly perceived by those who they are 'serving'.

Richards and colleagues (2015) evaluated the experience of college students in a physical-activity based service-learning program for children experiencing disability. Their findings indicated that students "felt they were able to make a difference in the lives of their partners" (p. 183). Furthermore, the students gained enhanced civic learning, connection to course material, increased knowledge of career opportunities, and emotional and personal growth. Roper & Santiago (2014) similarly found increased interpersonal growth and problem-solving skills of kinesiology students. Although the students experienced anxiety about interacting with people experiencing disability, the service-learning placements positively affected their attitudes and preconceived ideas, dissipating their anxiety.

Of the few identified studies specific to adapted physical education, Connolly (1994) and Hodge, Tannehill, & Kluge (2003) examined the meaning of practicum experiences of university students. Reflective journals, written by the students over the course of a semester, were thematically analysed. Through their reflections, it became evident that students went through a journey of feeling uncomfortable and nervous, to challenging their assumptions and transforming their perspectives when engaging with people experiencing disability. For example, Hodge et al. (2003) spoke to the change in perspective students went through regarding disability, such as a new-found appreciation of similarities and differences when engaging with individuals experiencing disability, shifting from initial apprehension. One student stated, "I was nervous and a little bit scared about working with children with disability" (Hodge et al., 2003, p. 388). Likewise, Connolly (1994) found that students faced fear, nervousness, and assumptions when anticipating difference; faced discomfort, were shocked and had a desire to help with encountering difference; faced staring, obstacles, felt like they took things for granted when sharing an experience of difference. A student commented, "…I don't know if I can deal with an

individual who is mentally handicapped" (Connolly, 1994, p. 314). Over time, students often changed their perspectives reflected in statements such as, "[they] are just like everyone else" (Hodge et al., 2003, p. 388), and "should be treated with the same kind of respect as an able-bodied person" (Connolly, 1994, p. 321). Students found social connections with the individuals they were engaged with and built "unique friendships" (Connolly, 1994, p. 320). Through engaging in authentic, reciprocal relationships, and collaborating *with* diverse communities (a pedagogy of relational ethics), the initial fear, apprehension and nervousness experienced by students may be alleviated (Bergum & Dosettor, 2005; Mintz & Hesser, 1996)

Connolly (1994) explained that although attitudes and competencies have been studied in practicum contexts, it is important that it is meaningful to the student, where relationships can be built, and "difference can be experienced in a lived, transforming way" (p. 324). In addition, she noted it was the difficult situations that promoted reflective learning, reflexiveness about themselves as practitioners, and willingness to act on their new gained perspectives. Hodge et al. (2003) also found that practicums, combined with journaling, was a successful means for students to identify, reflect on, and address problems, and to think critically about their actions when engaging with diverse populations.

Notwithstanding Standal and Rugseth (2014), there has been little exploration of CSL for APA student practicums in alternative settings (outside of teacher preparation education) such as disability-specific recreation centers, rehabilitation centers, community recreation centers, parasport organizations, and summer camps. Standal and Rugseth (2014) sought to understand the practicum experiences of adapted physical activity students using Dewey's educational theory (Dewey, 1910, 1983). Dewey claimed that students thrive in settings where they can interact with and experience the curriculum. The students participated in three-part practicum

placements that consisted of a rehabilitation centre, a winter-sport camp for kids, and various mental health institutions. Their experiences were gathered using focus groups, instructor field notes, and interviews. The findings were similar to Connolly (1994) and Hodge et al. (2003) in that the students found an increased importance in the ways they came to understand their assumptions around disability through self-reflection during their practicum placements. Standal & Rugseth found that students found meaning and joy in participating in the placements, but often doubted themselves and were insecure when starting out. Furthermore, through reflection and building relationships with people experiencing disability in their placements, the students in their study came to understand the disability through multiple theoretical perspectives and began to conceptualize disability in a different way. The authors supported Hodge et al.'s (2003) use of reflective journaling to facilitate critical thinking; however, added that there are numerous ways to support students in making sense of their practicum placements, such as providing varied platforms for reflection and monitoring student reflections to create growth and continuity in their learning – which could be achieved through debriefing with staff, discussing with peers and presenting what they learned through the practicum. Evident through the researcher of Connolly (1994), Hodge, Tannehill and Kluge (2003) and Standal and Rugseth (2014), students undergo a transformational learning process, whereby attitudes and assumptions about people experiencing disability are challenged over the course of their practicums.

Ableism. Ableism is an important concept in disability research, and encompasses the ways in which able-bodied people think about and towards people with impairments (Duncan, 2001; Hehir, 2002; van Amsterdam, Knoppers & Jongmans, 2015). Campbell (2001) defined ableism as "a network of beliefs, processes and practices that produces a particular kind of self and body (the corporeal standard) that is projected as the perfect, species-typical and therefore

essential and fully human. Disability then, is cast as a diminished state of being human" (p. 44). Although interactions between people can prove to be difficult, much of the research concerning these interactions has been from the perspective of people without impairments (Scully, 2010). Within disability contexts, this may be due to people experiencing disability being rarely thought of as the experts in disability, even in learning environments (Goodwin & Rossow-Kimball, 2012). As such, service-learning can reinforce existing ableistic attitudes, stereotypes and assumptions rather than challenge students to understand CSL needs from the perspective of the service recipients (Connolly, 1994; d'Arlarch et al., 2009; Hodge et al., 2003). It becomes difficult to form mutual and reciprocal relationships if assumptions about members of the community reflects assumption of being less than, or a diminished state of being. In fact, these types of relationship may form ethical risk as they create power imbalance (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005; Mintz & Hesser, 1996).

Practicum and CSL placements raise a number of pedagogical and ethical questions. To what extent do people with impairments endure negative ableistic asymmetries in power, risk, and knowledge during practicum placements (Connolly, 1994) which requires "significant labor in managing the cognitive and emotional aspects of their interactions with nondisabled people"? (Scully, 2010, p. 32). What expense or burden (if any) is being placed on the disability community who are engaging with these students? What are the experiences of the people experiencing disability when faced with certain initial attitudes of students, even if the purpose is to challenge them? Perhaps it is through relationship building that we can begin to address these ethical questions.

Perspectives of CSL Beyond the Students

Several researchers explored the perspective of community *organization* partners within

CSL contexts (e.g., Blouin & Perry, 2009; Darby, Ward-Johnson, & Cobb Elon, 2016; Miron & Moely, 2006; Sandy & Holland, 2006). The community organizations voices differed from the voice of community members or those receiving services. Blouin and Perry (2009) conducted a sociological study of the type of experiences the community organization partners had with CSL. They spoke with community organization directors and found CSL to be generally positive for the community organizations, however with it came some challenges in creating a mutually beneficial relationship. Three areas of struggle were identified (a) poor student conduct, (b) poor fit between course and organizational objectives, and (c) lack of communication between organization and instructors. Poor student conduct included unprofessionalism, unwillingness to work hard, unconcerned with results of their actions, and lack of awareness around issues of poverty, race, mental illness, substance abuse or homelessness that created offensive or hurtful behaviors. The authors recommended instructors collaborate with community partners by clearly communicating shared goals, student roles, and community partner needs. Darby, Ward-Johnson, and Cobb Elon (2016) found that community organizations played a large role as the co-educators for students. The authors found that "community partners and their clients themselves play a critical but often unacknowledged role as co-educators in diversity and multicultural education in academic service-learning" (p. 12). If community organizations are key contributors to the CSL, it becomes even more imperative to engage in collaborative and open conversations among the institution, students, organizations, and community in order to ensure reciprocal, diverse and collaborative roles are being met.

There is limited research focusing on how "recipients of service view the service" (the community) (d'Arlarch et al., 2009, p. 5). Goodwin, Lieberman, Johnston, & Leo (2011) examined the experiences of youth living with visual impairments at summer camp. The youth

worked with undergraduate students who were receiving adapted physical activity practicum course credits. The authors noted that although the youth thought the students were helpful in their success and creating a safe environment, they were also criticized for being patronizing and limiting autonomy. The authors suggested that "further inquiry into the complex interactions that occur between the athletes, camp staff, and volunteers is required" (p. 53). The researchers were not focused specifically on youths' experience with practicum students, rather their experiences in a summer camp. Regardless, the researchers highlighted the risk to the community that may come along with practicum student learning.

d'Arlarch and colleagues (2009) explored the experiences of Latino immigrants engaged in CSL and found that the participants had mixed emotions about the students with whom they were working. The students displayed multiple characteristics, from being polite and helpful, to cliquey and uninterested in the process. Although the community members experienced flaws (such a lack of engaging and relationship building) in the CSL context, the authors suggested university scholars may have a resistance to hearing them.

As stated by Sandy & Holland (2006):

> What do we know, versus what do we assume to know about these "other worlds" with whom we are entwined in the world of service-learning? Very little is written about the perspective of this "other world" that higher education wishes to engage. (p. 31)

Sandy and Holland (2006) indicated that community members emphasized the importance of relationship building when engaging in CSL experiences. In order to create effective campus-community partnerships, the needs and interests of both the community and the institution require careful consideration and exploration to unite and appreciate the diverse experiences of

each (Sandy & Holland, 2006).

There appears to be resistance in the field of service-learning to recognize the disability expertise of community organizations and community members, which is the focus of CSL for students (d'Arlarch et al., 2009; Himley, 2004; Saltmarsh, Hartley, & Clayton, 2008). To explore the assumptive notion that the community welcomes CSL and the benefits that come along with it, it is important to seek out and hear stories and counterstories from the community. Clapton (2003) defined counterstories as "real lived and relational experiences with and of people with disability" (p. 540). Goodwin and Rossow-Kimball (2012) suggested that counterstories can be a basis of understanding in adapted physical activity. Lived experiences might be shared between two people (e.g., student and community member), although how each person experiences it and what it means to her or him might differ tremendously (Connolly, 1994). If the purpose of APA practicums is to engage professionals with the disability community, then it is imperative to seek understanding of those who experience disability (Reid, 2003; Standal, 2014). The first-person perspective, a narrative or story provided directly from an individual's lived experiences, provides in-depth analysis of the embodied experiences one lives, which can be revealed through engaging directly with people who experience disability (Standal, 2014). Those who are receiving the service in adapted physical activity CSL will provide the most honest assessment of success (d'Arlach et al., 2009).

In summary, there is a call for research driven knowledge regarding the preparation of practitioners in APA and the processes and strategies involved in student learning (Emes, Longmuir, & Downs, 2002; Standal & Rugseth, 2014). I acknowledge the benefit of providing students with practicums and CSL experiences to create competent, ethical practitioners in the field. However, I believe what it means to be a competent, ethical practitioner should be created

in conversation with the people with whom they are serving. Institutions must recognize their limitations of teaching about diverse populations and acknowledge the significant role the community can play as co-educators (Darby et al., 2016). I sought to uncover community members' experiences of CSL to more fully understand the how relationship building - collaboration, reciprocity and diversity, is expressed, or not expressed.

Research Question

The research question was: How do members of the disability community experience an undergraduate adapted physical activity community service learning program?

Chapter 3: Descriptive Reflection on Methods

In this chapter, I provide descriptions and reflections of my chosen research methods, beyond that presented in the full research study in Chapter 4. I found an importance in articulating the methods more in-depth, because my ontological and epistemological assumptions "form the philosophical parameters that guide decisions on appropriate methodological practices" (Markula & Silk, 2011, p. 24). As such, my assumptions influenced the questions I asked, method selection, writing style, relationships with the research participants, judgement of the quality of research practices, and ethical stances.

As a qualitative researcher, I see the world as socially constructed, and I aim to understand my research through an interactive process between myself (the researcher), the participants, and the phenomenon of study (Markula & Silk, 2011). A paradigm is "the basic belief system or worldview that guides the investigator, not only in choices of method but in ontologically and epistemologically fundamental ways" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 105). My research falls under an interpretative paradigm, or what some researchers refer to as the constructivist paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Markula & Silk, 2011). In an interpretive paradigm, researchers seek individual and collective reconstructions of knowledge through a subjective meaning-making process of individual's subjective lived experiences (Markula & Silk, 2011). I used a qualitative research approach because my goal was to understand the lived experiences of people.

My research assumptions are embedded in a relativist ontology, a subjective epistemology, and a hermeneutic and dialectical methodology (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). A relativist believes that multiple forms of socially and experiential realities exist, although they may be shared across groups of people or cultures (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). A subjectivist

concludes that the researcher and research participant are interactively linked so that the findings are co-created as the research proceeds (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Using a hermeneutical and dialectical methodology, the researcher assumes individual constructions of their social and experiential realities, found through interactions "between and among" the researcher and participants. The individual constructions are interpreted by the researcher through hermeneutical methods and then compared using dialectical interchange (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 111).

The assumptions I hold through an interpretive paradigm researcher indicate a number of implications for my research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The findings in an interpretive paradigm are not generalizable. Rather, knowledge can be transferred from one setting to another is through "provision of vicarious experience", and knowledge is built up through increased "informed and sophisticated constructions via the hermeneutical/dialectical process" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 114). The researcher's values shape the inquiry's outcomes, and are impossible to exclude in the research due to the role the researcher plays in the research. The researcher's voice is passive, yet still a participant in the research, by engaging with participants and through reconstruction of their own and participants constructions of knowledge. The quality of the research is judged through a criterion of trustworthiness of credibility (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), to which Zitomer & Goodwin (2014) suggested using the criteria from the research approach undertaken. Novice researchers, such as myself, must seek to understand their political, social, cultural, ethnic, gender and economic histories and structures that surround their research because they play a role in the inquiry (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework I used for my study was relational ethics (Bergum &

Dossetor, 2005). Using a relational ethics approach encompasses looking at how we live in the world *together* in relationships. The four tenets of relational ethics are (a) mutual respect, (b) embodiment, (c) relational engagement, and (d) environment.

Mutual Respect. Mutual respect refers to the way we treat ourselves and others in relationships, while fostering autonomy, acting through interdependence, and assessing power relations (Bergum. 2004). We cannot respect others in an interactive process without first respecting ourselves, by living with dignity, confidence, pride, and self-worth. However, having only self-respect may lead to ethical harm in relationships, because mutual respect means integrating both self-respect and respect for others. Relational respect is a focus on both "self-interest (the self-respectful moral subject) and the other-interested (the respectful moral agent) in one person" (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005, p. 81). This means that self-respect occurs through self-awareness, rather than a self-centeredness.

Interdependence occurs between individuals in a mutual respectful environment – where "I acknowledge that what I do affects you, and what you do affects me" (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005, p. 69). However, in an interdependent relationship, each individual remains autonomous, and paternalism is avoided. Furthermore, autonomy should be fostered through interdependency, where decisions are made *together* through involvement and engagement with the other. In an adapted physical activity CSL context, an atmosphere of interdependence would require each partner to think deeply about how their actions affect their partner, and their partner's action affects them. For example, students or professionals may think they know best, or assume an expert role *about* the community. Rather, an interdependent relationship would foster autonomy and power *between* partners, providing acknowledgement that each partner brings their own knowledge, and therefore decisions are made *with* rather than *for* the community (Bergum &

Dossetor, 2005).

Mutual respect occurs when we can gain a perspective different from our own through listening and engaging. To truly have mutual respect, "there is a need to learn ways to engage with the other, the *you*, without reducing *you* to the same as *me,* or *me* to the same as *you*" (Bergum, 2004, p. 495). Individuals, in a relational ethic, attend to questioning of self-knowledge, questioning of who the other is, and evaluating the connection and relationship. Through this process, an appreciation of the other perspective and value of diversity may emerge. It is important to note that limited self-questioning may lead to ethical harm through "the loss of consideration of alternative views and understandings and the subordination of some kinds of knowledge…and experience…to expertise" (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005, p. 83). When mutual respect doesn't occur, or relationships are absent, power is lost or gained by certain individuals, creating a power imbalance (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005). In adapted physical activity CSL, without respecting and engaging with the other's perspective, ideas about disability may be perpetuated raising ethical concern of risk and harm. Decisions should be made *with* those experiencing disability, rather than *for.* Relational respect for one another could also be addressed in CSL through considering questions like: What are each partner's values and beliefs? What do we know about each other? What competencies does each partner bring? How do I address my partner? Who is the person in their role (i.e., community member, student, CSL instructor)? Importantly, each partner should feel comfortable with questioning the processes used in CSL.

As it relates to my research study, I used mutual respect to reflect on the ways in which each member of the community service learning environment respected one another. Mutual respect relates to the idea of collaboration as suggested by Mintz & Hesser (1996) which

emphasizes that each partner has their own interests, knowledge and experience which should be taken into consideration to avoid unnecessary power imbalance.

Relational Engagement. Relational engagement is found "in the shared moment in which people have found a way to look at something together" (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005, p. 103). We engage with others through compassion towards others, and seeing them as their neighbor rather than a stranger. This means considering the perspective and acknowledging the "wholeness" of another, in a receptive and open manner (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005, p. 113). Seeing the wholeness of another human being requires respecting their dignity and seeing past labels. Engagement with others can be experienced through practical actions, such as responsiveness, being present, authenticity, and vulnerability shown in conversation and dialogue. Authenticity means engaging with others without manipulation, by being present with your true self. Relational vulnerability is not viewed as a weakness, rather a positive strength required of us to show our true humanity (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005). Through revealing ourselves as vulnerable beings, the risk of power differentials decreases and the potential to truly engage with one another increases. Being a vulnerable self also requires thoughtful reflection on what causes reactions in relationships, deliberating why we feel the way we do, and resultantly, determining what we can do about it (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005).

In APA relationships, professionals and the disability community must find ways to look at something together; despite diverse backgrounds (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005; Mintz & Hesser, 1996). Deep meaning occurs when professionals acknowledge what the community needs and wants through connectedness. Not doing so may result in ethical issues of importance to APA practice and service (Bergum, 2004). For example, can lack of relational engagement pose ethical risk to the organization? What can shared moments created through true engagement do

for the goals of CSL? Community members and students might ask themselves: What is going on in this situation? How does it make me feel? How is it affecting my ability to learn, or my ability to teach? Through this process, responsiveness to the self and other is created, which assists moving forward, ethically, in relationship.

Embodiment. Embodied knowledge is lived by human beings through real actions, feelings, and experiences that are situated in historical and social contexts (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005). This means knowing what we *think*, and knowing what we *feel* – found through a personal narrative created through life experiences, such as illness, pain, love, and happiness (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005). Using relational ethics, researchers purport the need to achieve a connection, between the body, mind, and spirit, ensuring that scientific, subjective, and embodied knowledge are considered with equal weight (Bergum, 2004; Bergum & Dossetor, 2005;).

Despite difficulties that exist when we are faced with different values, opinions and ways of knowing, valuing others' feelings and emotions may be facilitated when reciprocal spaces are created (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005). In APA, this means that attention to who the individual experiencing disability is as a whole person, rather than to just the impairment presented is required (medicalizing the person) (Goodwin & Rossow-Kimball, 2012). By being wakeful to embodied knowledge, professionals can consider individual lived experiences of those with whom they are working, acknowledging them as subjective and relational (rather than objective) beings. Institutions and community organizations may teach objective knowledge about disability and impairment, but community members hold real life knowledge about *experiencing* disability through their feeling bodies (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005).

Environment. Environment is the "moment to moment, everyday occurrences that we

live" (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005, p. 165). It is a careful attention to the atmosphere around us. The theme environment within relational ethics ties the everyday moments of individuals to relationships to wider social and political systems (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005). Our environments are not only controlled externally around us, but also through our individual actions as we create spaces where ethical reflection can take place (Bergum, 2004). Ethical reflection involves informed choice, which is a basic principle of a respectful and ethical environment which includes consenting to participation and understanding what the consent means. Further, the 'self' is something that cannot be separated from its relationships to others and larger socio-cultural influences (Bergum, 2004).

Wakefulness to embodied knowledge can facilitate attention to the humanity of others, through the creation of relational spaces (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005). A relational space means connection between the body and mind, and between the self and others. Relational space can be created among partners through being *with* each other through narratives about life, while still being attentive to one's own embodiment, resulting in a deep and meaningful interaction (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005; Bergum, 2004).

In summary, CSL is comprised of multiple groups, each with diverse perspectives, all linked to each other by a larger social and political system. Relationships with each partner in CSL impact our choices and decisions. Although we have freedom and choice to make decisions, we also need to consider the morality of our decisions, considering the "common welfare, justice, and equity" of each individual (Bergum & Dosettor, 2005, p. 167). This requires balancing autonomy with interdependency and consideration for embodied knowledge (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005). Within the context of adapted physical activity, while creating student and professional vulnerabilities where learning occurs, reflexion on the importance of a foundation

based upon the tenets of relational ethics may be required for CSL users to create engaged relationships that are open, authentic, and considerate.

Goodwin & Rossow-Kimball (2012) noted that relational ethics can encourage engagement with others and support an ethical relational professional environment. The kaleidoscope lens, suggested as a framework for CSL, has many parallels and synergies with relational ethics (Mintz & Hesser, 1996). Ethical practice in CSL involves committing to each partner, behaving responsively, authentically, and responsibly to the self and others. Relational ethics emerged as a logical conceptual framework to examine the relationships between partners in an adapted physical activity CSL context. In exploring the experiences of members of the disability community, the quality of relationships will be examined. I used relational ethics when creating the individual interview guide, focus group interview guide, and bringing deeper meaning to interpretation in data analysis.

I thought deeply about how partners could act ethically in relation to the kaleidoscope lens of CSL, as seen in Figure 1 (Mintz & Hesser, 1996). Partners can choose to act in ways that emphasize and bring importance to the reciprocal, collaborative and diverse nature of CSL through careful attention to themselves and the relationships built with other partners. CSL is not created around us, but through our individual, day to day relational interactions within the environment (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005). To create a relational environment, the tenets in the graphic must be attended to in conjunction with one another by CSL partners. The figure can be viewed from the top down, where CSL practices are assessed and reviewed through the kaleidoscope lens and relational ethics tenets. It can also be viewed from the bottom up, where the environment is the starting point of where we could begin to implement CSL – through relationships with one another. Figure 1 was developed to illustrate the centrality of relationship

building in CSL from multiple perspectives. I would like to develop the model more fully as a heuristic tool for instructors as they design, implement, and evaluate CSL experiences for students, service providers, and service users.

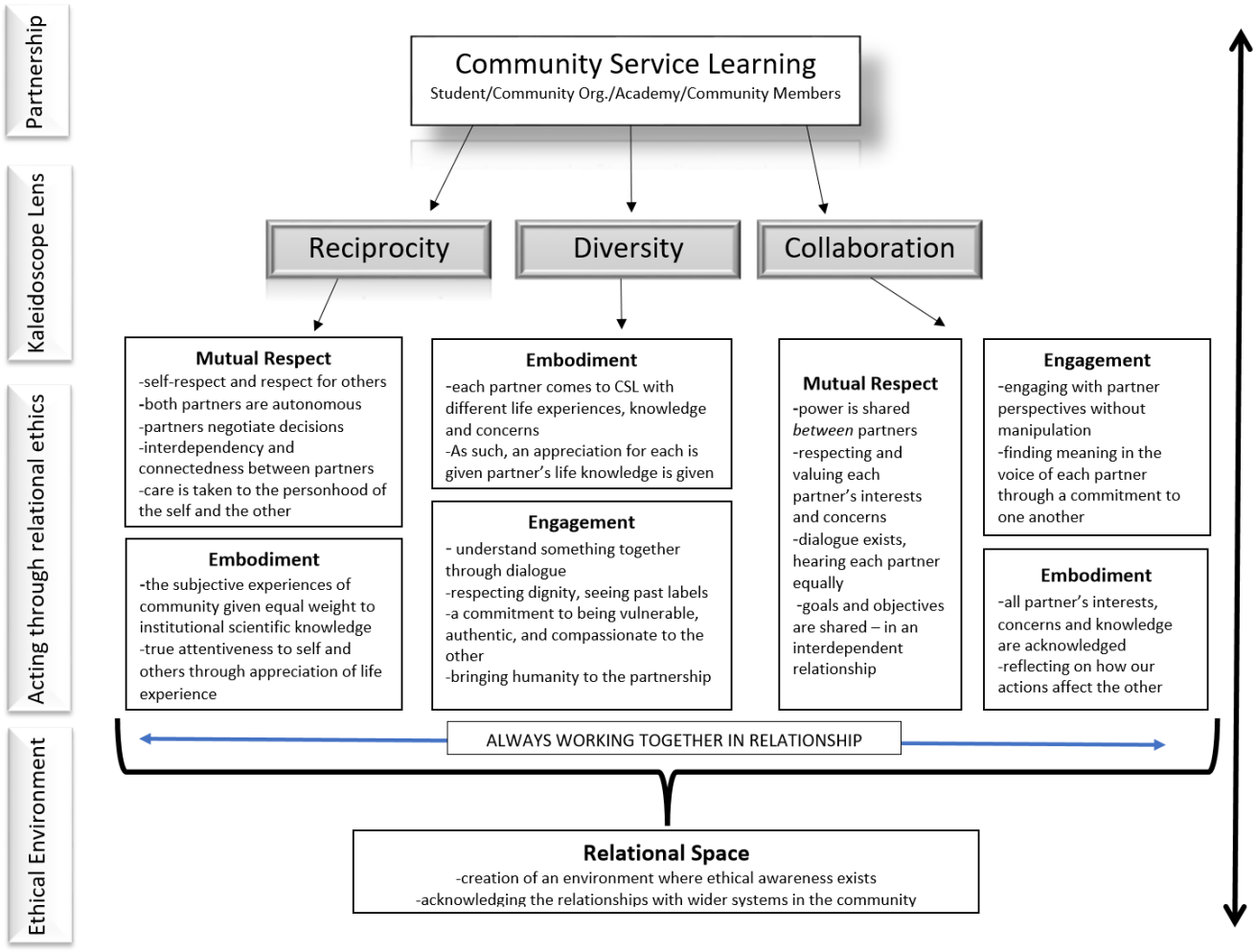

Figure 1: Community Service Learning Understood Through Relational Ethics

Research Approach

The research approach I chose for this study was interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). An IPA researcher's purpose is to examine in detail how people make sense of their personal and social worlds and the meaning of particular experiences (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Researchers use IPA to attain an in-depth analysis of *how* the participants are experiencing contexts. IPA is grounded in phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography, providing a systematic framework for examining and making sense of particular individuals making sense of experiences in particular contexts.

Phenomenology. The aim of IPA is to examine "experiences and/or understandings of a particular phenomenon" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 46). Phenomenologists focus on the study of experience and seek to understand lived experiences through individual perspectives and meanings. They understand that peoples' experiences may differ because of their situated relationships to the world around them. The act of reflecting on everyday lives and bringing meaning to those experiences requires looking at that which is often overlooked and towards an experience that is "embedded and immersed in a world of objects and relationships, language and culture, projects and concerns" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 21). In my research, the phenomenon was how one experiences a community service learning setting.

Hermeneutics. The focus of a hermeneutist is interpretation, then relationships between multiple parts to create a whole. It is based upon a process called the hermeneutic circle - the idea that understanding a text as a whole requires looking at the individual parts and having an understanding of each part by referencing the whole (Smith et al., 2009). IPA researchers also engage with a double hermeneutic, where the researcher is making sense of the participants making sense of their experiences (Smith et al., 2009). The researcher becomes an instrument for

interpretative analysis, and brings her or his subjective knowledge and perspectives to the process (Smith et al., 2009).

Idiography. The central concern of idiography is the particular, which means that the aim is to offer insights into how a given person, makes sense of a given phenomenon, in a given context. It is essential that individual experience and distinct voice is represented. “Idiography [is a]…commitment to the single case in its own right, or to a process which moves from the examination of the single case to more general claims” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 29). In understanding each particular case of the phenomenon being explored, we may move closer to understanding the “significant aspects of the general” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 32).

Study Context

The partners included in the CSL context were the community organization, program community participants, students, a teaching assistant, a course instructor, and organizational staff.

The community organization was in a disability-specific, not-for-profit community physical activity and fitness centre, housed at a large Canadian university. Services at the organization included parasport athlete development, adapted physical activity for adults and children designed to meet fitness and physical activity goals, and transition to community exercise facilities. The organization provided accessible equipment and space, and adapted physical activity consultants for the CSL program. Program participants attended the program twice per week for four weeks for 60 minutes per session. The service program consisted of an introduction to cardiovascular and muscular exercise, including a fitness assessment and a personalized fitness plan. As part of the exercise program registration process, community

participants were to be notified that their exercise sessions would be led by students who were receiving course credit as part of their undergraduate degree program. Participants voluntarily signed up to participate in the service program.

I was assigned as a teaching assistant for the CSL course that I was recruiting participants from. As a teaching assistant, my role was to be present at the CSL program, to support the students in making connections to the course content, and answer questions or concerns. The course instructor was experienced with CSL and had taught the course previously. In this study context, the instructor of the course also happened to be a staff member of the program organization. The course instructor followed the institution's CSL requirements and guidelines when implementing the placements, and registered the course through the CSL department.

The disability-specific program partnered with senior, undergraduate adapted physical activity students. The course in which they were registered included a combination of classroom education, online participation and CSL. The overall learning objectives as identified on the course outline were to (a) understand how assumptions and paradigms impact community programs (b) increase understanding of historical and contemporary ideologies framing physical impairment, sport and physical activity, (c) debate and discuss current topics in adapted physical activity, (d) increase knowledge of assessment, program creation, implementation and evaluation of adapted physical activity settings, (e) apply theories of motivation, empowerment, and self-determination to promote and facilitate independence and (f) apply material discussed in course to real-life settings. Students led the program sessions. Students and program participants had access to a supervising APA Consultant from the organization. Each student was required to attend one day a week of the program, for four weeks. This resulted in the program participants engaging with two students per week.

The specific learning objectives for the students, through participating in the CSL placement, were (a) leadership and facilitation, (b) support administration of fitness assessments (c) adapt exercise for adults living with impairments, (d) create adapted exercise programs based on individual goals and needs (e) develop rapport with participants, and (f) communication and time management skill development. The community organization designed curriculum for students to reference in creating program plans, which students had access to through an online portal and in briefing and debriefing of the sessions. At the end of four weeks, the students designed and provided a program plan for the program participants to continue to use in their gym activities.

The institution (university) of which the organization and course were a part, housed a CSL department. The mission of CSL is to foster reciprocal relationships between instructors and community partners that create opportunities for students to reflect on and explore classroom and community learning. The stated benefits of CSL for the community[1] are (a) gaining insight to capabilities of students and projects, (b) opportunities to be co-educators of students, (c) gaining human resources, (d) increasing public awareness of key issues, and (e) identify and access other university resources. The undergraduate course that provided the context for this study was officially registered by the course instructor as a CSL class within this CSL department.

Participants

Nine adults (n = 2, female, n = 7 Male, *age range = 28-65 years, mean age = 50 years*) participated in the study. Participants were recruited from two program sections each lasting four

[1] Information for community partners accessible on the website is targeted towards the organizational community staff partners. Information does not exist on the website for community *members* that are recipients of service in the community organization partnered program. The "community" in this context refers to the community organization staff.

weeks long. Both of the program sections fell in the same semester, so participants were engaging with the same group of students. Two participants were recruited from the first section and seven participants from the second section. Participants experienced disability due to functional limitations imposed by interactions between neurological impairments and the environment. Three participants used wheelchairs, and two used a cane to support ambulation. One participant had previously participated in the program, while the remaining were new to the specific context. All participants had previous experience engaging with students in other settings, such as in hospitals, physiotherapy clinics, and occupational therapy clinics. All participants provided written consent to participate in the research study. Impairment type and impairment identifiers are not presented to protect identity of the participant. Furthermore, I did not want to perpetuate ableist labeling of bodies, whereby individuals are compared to a socially constructed, normative body type (Campbell, 2001). Rather, I would prefer to use ecological descriptors to describe the context and the services that were provided to support health and exercise of the users.

Recruitment Strategies

Smith et al. (2009) stated that:

> …in choosing IPA for a research project, we commit ourselves to exploring, describing, interpreting and situating the means by which our participants make sense of his/her experiences. Thus, IPA researchers need, first of all, to access rich and detailed personal accounts. These accounts will be elicited from persons who are able and willing to offer us a view of the phenomena under investigation. (p. 40)

My aim was to recruit six adults from the disability-community engaged in an APA CSL

focused program. Smith et al. (2009) suggested a sample size of 3-6 when using IPA to achieve rich, in-depth analysis. The sampling strategy I used was criterion and convenience sampling (Patton, 2002). The criteria were (a) age of 18 years or older, (b) registered in the CSL-partnered, physical activity program at the disability-specific organization. The sampling was convenience because the program participants were recruited through the same CSL program. The criteria were created to ensure information-rich cases related to the phenomenon of study, while seeking a homogenous sample, as suggested by Smith et al. (2009) (Patton, 2002). A homogenous sample means the participants represented a perspective of a phenomenon (rather than a specific population type) (Smith et al., 2009). The sample was homogenous because they experienced mobility impairment, sought out exercise knowledge and support to foster independent exercise, and participated with students in CSL context. Eligibility to be involved in the study was not restricted to age, gender, impairment type, or experience. Participants were excluded if they were unwilling or unable to complete at least one of the data collection methods (individual interviews and focus group interviews), or did not complete at least 50 percent of the CSL program.

With permission of the course instructor and community organization staff, I did a brief presentation of the research study on the first day of the program (for each section) at which the students enrolled in the course were present. Four people were in the first section, and ten people were in the second section. Information letters for participants to take home and read were distributed so as to not take too much time from the program. At the next session, participants indicated their interest in participating in the study by returning the signed consent forms. Participants were contacted at the conclusion of the program to proceed with scheduling of interviews and focus groups.

Data Collection

The data collection methods used for this study were demographic forms, individual interviews, focus groups, artifacts, observations, and field notes.

Demographic form. Upon meeting with the participants for their first interview, I collected demographic forms that included name, gender, age, contact information (phone & email), length of experience with students, length of time involved in this program, and impairment (optional). Impairment was an optional category and used to determine the general nature of the participants program needs (see Appendix A). The contact information was needed to set up interviews and focus groups, and the completion of member reflections. Length of experience with community organization, length of time in the program, length of time engaging with students, gender, and age were asked, as they provided context for the idiographic interpretation of the findings.

Individual Interviews. Interviews enabled me to explore experiences, by speaking directly to the individual (Kvale, 1996; Markula & Silk, 2011). One semi-structured, face-to-face, audio-recorded interview was conducted with each participant. The interview schedule used open-ended questions and was informed by the study purpose, literature review and conceptual framework of the study (Markula & Silk, 2011; Smith et al., 2009). Semi-structured interviews enabled me to be "an active participant in the interview and 'probe' further information or discuss issues that arise during the interview situation" (Markula & Silk, 2011, p. 85). Each interview was approximately one hour long, and was held in a quiet meeting room. The aim of the interviews was to enter the world of the participants and create a space for them to recall their stories and experiences. The interviews were held within seven days of their last placement with the students, to provide an opportunity for the participants to interact with students for the

longest period of time prior to the interview (see Appendix B).

Focus Group Interviews. Focus groups can be used to "successfully aid respondents' recall or to stimulate embellished descriptions of specific events…or experiences shared by members of the group" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 704). Two audio-recorded focus groups of two people each were held within three weeks of individual interviews to enable participants to share their thoughts, feelings, perspectives and experiences in working with students. The remaining five individuals that did not participate in the focus groups either could not make it work in their schedule to attend, or did not have an interest in participating. In the focus groups, I asked follow up questions I had after the individual interviews, based on reading individual interview transcripts and my field notes of the individual interviews and observations.

Smith et al., (2009) suggested three tasks to run of an effective focus group (a) facilitating the discussion, (b) monitoring the discussion, and (c) maintaining a reasonable and ethical environment. The focus groups took place in a quiet meeting room. I used questions to moderate discussion in the focus group, focusing on the research question and conceptual framework. I created the moderator guide after collecting individual interview data and observations, so that I could touch on topics that I may have missed as they related to my research question (see Appendix C). I allowed for free-flowing discussion, yet refocused participants when discussion went off topic. Often, participant statements would spark conversation and recall between focus group participants, providing a richer and more in-depth detail of their experiences. I ensured that each member was treated with respect and dignity throughout the discussion, by reminding participants that they didn't have to answer questions they didn't want to, as well as provided them the right to withdraw if they became uncomfortable in the setting and chose to do so. Everyone was provided ample time and opportunity to speak by

the researcher and other participants. The participants were very respectful to one another throughout the interview and allowed for each person to finish prior to speaking.

Artifacts. Artifacts used for the study included the CSL Department's website and the CSL course outline and placement manual. Information used from the website included pages describing general information about CSL for students, community partners, and instructors. The course outline was used to gather the course objectives along with the objectives for the CSL placement.

Observations. Observations were twice over the length of the CSL course (once at the beginning, once at the end), with the intent of observing the overall relational environment of the CSL context. I used unstructured observations because they informed me about the physical, social and emotional aspects of the CSL context (Mulhall, 2003). My observations did not interfere with the participants and were noted as general descriptions of the environment (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). I observed the atmosphere of the room, rather than specific partners or participants at the beginning and at the end of the CSL placements. I referred to a checklist of questions, as it reminded me of what was important for the research purpose. The checklist consisted of descriptive and reflective questions framed by my conceptual framework and literature review (see Appendix D). The observations were instrumental in enabling me to achieve an in-depth, idiographic mindset data during analysis (Smith et al., 2009).

I read and re-read the observation questions prior to attending the program to be prepared for the observation in real time. I recorded my thoughts at the end of each CSL session in a word document on the computer. I did not include notes of student activities as they were not part of the study.

Field notes. Field notes were taken after each interview and focus group to record my thoughts, reflections, feelings, and ideas, as well as any other questions I wanted to follow-up on with the participants (Mayan, 2009). I used field notes because it was impossible to remember everything that happened in each session. They helped me to reflect on the overall research study as I entered into data analysis (Mayan, 2009). The field notes assisted me when analyzing each participant's experience by providing me with the individual thoughts I had with each particular interview, adhering to the idiographic nature of IPA (case-by-case) (Smith et al., 2009).

Within my study were two individuals who experienced speech impairment, which meant they used forms other than verbal or additional techniques, to communicate. I did not feel it was ethical to exclude them from my study when they were interested in participation, as their voice was of equal importance.

One participant opted to complete the interview through email. I emailed the interview questions to the individual through email, to which they responded. I sent follow-up questions (as I would probe in interviews) to them and I repeated the process three times. I typed all of their answers into a word document and sent it back to them for an accuracy check.

The other participant was experiencing new forms of expressing themselves and receiving information (within the last year), therefore tools and methods of communicating were still being explored. I conducted research on how to most effectively interview individuals using forms of communication other than verbal. Several strategies are used to facilitate interviews, such as (a) audio-taped interview combined with research notes of non-verbal communication, (b) including participation of supports for individual, (c) providing ample time for expression prior to asking for assistance from supports, (d) making the questions short and simple, (e) using supports of pictoral boards for assistance in recall and communication, (f) using other forms of

communication, such as pencil and paper, (g) as the researcher, using different ways of presenting the question and receiving the answers, with checks to ensure I was understanding them correctly, and (h) noting non-verbal body language (Dalemans, Wade, van den Heuval, & de Witte, 2009). I undertook all of the strategies suggested during the interview with this individual.

I printed the interview questions out so that there was one question per page in larger font, with plenty of room to write (Dalemans et al., 2009). The participant wrote words or drew pictures in response to the questions. I would then repeat aloud what I thought they were trying to say, to which they would respond yes or no with their body language, verbally, or in writing. My paraphrasing was recorded on the audio tape and became part of the data. If I received a "no" response, I probed with other questions relating to the topic and repeat aloud my understanding of their answer, until I received a "yes" response.

The human support provided for the individual was a family member who knew them very well, and they played two roles (a) being a 'translator' when required (as they knew the individual's communication techniques well), and (b) expressing their own perception of the conversation. After each 'translation' the researcher also confirmed with the translator that she understood what was communicated correctly (from their perspective).

Data Analysis

Analysis followed a six-step process of thematic analysis consistent with IPA research (Smith et al., 2009). Step one involved reading and re-reading each individual transcript. I read each transcript once without any noting or comments. The second time I read each transcript, I revisited my observational notes and field notes to more deeply understand the context and enter

the world of each specific participants in the best way possible. After reading through each transcript, I made additional field notes, documenting follow-up questions to consider and my own reflective thoughts. In step two, I performed initial noting with descriptive and conceptual comments. I imported the transcript text into a word document table, with the headings: emergent themes, transcript, and initial notes, as suggested by Smith et al., (2009). I then printed out the word tables and made descriptive and conceptual comments with different colored pens on the hard copy.

Step three involved developing emergent themes. Through the initial comments made in table columns, I developed an emergent theme by creating a concise and clear statement of what the participant was experiencing, and noted it in the emergent theme column. In step four, I searched for connections across emergent themes. I wrote all of the themes onto a separate word document so that I could have a clear and visible list of the emergent themes. Through viewing the list, I visually mapped out, or clustered the themes that were similar, through staying close to the text and interpretation. Each cluster was assigned a super-ordinate theme name describing it. I took the individual super-ordinate themes back to a new word document and typed them out. Afterwards, I went back to the transcripts to find quotes that meaningfully represented the theme, and populated the document using this process. Step five consisted of repeated steps one through four for each individual case. Step six was the process of looking for patterns across all cases. This process was similar to step four – each super-ordinate theme was compiled into a document and compared to each other using visual mapping and cutting out theme names to move around visually on a table, in order to group into major super-ordinate themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Smith et al., 2009) (See Appendix F).

The focus group analysis followed the idiographic approach of IPA. Analysis for each

individual within the focus group followed the same six-step procedure. This involved reading and re-reading each focus group transcript, focusing on individual experiences within (particulars). The focus group transcripts were then re-read to analyze the group dynamics. Connections and patterns across focus groups were then identified to create super-ordinate themes (Smith et al., 2009).

Observational data were used as integral information to provide context to the study during data analysis. Similarly, field notes were used to assist with interpretation of the interviews and focus groups, as well as enable me to read each transcript in an idiographic nature.

Relational ethics was drawn upon to interpret the findings of the study (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005). Comparing the participant statements with the main tenets of the theory brought a deep understanding of the meanings held within. The thematic findings are presented in chapter four and illustrated with quotations.

Trustworthiness

Zitomer & Goodwin (2014) noted that it is important for researchers to familiarize themselves with the criteria for trustworthiness suggested by the research approach utilized. Therefore, I used the criteria Smith et al. (2009) suggest for IPA, which includes sensitivity to context, commitment and rigor, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance. Multiple terms are used to describe similar criteria for judging quality of qualitative research. Zitomer and Goodwin (2014) suggest these criteria align with reflexivity, credibility, coherence, and significant contribution, respectively. They also provided effective strategies to address these criteria.

Sensitivity to Context. Yardley (2000) suggested that researchers should be immersed in the literature pertaining to their research topic. I therefore conducted a thorough literature search prior to the study, as well as during and after data analysis.

I provided as much information explaining the research context and participant backgrounds as I could without compromising participant identity. Throughout the research process, I reflected on my attitudes and assumptions, and thought critically about how my social position and history affected my thinking in my field notes. I wrote about many thoughts, feelings, and emotions, including (but not limited to) noting questions that I thought might be important for the interviews and focus groups; documented how I felt before I started the research process and after and, furthermore, asked myself why I felt that way; noted assumptions I held as well as if they were challenged or transformed; recorded notes of advice in order to improve my interviewing skills; and, related and articulated my role as the researcher, teaching assistant, and my own past experience as a student in CSL. If at any point I had concerns or questions, I discussed them with my supervisor. I documented these notes consistently, which are reflected in the concluding chapter.

Because I was a teaching assistant for the course I had to put rigorous thought into how I could most effectively and ethically conduct observations for the study, while at the same time be a competent instructor. I completed reflective field noting, discussed with my supervisor on a frequent basis, and returned to my field noting during analysis to ensure my role in the study was that of a researcher. I believe my position as a teaching assistant provided benefits as it enabled me to create pre-existing relationships with the participants and gain a deeper understanding of the study context. During interviews, I made it clear to the participants that I would like them to explain their answers to me as if I wasn't there and didn't know about the program.

Commitment & Rigor. Yardley (2000) noted that "the concept of commitment encompasses prolonged engagement with the topic…. the development of competence and skill in the methods used, and immersion in the relevant data" (p. 221). As a researcher, I attempted to ensure "attentiveness to the participant during data collection" and bring care to the data analysis (Smith et al., 2009, p. 181). I did this by ensuring an idiographic approach to my analysis; looking deeply at one participant's experience before moving on to the next (Smith et al., 2009). I asked the participants if they were comfortable in the interviews and tried to be very attentive to the experiences and conversations they chose to share with me. Yardley (2000) also stated that rigor refers to the "resulted completeness" of the data. Triangulation was used to bring multiple sources of data forward and explore the limits of the experiences of the CSL context (field observations, interviews, artifacts, and focus groups). A two-level member reflection was undertaken. Following the collection of interview and focus group data, I transcribed the audio-recordings and sent the transcripts back to the participants through email so they could verify that the information was accurate and reflected what transpired in the interviews. Five out of nine participants responded, reporting their transcripts were an accurate depiction of their experiences. Additionally, following thematic analysis, I provided a summary of the findings to the participants through email, so they could provide feedback and indicate if they saw themselves in the summary of the findings, known as member reflections (Markula & Silk, 2011; Smith & McGannon, 2017). Four out of nine participants responded, reporting that the findings were an accurate depiction of their experiences.

As a researcher, I continued to improve my interview skills throughout the process; I am member of two research teams and have past experience conducting interviews. I ensured to create an effective interview guide, to keep the interview focused, to efficiently collect data in

the time period available with each participant (Patton, 2002). The interview guide consisted of questions that were clear, open-ended, easy to understand, and enabled the participants to share their experience comfortably (Patton, 2002). This was confirmed through the pilot interviews. Prior to conducting the study, I piloted the interview guide with a colleague in the adapted physical activity lab to seek feedback regarding administration and structure of the interview guide (non-content). I also piloted the interview guide with two community members that participated previously in the CSL program. The pilot interview participants found the interview schedule to flow with ease, effective, and interesting. They suggested questions to be added to capture the full range of the CSL experience (e.g., physical, emotional, and social). The additions were made prior to conducting the research study.

I attempted to establish rapport through casual, friendly and reciprocal conversation, sharing information about myself, and attending to their questions and concerns. I respected the participants and their answers, and told them that their experiences and feelings were important to me (Patton, 2002). I also gave care to communicating my "personal interest and attention to the subject" by being attentive, nodding my head, using appropriate facial expressions, and asking for clarification when needed (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992).

Transparency & Cohesion. Transparency requires the research process be clearly described in the write up of the study (Smith et al., 2009). I attempted transparency by "carefully describing how participants were selected, how the interview schedule was constructed and the interview[s] were conducted, and what steps were used in analysis" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 182). My position as a teaching assistant while being a research assistant was openly noted. During the research process, I provided full disclosure to the participants by explaining the purpose of the study.

I achieved coherence by reading and re-reading drafts of the write up, as well as asking others to read it to effectively present consistent and clear arguments and themes (Smith et al., 2009; Zitomer & Goodwin, 2014). Theory was used throughout the research process to ensure cohesion during its entirety. I did regular debriefing with my supervisor continually throughout the study, and also performed a secondary data analysis. An example of the notes used during data analysis can be found in the Appendix (See Appendix F). I achieved cohesion within my ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions through identifying them in an interpretive paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Markula & Silk, 2011).

Impact & Importance. Impact and importance refers to the significance, understanding, meaningfulness, and useful knowledge that the piece of research provides to the readers (Smith et al., 2009; Yardley, 2000; Zitomer & Goodwin, 2014). I aspired to conduct a research study that was meaningful to not only the people with whom I was working, but others in the field. My aim was to have results that created practical knowledge that is theoretically transferable to not only educators in APA, but other disciplines that utilize disability-related practicums, such as recreation therapy, physiotherapy, medicine, nursing, social work and teaching, which I believe was achieved (Yardley, 2000). Readers can determine theoretical transferability by linking the analysis of this IPA study, other literature, and their own personal and professional experience, to determine if the study is more or less similar to other contexts. To increase transferability, I provided detailed description of the study context, so that people in other disciplines can accurately judge if the findings suit their settings (Shenton, 2004).

Ethical Considerations

"Qualitative research tends to be subjective, contextual, and ethically more complex than quantitative research because of the integral role the researcher and participants play through

their involvement in the research process and the investigated social context" (Zitomer & Goodwin, 2014, p. 194). Due to the sensitive context of my research, I took the following measures to ensure ethical research.

I applied for ethics through *Research Ethics & Management Online (REMO)*. This included creating a HERO application and answering all questions related to the ethics of the study. The ethics application was approved on June 23, 2016. I adhered to the guidelines of my ethics application throughout the research process.

Prior to starting the proposal for this project, I contacted the director of the community organization to garner permission to conduct research within the programs offered. The director of the community organization was also the instructor of the CSL course. I reinforced to the instructor/director, that the intent of the study is not to evaluate the instructor, course, how it was delivered, or organized, but rather to explore a common adapted physical activity practice, used widely across institutions. The instructor/director understood my purpose, found it to be an interesting topic, and approved my request to do the research with the course and organization.

Signed informed consent was attained for participation in the research study (see Appendix E). Smith et al. (2009) suggested that consent should be attained for not only data collection, but for the "likely outcomes of data analysis" (p. 53), such as the inclusion of verbatim extracts in a published article. The informed consent and information letters clearly stated that data would be presented at a research conference, and submitted for publication, with the use of anonymous identifiers and verbatim extracts. An explanation of the study was provided in the face-to-face interview and the right to withdraw anytime during data collection, and a question period was allotted. In my consent form, I made sure to note that participation in this study would not have any effect on their participation in programming at the community

organization.

Raw data were only seen by my supervisor and me. Pseudonyms were assigned to the participants following the collection of data. I stored data in a locked cabinet, in locked room, to which only I have access. I locked any online information with a password for both the computer as well as the account where I filed the data. In the event that sensitive issues arose during any point of the study which causes distress in the participants, I was prepared to refer them to the Alberta Health Link - dialing 811. Referral was not required. As a researcher, I did my best to ensure "open-mindedness; flexibility; patience; empathy; and the willingness to enter into, and respond to, the participant's world" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 53).

Chapter 4: Research Study

The unheard partner in adapted physical activity Community Service Learning

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Abstract

Researchers in this study explored how community members experienced an adapted physical activity (APA) undergraduate community service learning (CSL) course. Nine adults (*female = 2, male =7, mean age =*50) experiencing disability enrolled in a senior-undergraduate, adapted physical activity CSL course, participated in the study. Data collection sources were individual and focus group interviews, observation and field notes, and artifacts. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was used to inform the research process (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Relational ethics provided the conceptual framework. Four themes described the participants' experiences, (a) yes, we will be partners in CSL (b) but…we're in the dark, (c) subjected to being the subject, and (d) always engage through relationships. Although participants were not fully engaged in collaborative and reciprocal activities with the organization or the students, participants revealed that relationship building contributed significantly to how they experienced CSL.

Community Service Learning (CSL), a tool used to enhance academic learning and promote civic engagement, combines classroom theory with community practice (Jacoby, 1996; Richards, Eberline, Padaruth, & Templin, 2015; Roper & Santiago, 2014). Adapted physical activity (APA) and pre-service teacher education have historically used disability-related CSL practicum placements, combined with course work, to prepare students for professional practice in inclusive environments (Connolly, 1994; DePauw, 2000; Hodge & Jansma, 1999; Hodge, Tannehill, & Kluge 2003). Although principles of CSL are based on collaboration with all partners engaged, the community member voice is largely absent from the research literature (Blouin & Perry, 2009; Domangue & Carson, 2008).

Kaleidoscope Lens of CSL

Mintz & Hesser (1996) presented a model for viewing CSL that they coined 'the kaleidoscope.' It is marked by the three key components of collaboration, reciprocity and diversity, which acknowledges the interrelationships of the academy, students, community organizations, and members of specific communities in bringing the experiences, expectations, and attitudes of each partner together. In a *collaborative* environment, the expectations, interests and concerns of the partners come together to determine mutually beneficial outcomes and clearly articulated service and learning goals. Partners share power equally, ensuring trust, community building, and inclusivity within their relationships. *Reciprocity* means that each partner participates as both a teacher and a learner. Those receiving student support are also actively involved in identifying the nature of the service and the responsibilities of the partners. The *diversity* lens is a way of bringing a culture of respect and appreciation for race, ethnicity, gender, age, class, sexual orientation, and ability to the CSL environment as all forms of human difference are valued. The kaleidoscope model acts as a lens for viewing CSL from perspectives

other than our own (Mintz & Hesser, 1996). The outcomes of collaboration, reciprocity and diversity include shared knowledge creation and understanding, increased awareness of social concerns, and action that addresses public needs (Domangue & Carson, 2008; Richards, Eberline, Padaruth, & Templin, 2015).

Guidelines for promoting collaboration with program staff and implementing CSL (e.g., Bishop & Driver, 2007; Darby, Ward-Johnson, & Cobb Elon, 2016; Miron & Moely, 2006; Moorman & Arellano-Unruh, 2002; Richard & Wilson, 2012; Sandy & Holland, 2006), largely ignore the perspectives of those who are the recipients of the service (the community *members*) and thereby the principles of collaboration and reciprocity (Mintz & Hesser, 1996).

A Pedagogical Tool

The benefits of CSL as an academic tool for students are well documented and include increased learning, achievement, performance, and engagement in the classroom (Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, & Yee, 2000; Domangue & Carson, 2012; Furco & Root, 2010; Richard et al., 2015). Moreover, students practically apply what they are learning in the classroom, are exposed to career possibilities, and gain an increased social, personal, and political awareness about the world around them (Astin et al., 2000; Furco & Root. 2010).

Within adapted physical education teacher preparation contexts, researchers have concluded that experiential learning[2] promotes positive attitude changes towards people experiencing disability, increases students' perceived competence, and promotes inclusion in classrooms (Ellis, Lepore, & Liebermann, 2012; Folsom-Meek, Nearing, Grotesluschen, & Krampf, 1999; Hodge, Davis, Woodward, & Sherill, 2002. Connolly (1994), Hodge, Tannehill,

[2] The term experiential learning is used as it was not clear from the published literature if the programs students engaged in fulfilled the CSL tenets of collaboration, reciprocity, and diversity (Mintz & Hesser, 1996).

and Kluge (2003), and Standal and Rugseth (2014) focused on the meaning of experiential learning for APA students who would be working outside of school classrooms. The students wrote reflective journals of their experiences, which were thematically analyzed. All researchers reported that the students underwent transformational learning whereby their previous attitudes and assumptions about people experiencing disability were challenged.

Community Voices in CSL

In contrast to the benefits of CSL to students, the benefits to the community have not been clearly identified (Blouin & Perry, 2009; d'Arlarch et al., 2009). Bishop and Driver (2007) suggested that service-learning may provide organizations with a free resource. Rarely, however, have researchers focused on "how recipients of service view the service" (d'Arlarch, Sanchez, & Feuer, 2009, p. 5).

Sandy & Holland (2006) indicated that although community participants emphasized the importance of relationship building when engaging in CSL, the perspectives of community members in partnerships with universities are under-represented. There appears to be resistance to acknowledging community members as contributors to relationship building with partners (d'Arlarch et al., 2009; Hinley, 2004; Saltmarsh et al., 2008). Blouin & Perry (2009) also found that although community participants found their experiences to be positive, there were challenges in creating mutual and reciprocal relationships. Finally, d'Arlarch and colleagues (2009) found that community participants had mixed emotions about the students they were working with who they described as being unidirectional, yet polite and helpful or even uninterested.

In a rare APA study, the voices of the community were heard. Goodwin, Lieberman, Johnston and Leo (2011) examined the experiences of youth with visual impairments at summer

camp where university APA students acted as camp counsellors in conjunction with a course practicum. The authors noted that although the campers thought the student counsellors were helpful in their camp success and created safe environments, they were criticized for being patronizing and limiting independence. The relational tension between the participants and practicum students highlighted the risk associated with non-reflective use of CSL as a pedagogical tool for student learning in APA and as a needed supplementary resource for programs.

To address the research gap in community member's experiences of CSL and bring pedagogical reflectiveness to its use in the preparation of adapted physical activity professionals, the purpose of this study was to explore: How do members of the disability community experience undergraduate adapted physical activity community service learning?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for the study was Relational Ethics (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005). The kaleidoscope lens of CSL has many parallels and synergies with relational ethics, making it a suitable framework for the study. Collaboration, reciprocity, and acceptance of diversity are possible through meaningful engagement with others. Relational ethics encompasses a deep interdependence between humans by living in the world *together* through relationships. There are four tenets of relational ethics (a) mutual respect, (b) embodiment, (c) relational engagement, and (d) environment. *Mutual Respect* is having respect for oneself and for others, and embracing diverse perspectives. How we treat ourselves and others is reflected in such traits as self-worth, confidence and pride as it intersects with factors such as power, choice, freedom, attentiveness, reciprocity and responsiveness. The tenet *embodiment* means that credibility is given to the embodied knowledge gained through actions, feelings, and experiences

that are situated in historical and social contexts (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005). The resulting knowledge contributes significantly to existing theoretical knowledge of self and others. *Relational engagement* is a commitment to actively engage with people with diverse knowledge and experiences. It involves interdependence, and the learning and understanding of others, but not at the sacrifice of independence and autonomy. *Environment* is the creation, through our everyday actions, of an environment where ethical reflection can take place. A relational ethical environment occurs when there is recognition that not only do our decisions impact others, but the impact must be understood through larger social and political systems.

Method

The research approach undertaken for this study was interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009). Smith et al. (2009) purported that in choosing IPA "we commit ourselves to exploring, describing, interpreting, and situating the means by which our participants make sense of his/her experiences" (p. 40). Researchers use IPA to seek understanding of lived experiences by exploring people's perspectives, as it provides a systematic framework for describing and interpreting everyday occurrences. IPA is grounded in phenomenology, hermeneutics, and idiography. Phenomenologists focus on the study of and description of lived experiences through individual perspectives and meanings. The focus of hermeneutics is interpretation, whereby researchers attend to the dynamic relationship between themselves and their participants. Researchers make sense of participants making sense of their experiences, known as a double hermeneutic (Smith et al., 2009). The central concern of idiography is a commitment by researchers to uncover deep and detailed understanding of single case experiences prior to moving across participants.

Study Context

The study took place within a not-for-profit disability-specific community fitness organization housed at a large Canadian university. The fitness facility has standard contemporary exercise equipment designed for diverse users, and was staffed by adapted physical activity fitness professionals. Participants attended a four-week fitness program, twice per week, designed to enable participants to develop exercise skills, proper technique and knowledge of cardiovascular training, resistance training, and flexibility, in accordance with their individual needs and goals. The staff was to inform the participants of the CSL partnership prior to the voluntary registration in the student-led program.

The instructor of a senior-level undergraduate course adapted physical activity course partnered with the program through CSL. The students completed fitness assessments and designed a fitness plan for one or two participants. They provided direct support as required to achieve the fitness goals for a four-week period. During the program sessions students and participants had access to the organization's fitness staff and a teaching assistant for the CSL placement.

The CSL placement learning objectives for the students were (a) leadership and facilitation, (b) support administration of fitness assessments (c) adapt exercise, (d) create adapted exercise programs based on individual goals and needs (e) develop rapport and, (f) communication and time management skill development. The overall learning objectives of the CSL course were (a) understand how assumptions and paradigms impact community programs (b) increase understanding of historical and contemporary ideologies framing physical impairment, sport and physical activity, (c) debate and discuss current topics in adapted physical activity, (d) increase knowledge of assessment, program creation, implementation and evaluation

of adapted physical activity settings, (e) apply theories of motivation, empowerment, and self-determination to promote and facilitate independence, and (f) apply material discussed in course to real-life settings.

Participants

Nine adults (*n* = 2, female, *n* = 7 Male, *age range = 28-65 years, mean age = 50*) years participated in the study. Two participants were recruited from the first section of the program and seven from the second section in the same semester. Participants experienced disability due to functional limitations imposed by interactions between neurological impairments and the environment[3]. Three participants used wheelchairs, and two participants used a cane to support ambulation. One participant had previous experience with the fitness program while the remaining were new to the program. All participants had engaged with students in other settings, such as in hospitals, physiotherapy clinics, and occupational therapy clinics. Written consent to participate in the research study was provided in accordance with the Ethics Certificate granted by the host university. Pseudonyms were assigned to protect the privacy and anonymity of all participants. Due to the inclusion of the participant's value in the research inquiry, "ethics is intrinsic" to an interpretive paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 115). The researchers therefore disclosed all information about the research study to the participant.

Data Collection

The data collection methods included completion of demographic forms, audio recorded one-on-one and focus group interviews, observations, artifacts, and field notes. One semi-

[3] Ecological descriptors were used to describe the participants so as not to perpetuate ableistic labeling of people by perceived deficits.

structured, face-to-face interview was conducted with each participant using an interview schedule informed by the CSL kaleidoscope lens (Mintz & Hesser, 1996), and relational ethics, (Markula & Silk, 2011; Smith et al., 2009). Each interview was approximately one hour long with the aim of entering the world of the participants and providing them a space to recall their stories and experiences, while probing deeper into issues raised (Markula & Silk, 2011). The interviews were held within one week of their last session with the students. Sample questions included: What did it feel like to meet the students for the first time? How did you feel about your role when working with the students? Why did you choose to get involved with this program?

Three weeks after the last interview, two focus groups of two people were completed to provide opportunities for the participants to share their experiences with others and expand on their earlier ideas. The remaining participants declined participation in or were not available for participation in a focus group. Initial questions were formulated from the one-on-one interviews, followed by free-flowing discussion. Sample questions included: The term *guinea pig* was used. What does that mean to you, and how do you feel about that? How does it feel to repeatedly be the 'subject' of the students' learning? What were the advantages or disadvantages in engaging with undergraduate students?

Observations occurred twice over the length of the CSL course (once at the beginning, once at the end), with the intent of observing the overall relational environment of the CSL context. General descriptions of the environment were noted, and a number of broad questions were used as prompts for observation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). Field notes were also recorded after each one-on-one and focus group interview, capturing thoughts, reflections, feelings, ideas, and follow-up questions (Mayan, 2009). The observations and field notes were used to reflect on

the overall research study during data analysis and interpretation (Mayan, 2009).

Data Analysis

Data analysis involved an idiographic, line-by-line thematic analysis, including a six-step procedure recommended for IPA (a) reading and re-reading one individual transcript, (b) initial descriptive and conceptual noting, (c) developing emergent themes, (d) searching for connections and developing super-ordinate themes, (e) moving onto the next case, and (f) looking for patterns across each individual case (Braun & Clark, 2006; Smith et al., 2009). The focus group analysis followed the same the idiographic approach. This involved reading and re-reading each focus group transcript, focusing on individual experiences within (particulars). Connections and patterns across individual and focus group interviews were then identified to create super-ordinate themes (Smith et al., 2009). Relational ethics was drawn upon to bring a deeper understanding of the meanings held within (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005). Summaries of the findings were returned to the participants requesting reflective feedback (Smith & McGannon, 2017). Four participants returned their summaries all affirming that they could identify with the findings as they were presented.

Trustworthiness

Smith et al. (2009) suggested using Yardley's (2000) widely cited criteria for trustworthiness of IPA research. The criteria include sensitivity to context, commitment and rigor, transparency and coherence, and impact and importance. Strategies for *sensitivity to the context* included an understanding of published literature on CSL specific to educational disability settings. Detailed information was provided to explain context and participants, without compromising identity. Researchers were reflective in nature, and thought critically

about their social position and history and how it affected their thinking, noted through field notes. A two level member reflection was conducted (a) to confirm the completeness and accurately of the transcripts and (b) to provide the opportunity for the participants to reflect on summary statements of the findings (Smith & McGannon, 2017). Five of the nine participants responded to emailed summaries indicating that they saw themselves reflected. *Commitment and rigor* were achieved through careful attention to the idiographic nature of the research approach, and care was given during interviews to ensure participants were comfortable enough to be open about their experiences and rigorous data collection (Smith et al., 2009). In addition, triangulation occurred with multiple sources of data (field observations, interviews, artifacts, and focus groups) (Smith & McGannon, 2017). *Transparency and cohesion* were achieved by completing, noting, and detailing the research process and methodology, and filing and photocopying all original documents that were reviewed during analysis. Full disclosure of the research purpose was provided to participants prior to commencing research. Theory was used throughout the research process to bring cohesion to the research purpose, formulation of the interview guide, data analysis and interpretation, and discussion. *Impact and importance* will be determined by how the results of this study are used to inform researchers and practitioners, and what readers find important in their practice. By provided a detailed description of the study context, participants, and research approach, readers can judge the suitability of the findings to their own settings (Shenton, 2004). Thematic findings were presented in the results and illustrated with quotations.

Results

Four themes represented the participants' experiences of CSL. The themes were (a) yes, we will be partners in CSL (b) but…we're in the dark, (c) subjected to being the subjects, and (d)

always engage through relationships.

Yes, We Will be Partners in CSL

The CSL program provided community members with knowledgeable students and staff, and the participants were supportive of and satisfied with the outcomes they received through participation. The degree of mutual respect between the partners was evident through the connectedness of their activities and the interdependence created.

The participants had positive experiences in the CSL context, understanding that by supporting students to apply their knowledge in a learning context, they would be better prepared for professional practice. Their openness to sharing their embodied experiences to advance student learning and success; coupled with the knowledge, support, and preparedness of the students, built a foundation for mutual respect through interdependence and relational engagement through meaningful shared moments. Adam noted, “The students, they are good, they worked well. They are professional…they are well prepared…they know what they are doing….they are very helpful.” Similarly, Carol recalled, “They are really accommodating and they are always there if I need them.” Ryan also recalled, “They were also pretty friendly, and they’re pretty knowledgeable too. I’d rate them pretty high…they seem to think of good ideas….whereas the professionals, some of them, they are just stuck in their ways.” Jack added, “I like the fact that I may give them the ability to try things, cause that’s the only way they are going to learn.” Beyond being knowledgeable, the participants enjoyed the fact that the students were flexible, eager to try new things and recognized that it was their job to try new ideas, test their knowledge, make mistakes, and seek feedback from their instructors. They were not (yet) confined to clinical practice settings where the implementation of perfected, regimented protocols were required. The suggestion that the students were not ‘stuck in their ways’

reinforced the importance of real world experiences in professional preparation and the processes of reflecting -in and -on interdependent action. In this instance, there was a respect and appreciation for the participants' embodied knowledge and how their professional actions may affect others.

Ryan explained further that both he and the students were the teacher and the learner, and the mutual respect that emerged due to the reciprocity of the combined perspectives ultimately enhanced his engagement in the program He stated:

> They were willing to learn and at the same time they were willing to teach…I actually like it, because I like helping people out, and that's a good thing for me….They are learning from me….and they get to teach me things I didn't know about working out…so it's kind of a mutual arrangement.

The participants had differing ideas of what the students might be learning in the CSL program, highlighting the diverse nature of CSL. For example, Alan suggested students would gain confidence in their facilitation skills. He explained:

> I think they are learning how to talk in front of people, get over it, you know what I mean? They've got to stand up in front of a crowd and talk. Some might not like it, or might be a little shy. They're talking to somebody and showing them what to do…the ability to teach someone else.

Carol was direct in what she hoped students would learn, stating, "…learn and have an idea with the different cases…I would like them to know that it takes time and a whole lot of patience…and there is not enough people these days to give a hand to help out." Jim explained the benefit of engaging with diverse populations was creating a space for different perspectives.

He stated:

> I think that as each one of us, as different individuals, we each have something different. And I noticed that I don't think I was with the same people every time. That gives them a chance to be with each and every one of us to understand the difference between what we needed in services, and what we could do. Like, they put us through those exercises, what we could do and what we needed, and so they needed that to help them learn.

At the same time, the participants respected and trusted the students' knowledge base, and were forgiving of the level of service they received at times. They valued and respected the students' pre-professional contributions in a demanding and diverse applied learning setting. As Alan so well stated, "Well, I could tell they were learning. You know what; nobody knows it all, right? Everybody's got to learn one time in their life." Mike expressed, "So I think if you do this program here, you should be able to be more understanding of the students…it may be hard on the students because they have to work, study, and do their practicum." By creating a relational space between the partners, a positive learning environment was created. Not only did participants see CSL as beneficial to them as community members, but recognized the potential for pedagogical meaningfulness for the students.

But…We're in the Dark

Only five of the nine participants were informed they were registered in a fitness program aligned with a CSL class and that they would be working with students. As such, they were not collaborative partners in the planning or implementation of the program. None of the participants received a briefing on the course objectives, the course outlines, or received other forms of communication as to the nature of the CSL context. Collaboration, as one of the cornerstones of

CSL, requires acknowledgement and voice of partners' needs, concerns and expectations. In the instance of this CSL program, the participants were passive partners in the planning of the CSL program, leading to confusion. Mike explained:

> I was totally surprised. I thought everyone was working at the gym. It wasn't until I was talking to one of the students they told me that he was a student. And I realized this was part of a class.

Allison's comment further illustrates the extent to which the participants were invisible in the CSL planning and implementation processes, "What is their participation in this? Are they to figure out what they can do for us? To help us exercise, or what?"

Without understanding the perspectives of the participants,' opportunities for inclusivity, community building, and relational engagement were left to chance. Jim was unsure of the expectations for the program. His comment highlighted the degree to which the participants were excluded as valuable partners in the CSL planning processes and left to their own devices to make sense of their participation, and that of the students. In turn, the students appeared to be uncertain of their roles in the CSL program. Jim relayed:

> I wasn't quite sure what it was they were supposed to be learning….what it was we were doing – what was I helping them with?...I should probably ask them. Well like last week, I asked them what the course was and it was kind of vague.

The lack of collaboration in determining and sharing expectations, knowledge, skills, and concerns of the instructor, students, and participants made it difficult to foster collaboration, diminishing the potential for engagement and the creation of a relational space where each partner is included and valued.

After participating with the students for four weeks, the participants were left wondering what the students learned in their time with them. Mike stated "Oh, I would love to know what they learned from this experience," and Ryan said, "For me, I think I would like to know what they did learn." Participants were vulnerable to the students, sharing their embodied knowledge and lived experiences, but were left unsure of their impact beyond the four weeks of the program, or the efficacy of their roles as disability teachers. Participants wondered if engagement with the students had any long-term impact on their perspective as professionals, or if the students were simply completing course requirements, with little reflection -in or -on their CSL experiences. Questions about the respect that the students held for the participants and whether they valued their knowledge or the everyday moments of time they spent together were left unanswered; time that can bring wakefulness to the impact of cultural, social, and political systems on connection and community building. Jim explained:

> I hope they're going away thinking that I helped them with whatever they needed to be helped with. I probably figure that they're going home thinking absolutely nothing. Just, it was what they had to do, and after they're finished, they don't think anything.

With limited dialogue, the community members were denied partner status prior to the commencement of the program. They were left open to being perceived as objects of the students' learning, minimizing the potential for a learning environment built on collaboration and reciprocity.

Subjected to Being the Subject

The participants felt at times that their role in CSL was that of a subject, something students can learn about (or on) and something to practice, learn, or act on, in relation to their

classroom course work. For example, when asked what his role was in CSL, Jim responded, "Guinea pig….like a subject." Ryan added, "Using me as a dummy…but basically…just being a subject for them to work with I guess." The terms *guinea pig,*[4] is a term used to describe a subject role, meant for experimentation and research. *Dummy* connotes to figure or form on which to act out procedures or methods. The participants perceived their role to be that of a subject of curiosity within the exercise domain due to impairment. Being a subject of another decreased the opportunity for sharing embodied knowledge, mutual respect, partnership through engagement, or vulnerability of the learner to seek information beyond classroom learning.

The participants attempted to balance their perceived roles as guinea pigs and dummies by sharing personal information about themselves to foster relationship building and enhance student knowledge and comfort. This required vulnerability on the part of the participants as they shared information beyond that typical of conversations with strangers. When reflecting on what her role was in CSL, Allison stated, "Well, exposing myself…because, you know, it depends on where you are. So that comes up. So, exposing myself I guess, and my condition to them." Similarly, Jim said, "To help the students the only way you can do it is to tell them what happened to us, why we're this way, and what we can and can't do." Expose means to reveal a true nature, to uncover, or to make visible. This type of sharing was not reciprocal, as there was no equivalency for the students. There was the potential for interdependency however, as the participants' sharing of embodied knowledge should give rise to facilitating the ability of the students' to provide meaningful support in the exercise context. This isn't always the case however. Allison recalled:

[4] Guinea pig is an idiom, and can be defined as "2: a subject of research, experiment, or testing" (Merriam-Webster, 2017).

> What I don't like is when people don't introduce themselves and people just come in and look at us and have back and forth questions, you know the doctors do all this stuff, and the instructors doing all the telling about us, and that we can't say anything about how we feel. Then that is where it draws a line.

Jack on the other hand said "I'm used to it, cause you know, when you have [impairment], you see so many people. That's why I have a hard time with names." Ryan reiterated, "Well I've just been dealing with students for a long time. So I kind of know."

Interdependence implies mutual respect, with decisions made together, and each partner thinks deeply about the other. The participants worked to understand the perspectives of the students, however it was less clear if the assumption of an expert role by the students shifted the power dynamic away from an ethic of mutual respect.

Always Engage Through Relationships

All participants highlighted how their face-to-face relationships with students impacted their experiences of the CSL context. Not all participants defined their relationships with the students in the same way however, the basis of *how* they desired to interact with the students was collectively consistent. For example, Alan, Adam, and Matt defined their relationships as personal trainer and client, while others defined their relationships as friendly acquaintances. Participants appreciated and desired authentic connections, reciprocal sharing, and mutual respect in their day-to-day interactions with the CSL partners. For example, Jack stated "I like just having somebody there if you want to talk a bit....We would talk about things that are going on sometimes, like you know, Trump." Similarly, Alan said "I'd say to the students it'd be like a social thing. Cause that's one of the reasons I came." Getting to know each other and being able

to have casual and relaxed conversation was important. The participants expressed a desire to build rapport and trust through casual and friendly conversations. Ryan explained:

> Well they got to know me at first I guess…me as a person…because that's a big – their job I think. Just being a generally social person….they actually like listened to me. They talked to me and it was back and forth, not just telling me what to do, you know?

When Ryan used the word "actually," it suggests that professionals listening to him were not common experiences. This form of relational engagement required the students to respect Ryan's dignity and look past labels. Ryan felt a relational environment that enabled him to connect and engage with students. Participants were understanding of the students' roles and their required learning but also had a desire for students to understand them as living, human beings with needs, wants, and emotions. For example, Jack explained "...understanding that everybody is human - just cause they have [impairment]…doesn't mean I'm not human anymore, or have feelings, you know? That type of understanding."

Beyond seeing the participants as people, Jim highlighted the desire for the students to engage with him to ascertain his abilities before making helper or professional expert assumptions. He explained, "I would say to start with understanding. Understand what, not so much to help and assist. To understand first, and hang back and if we need assisting then assist." Similarly, Adam expressed "It's better to know me first…don't put yourself [into the]…expert [role]." Moreover, the participants wanted the students to engage relationally, to gain functional knowledge about impairment. Mike explained "It was important for them to know that my hand can't raise more than this…because they don't know by looking at me."

As demonstrated, not all participants experienced the same type of positive relationship

building with the students. However, all participants expressed a desire for relational connectedness, engagement, and respect in the CSL context. Matt had feelings of discomfort when the students didn't show a respect for and engage with him. Matt desired an authentic connection with the students, for them to be *with* him in the environment. In this conversation (after hesitant body language and a disappointed facial expression when asked about his relationship with the students), he stated:

> "*Would you rather them try to get to know you more?"*
> "Yes! Know you."
> "*Get to know you more?"*
> "Yeah, know you!...Questions…communication…open…interested."

Discussion

Although there is little information available in the literature to guide instructors about *how* to create mutually beneficial CSL contexts (VanSickle & Schaumleffel, 2015), the participants still found their experiences to be generally positive and beneficial, consistent with the findings of others (Blouin & Perry, 2009; Holsapple, 2012). The students were introduced to movement diversity, and a sense of reciprocity was created between the participants and the students in part due to the generosity and tolerance of the participants. At the same time, lost opportunities for relationship building and the shared learning and teaching it could bring were evident through the reflective unpacking of participants' experiences using a relational ethics lens (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005).

Limited collaboration at the organizational level (fitness facility) existed in the goal setting, planning and implementation of the program. Participants revealed that the extent of

their contributions to student learning and their perceived value was curtailed by the inaction (lack of collaboration) of the CSL organization, relegating the participants to the role of subjects for student learning devalued their voice, embodied knowledge, and collaborative contribution to the pedagogical goals of the program. With the provision for structured opportunities to express interests, concerns, and expectations, daily interactions between the participants and the students could have created opportunities to gain valuable perspectives of others' through expressions of mutual respect, relational engagement, embodied knowledge, and an environment conducive to reflecting- in and -on actions (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005; Sandy & Holland, 2006; Schon, 1983).

Layers of relationship building held different meanings for the participants depending upon the partner (i.e., students, community organization). The findings will be discussed against the kaleidoscope components of CSL (i.e., reciprocity, diversity, and collaboration) using the lens of relational ethics, to bring a deep appreciation of the importance of community members in the planning, implementation, and success of CSL programs (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005; d'Arlach et al., 2009; Jacoby, 2003; Mintz & Hesser, 1996).

Reciprocity. Reciprocal relationships mean that each partner in CSL is acting as both the teacher and the learner (Minter & Hesser, 1996). Interdependency among partners (students, participants, organization) was evident, whereby the students learned from the community, and the community organization and participants appreciated and benefitted from the students' presence and support (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005). The day-to-day social interactions between community members and students were generally friendly, authentic, and connected, showing a level of relational engagement (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005). However, while student-community social interactions remained generally positive, the role of the 'subject' that was experienced by participants diminished the possibility of the community taking on a teaching role – and perhaps

at times even a learner role, resulting in an imbalance of autonomy with the potential result being that decisions were made for rather than with the community members (Mintz & Hesser, 1996; Jacoby, 1996; Bergum & Dossetor, 2005). Student learning was the priority, which made it difficult to see collaboration *with* the participants as important to the creation of a relational CSL space. The participants were relegated to an instrumental, objective role for the students (Blouin & Perry, 2009; Bringle & Hatcher, 1996). This relegation was not willful necessarily, but the result of not reflecting on the importance of collaboration in the CSL program. The participants' knowledge was lost to what some would term the ableistic assumptions that the participants were the passive recipients of service with no voice, rather than a valued knowledge-keeper of embodied disability experiences (Campbell, 2001). Moreover, for the students to engage in civic learning and bring a cultural, social and political importance to their relationships, community members need to be placed in teaching roles where their diverse life experiences and embodied knowledge can be brought to bear (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005; Bringle & Hatcher, 1996; Levesque-Bristol & Cornelius-White, 2012). Although there was attentiveness to daily decisions and personhood to the participants, and connectedness between students and community members, the lack of engagement and appreciation for embodiment between the organization and the community participants diminished the pedagogical richness and meaning that the reciprocal roles of teacher and learner can bring.

Diversity. A diverse CSL program means respecting and appropriately highlighting human differences by having an appreciation of the qualities that each partner has to offer (Mintz & Hesser, 1996). Diversity can be honored by embracing embodied knowledge, engaging with others and seeing past labels, considering the wholeness of people, being vulnerable in interactions, and being authentic in the desire to learn (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005). Appreciating

diversity requires a commitment to shared goal setting, a commitment of time for planning and reflection, and flexibility to accommodate the best interests of all parties (Mintz & Hesser, 1996). The CSL program provided students with a significant opportunity to learn beyond their classroom exercise science knowledge, to a more holistic view of the social and cultural influence at work in fitness and exercise contexts (Haegele & Hodge, 2016; Standal & Rugseth, 2016).

The participants were willing and even eager to contribute to the professional preparation of the students by sharing their life worlds with them, knowing that they would at times be objectified by the students. Their willingness was thwarted however, by inattention to the creation of structured opportunities for collaboration and community building, ultimately impoverishing the students' potential learning experiences and the quality of the participants' time in the program (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005; d'Arlarch et al., 2009). Over time, their good will in 'putting themselves out there' waned, an unwelcome outcome of their participation. The participants were vulnerable in the CSL setting and expressed it by sharing how their bodies moved, providing information on medical labeling, the impact of medications, aspirations and fitness concerns, and stories of their lives at the risk of being subjectified. Moreover, participants weren't given the opportunity to provide feedback or their perspective on their experience with the students nor were the students required to share their learnings with the participants (Duncan, 2001; Hehir, 2002).

Although the participants acknowledged and valued the knowledge base of the students, the relational space for mutual sharing of knowledge is difficult to create when the community members are placed in a subject role (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005). Ethical issues of power and risk of creating assumptions around ability arise when participants are not enabled to share their

embodied knowledge – knowledge that is experienced and a result of thinking, feeling, and living what is known as 'disability' (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005; Campbell, 2001; Jacoby, 2003).

Collaboration. A collaborative environment is marked by shared goals and objectives, where each partner's interests and concerns are acknowledged, and given equal status (Mintz & Hesser, 1996). Collaboration is enhanced by assessing power relations between partners, respecting and valuing interests, engaging with partner perspectives without manipulation, and finding meaning in each voice (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005; Mintz & Hesser, 1996). The students brought a knowledge base (voice) to the CSL program that the participants described as desirable and needed. Unfortunately, when it came to the implementation of the program, the participants were not valued in a similar way, removing them from an interdependent relationship given their expertism on disability (d'Arlarch et al., 2009; Himley, 2004; Saltmarsh et al., 2008). With the participants being in the dark about the students' roles and expectations, it was difficult to create a mutually respectful learning environment (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005; d'Arlarch et al., 2009; Mintz & Hesser, 1996). Neglecting to place the community in an expert role was consistent with the findings of (d'Arlarch et al., 2009). The subject role of the participants (Campbell, 2001) raises ethical issues about power, privileged knowledge, and expertise (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005, Goodwin & Rossow-Kimball, 2012). Although not the focus of this study, by omitting the development of an environment built on collaboration, mutual respect, shared goals and objectives, and valuing each partners' contribution, there is also risk of placing the students in a situation of fear and nervousness (Connolly; 1994; Hodge et al., 2003) which may inhibit relationship building, at least initially. The practice of CSL raises pedagogical questions worthy of ethical reflection. Without full and explicit collaboration with the community around goals and objectives, students are left to their own devices to determine if their actions are beneficial,

effective, and appropriate from the communities' perspective. It also becomes difficult for the community members to truly collaborate with the student community (Jacoby, 1996; Mintz & Hesser, 1996).

In reviewing participant experiences against the kaleidoscope lens, it becomes evident that the CSL outcomes of community collaboration, social concerns, and public needs based on organizational engagement were not fully met (Bringle & Hatcher, 1995; Domangue & Carson, 2008; Furco & Root, 2010; Richards et al., 2015).

CSL organizations and institutions rely on the participation of the community. Researchers in relational ethics suggest that interpersonal and societal relationships are influenced by power dynamics (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005). In working in CSL placements with people who are marginalized in society and potentially disadvantaged as a result, ignoring the voice the community reinforces and perpetuates for social marginalization, power imbalance, and subjectification (Goodwin & Rossow-Kimball, 2012). When the institutional goals are put above the goals of the community, it becomes difficult for students to learn the wider social, political and personal implications of their actions and beliefs (Goodwin & Howe, 2016). Creating a relational environment *with* the community enables reciprocal relationships among the community members, students, and institutions, opening conversations that challenge dominant discourses of disability. Subjective experiences *of* disability are heard; students learn what the community finds important and impactful; and power silos between partners are broken down. Relational ethics (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005), may fill the mutually beneficial *how* gap by providing a conceptual framework for instructors in their desire to create a sense of collaboration, reciprocity and diversity in CSL programs (Mintz & Hesser, 1996).

Conclusion

The participants' lived experiences highlighted the need to look more closely at our everyday practices in APA from multiple perspectives (Goodwin & Rossow-Kimball, 2012; Standal & Rugseth, 2016). Importantly, a commonly used pedagogical tool used in adapted physical activity may require further critical reflection. Due to the highly relational and interdependent nature of CSL, questions of ableism, power, and expertism raise questions of ethical importance (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005; Goodwin & Howe, 2016; Goodwin & Rossow-Kimball, 2012). CSL requires attention and appreciation of each partner's perspective to balance power dynamics and truly enable students to see wider social and political aspects that impact community participants' experiences of disability. The participants in this research study as members of the disability community, *can* provide insight into what is important for students to know and learn when they go out into the world to become practicing professionals.

Relationship building has the potential to foster respect, openness, vulnerability, reflexivity, and mutual understanding. As such, it is important to deeply question the common, taken for granted teaching and professional practices and perhaps consider alternative relational strategies.

In the future, we recommend exploring the voice of the disability community further; exploring strategies on how we can engage with members of the community in collaborative ways when implementing CSL; creating models that integrate relational theories and frameworks for CSL to facilitate the planning, implementation, and evaluation of CSL; and developing strategies for classroom activities that address mutual respect, access to embodied knowledge, engaging collaboratively with partners, and building reciprocal and diverse environments with the community. Finally, evident through the highly relational aspect of CSL in this study, we

believe it is important to reflect about the ways we can continue (or start) to challenge power dynamics existing within common teaching practices and professional practice in APA. It is our hope that the findings of the study will encourage an impetus of engaging in conversations around how we can reciprocally and mutually collaborate with the community in APA, and how we value and view different perspectives in our practices.

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Chapter 5: Final Reflections

Implications

The results of this study are an indication to researchers that an urgency to acknowledge and collaborate with the community members is required. Without giving value to this voice, we run the risk of creating unnecessary and potentially marginalizing power dynamics, wedging (an even larger) gap between the institutions and real, lived, community experiences (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005; Jacoby, 2003; Jacoby, 1996; Scully, 2010). By reinforcing this gap, students cannot possibly see the social and political outcomes of CSL to the fullest potential, as desired in the implementation of CSL (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996; Erickson & Anderson, 2005; Jacoby, 2003).

Participant experiences revealed the community has distinct ideas of what they would like students to know and learn when they are participating in undergraduate adapted physical activity community service learning. Furthermore, there was confirmation in this study that CSL is something that is welcomed and is beneficial to the community members, meaning we may not have to forego implementing the practice of CSL. It is important to note, however, that the findings of this study are not generalizable. Therefore, the only way to evaluate if CSL is welcomed and beneficial to the community is to explicitly consult and collaborate with community members as a valued partner, and hear their experiences, opinions, and perspectives.

So what does this look like? At the very least, I propose community members are recognized as a true partner is CSL – from the highest level of CSL implementation in CSL-using institutions. I also believe community members should have a stronger significance in research around CSL.

Perhaps a first step is to get community members involved in the very root of the CSL implementation. In research and in institutional documentation for guidelines, there is a lack of acknowledgement for the community members, with a large focus on the community organizations. If community members are involved in CSL, then the purpose of CSL itself is discussed with all partners present. This way, community members may decide if it is something they would like to participate in as well as bring their valued knowledge and experience to the table. From there, goals, objectives, and perspectives can be discussed for mutual collaboration and contribution between all partners. The ways in which we could shift our practices within CSL should be discussed in conversation with course instructors, CSL staff, and community organizations, which I am very interested in engaging with.

Limitations

There were a few limitations when conducting this study. I also acted as the teaching assistant for the CSL placement. Thus, it was difficult to separate my experience and involvement in the CSL placement from the study findings. An inevitable bias existed throughout the entire research process; however a number of steps were taking to enhance the credibility of the findings, such as member reflections and reflective writing (*see Chapter 3).* In addition, as the TA, I had a pre-existing relationship with the participants prior to participating in the interviews. As such, participants may have felt that they were not able to share as much as they would have without knowing the TA, in fear of offending me. However, action was taken to make sure the participants were aware that their participation, and thus response in the study, had no impact on me as the TA or staff at the CSL program, and that they should feel free to share whatever they would like without fear of offending. In contrast, the pre-existing relationship that I had with participants may have allowed for greater sharing, as rapport and trust were built prior

to the interview.

Another limitation is that this study only studied a small sample of individuals experiencing disability. It is possible that individuals from other communities may experience the various types of CSL placements that exist. It was not my intent to generalize the findings, rather to bring light to some of the relational aspects that *may* exist within CSL placements, and call to action a greater attentiveness when implementing CSL.

Participants in my study used forms of communication other than verbal, which could pose as a limitation for the study, as I used semi-structured interviews. However, research was undertaken to determine ways to most effectively interview the participants while still honoring their true experience. Alternative ways of interviewing were introduced to participants that required or wanted it. Member reflections were used to ensure that the participants saw themselves in the findings.

Finally, the focus group size was unfortunately small, at two individuals per focus group. After individual interviews, many participants either did not have time to participate in focus group interviews or had health concerns providing a barrier to participate. However, the participants in the focus groups provided in-depth experiences through conversation with each other that supported the exploration of the research question.

Knowledge Translation: Putting Research into Practice

Following the first round of data analysis, I presented my preliminary findings at an adapted physical activity symposium. An attendee at the presentation asked, “What do we do with this information now? As a community organization, what can we do to implement reciprocity and collaboration?” In following weeks, I had a conversation with the community

organization staff, who indicated their interest and willingness to discuss how we could make practices better within the context of their facility and CSL placements. At the end of the semester, course instructors were contacted by staff in the department of CSL looking for feedback on how CSL went during the year, and how it could be done better. The course instructor of this study context then contacted me to see if I wanted to be a part of the conversation with them. The course instructor was very receptive and interested in the results of the study and how we could 'do CSL better.' We engaged in conversations with the CSL department, who also became interested in this as well.

The main points discussed were that the community members are doing work to contribute to student learning without being acknowledged or recognized as a partner, which posed as a concern for the course instructor, the community organization, and the staff in the institution's CSL department, as it does not indicate collaborative, reciprocal or diverse environment, or create a space where power is shared equally amongst all partners (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005; Jacoby, 2003; Mintz & Hesser, 1996). Conversation was held about how we could address this problem – such as (but not limited to):

1) An infographic that explains CSL and what each partner's role is, sharing it prior to participation. This addresses mutual respect and indicates reciprocal actions (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005; Mintz & Hesser, 1996).
2) Acknowledging the community on the CSL website at the institution, the role they play and their contribution, highlighting the diversity that is being contributed to the contexts and acknowledging that their perspectives are valued (Bergum & Dossetor, 1996; Mintz & Hesser, 1996).
3) Highlighting and profiling community participants on the CSL website as they do with

students, instructors, and community organization staff, indicating reciprocal roles and value to each partner (Sigmon, 1979, Jacoby, 2003).

4) Consulting with the community prior to their participation by having all partners in the room at once to identify and disclose goals, and having a year end get together and inviting the community to discuss what was learned. Essentially, creating a space where each individual feels acknowledged, addressed and valued through authentic engagement and reciprocal conversation (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005; Mintz & Hesser, 1996).

Several points were brought up that are worthy of deep reflection. For example, if the community is constantly doing labor to facilitate student learning, what if they don't want to explicitly be involved in the CSL process – does that create more labor (Scully, 2010)? Although important to consider, I believe it should be the choice of the community to make that decision on their own, rather than have the decision made for them (d'Arlarch et al., 2009). Another interesting point brought up was that it might be the role of the community organization to facilitate collaboration with the community. While research has shown that the community organization plays a large role in acting as co-educators for student (Darby et al., 2016), the very basis of the problem stems from creating knowledge about disability without the inclusion of individuals experiencing disability in the conversation (Clapton, 2003; Reid, 2003; Standal, 2014). This issue can only be addressed through the system of *how* CSL is being implemented from the institutional level. It is a display of creating relationships that value community knowledge that is impactful (Bergum & Dossetor, 2005; Goodwin & Rossow-Kimball, 2012).

Following this study, the instructor, community organization, and institutional CSL staff have demonstrated reflexive and reflective thinking about the ways in which this CSL course marginalized community members, which formed the basis for change.

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Appendix A: Participant Demographic Sheet

Experiences of Community Service Learning

Please take a moment to fill in the participant information form. All information collected will support the research outlined in the information letter and will only be seen by the research team. If you are not comfortable answering any of the questions, leave them blank.

Participant Profile

Name: _____

Phone: _____ (home) _____ (mobile)

Email: _____

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Impairment: _____

Number of times involved with students *(please circle)*: 1st time 2-3 times 3+ times

Number of times involved in this specific program *(please circle)*: 1st time 2-3 times 3+ times

Length of Time Attending [organization] *(please circle)*:

0-3 months 3-6 months 6-12 months 1-3 years 3-6 years 6-9 years 10+ years

Why did you join this program?

_____

_____

How many times per week do you see the students through this program? _____

How many times per week do you see students in other programs? _____

Are there any other settings that you have worked with students? If so, please list:

_____

_____

_____

Are there any other settings that you are involved in physical activity? If so, please list:

_____

_____

_____

Appendix B: Interview Guide

1) Tell me about your experiences with the students.
    a. If you could describe it to a friend, what would you say?
        i. Physical, social, emotional aspects
    b. What did you do during a session?
    c. How did you feel during that session?
    d. How did you act, how did the student act?

2) What was the process to get involved in this program with the students?
    a. What type of preparation do you receive?
    b. Why do you choose to get involved with the student program?
    c. What opportunities are created through your shared time with the student, for the student and for you?

3) What did it feel like to meet the student for the first time?
    a. What did you talk about?
    b. Was there anything else, thinking back, that you wished you had talked about?
    c. Did you think differently about what you did and how you did it when the student started participating?
        i. Does your body become conscious to you, and in what ways?
        ii. How does it make you feel?
    d. What things do you think are important to share with the student?
        i. When do you bring them up, and how?
        ii. Are there things you don't wish to share with the student – if so, what are they, and how do you avoid them?
4) What do you feel your role is when working with the student?
    a. What do you wish your role is with the students (if different)?
    b. What do you feel the students perceive their role to be?
    c. What do you wish the student's perceived their role to be (if different)?

5) What contribution do you think you are making to the students' learning?
    a. How do you feel about making that contribution?
    b. What do you think the students want to know when participating?
    c. What do you think the students are learning?

6) What contribution do you think the students are making to your experiences? thinking
    a. What would you change about the contributions the students are making to your participation?
    b. How would you go about communicating this to either the student or the instructor?

7) What type of relationship is formed between you and the student?
    a. What are some specific things you do, if any, in creating a relationship with the student?
    b. What types of things do the students do, if any, in creating a relationship with you?

8) What meaning does this experience hold for you?
    a. What do you think/hope it means for the student?
    b. What do you think they take away from the class time shared with you? What do you take away from it?

Appendix C: Focus Group Moderator Guide

Discussion Points

- What does “dummy” or “guinea pig” mean to you? The “guinea pig” idea - how do you feel about that? Let’s chat about these terms as they’ve been mentioned by many participants.
- The statement “the community (you) welcomes students from CSL and finds it beneficial to be involved in a such a program” - can you respond to this? How do you feel about this statement?
- What is it that you want students to know and learn through this experience? What do you want to learn?
- Can you provide an in-depth explanation of your experience - from when you arrive at the program to the end?
- What was it like for students to be learning about you?
- Common theme: “we’ve participated with so many students that it doesn’t really affect us anymore.” How do you feel about that? Would you change that - keep it that way?
- What kinds of things do you have to do in order to work with the student?
- Tell me a story that gives an example of a typical day with the student.
- How was your experience with the TA or the consultant? What did that do for you?
- How does it feel to repeatedly be the ‘subject’?
- Can you think of specific examples of why this was a positive or negative experience for you?
- How do you form a relationship beyond trainer and client? How did the students get to know you?
- What are the advantages/disadvantages of having a student or a professional?
- Teacher/learner - what are you teaching them?
- Jim - you indicated students need someone to practice on - what does this mean to you, and how do you feel about that?
- Jim - “I hope they come away with some kind of knowledge that things are a little different. That but not that, but not to treat us with kid gloves” - can you elaborate what this means to you?

Appendix D: Observation Notes

CSL Placement Observation Sheet

Date: _____

Descriptive	Basic Observation: ➢ Who is present during the field experience? (students, staff, participants, volunteers?) ➢ What are the people doing in the room? ➢ What is the overall atmosphere like during the field experience? ➢ What is different from the last field experience? Physical Observation: ➢ How are the participants stationed in the room? ➢ Where does the student position her/himself, where is the participant stationed? ➢ Is there noise, conversation, chatter in the room? What does it sound like? ➢ Is there assistive support other than the student present? Is the TA, instructor or APA staff member present? Emotional Climate: ➢ What is the energy level of the day overall, of the individual participant? ➢ What is the nature of general interaction in the room?
Reflective	➢ Pay attention to thoughts, feelings, emotions and interpretations ➢ What were some important thoughts that arose after witnessing the experience? ➢ How do my initial expectations compare with my observation? ➢ What aspect of the relationship and role of the student and participant still need to be explored? ➢ What have I learned from my observations? ➢ What will I need to pay attention to in my next observation? ➢ What were some instances that might help me to probe the interpretation of the experience of the members of TSC?

Appendix E: Participant Information Letter & Informed Consent

Study Title: Why Didn't They Ask Me About My Disability?: Views on Community Service Learning

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Background: We would like to invite you to be a participant in a research study. The reason you are being asked is because you are working students in a university class that uses community service learning. Your stories are important to us. They will help us to understand your experiences when working with students. They will also help us understand your contributions to student learning. The results of this study will be used in support of my thesis project.

We would like to hear your stories if:

- You are at least 18 years of age, and
- You participate in a program working with students in the PEDS 472 class at The Steadward Centre.

Purpose: The purpose of this study is: How do people with impairments experience participation an adapted physical activity undergraduate community service learning setting? The findings will assist in preparing capable professionals.

Study Procedures: By participating in this study, you will need to complete the following:

- Participant information form
- One one-to-one audio recorded interview (approximately 60 minutes)
- One audio recorded focus group with three to five people (approximately 90 minutes)
- Review transcripts of the interview and focus groups to make sure it is accurate (approximately 30 minutes)
- Review a summary of the findings and provide feedback (30 minutes).

The total time commitment is approximately 3.5 hours (interviews – 1 hour, focus groups – 1.5 hours, review of transcripts and findings - 1 hr.).

Observation notes will also be taken. We will record the overall environment of two sessions. We will also keep written field notes of my thoughts throughout the length of the study.

Benefit: There is no direct benefit from being in the study. Although by sharing your experiences, you help us understand CSL from the communities' view. You will help us understand how to create mutual

benefit in CSL.

Risk: There are no physical risks to being involved in the study. You can refuse to answer any question you are asked. You may become tired due to the length of interviews. We will direct you to an appropriate community organization or counseling service if you would like to discuss topics raised further.

Confidentiality: As you may be sharing your stories within a group, you cannot assume total anonymity. We ask that you do not share the information discussed in the focus group with others. Pseudonyms will be assigned to all names during data collection. This will ensure anonymity within the research group and in the manuscript.

We intend to present the research findings at an oral exam for a Master's thesis. The findings will be presented at a conference as well as published in a research journal. We will use direct quotations in the presentations and publications. We will take every possible step to protect your identity and privacy. No names or any other identifiers will appear in public or stored information. Only research team members will have access to the information.

Study data, including personal information will be safely stored. (i.e., a locked filing cabinet in a locked office and a password protected computer with non-identifying file names). Five years following the end of the study, the information will be shredded and double deleted from the computer.

Voluntary Participation: Your participation is voluntary. You may refuse to answer any question. You may ask to have the audio-recorder turned off at any time. Even if you agree to be in the study, you can change your mind.

Freedom to Withdraw: You can withdraw at any time during data collection and up to one week following your focus group interview. There will be no penalty of any sort. If you withdraw prior to the one-week time limit, we will destroy all your information. If you wish to withdraw, contact Rebecca Marsh by telephone, email, or in person.

Additional Contacts: If you have any questions, please contact Rebecca Marsh. The plan for this study has been reviewed for its adherence to ethical guidelines by a Research Ethics Board at the University of Alberta. For questions regarding participant rights and ethical conduct of research, contact the Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615.

Consent Statement

I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I have been told whom to contact. I agree to participate in the research study described above and will receive a copy of this consent form. I will receive a copy of this consent form after I sign it.

Participant's Name (printed) and Signature_____ Date_____

Name (printed) and Signature of Person Obtaining Consent_____

Date_____

Appendix F: Data Analysis Example

Didn't quite connect with students

Felt it was positive

Students were inquisitive

Open to student learning

Open to student learning

Used to being a subject

Open to working with students

Understanding that he is the subject

Subject role

Not prepared to work with students

Social benefit

Enjoyed social aspet

Positive experience

Willing to share personal information to students

Boundaries to sharing

Social benefit

Social enjoyment

Has personal life knowledge to share

Teaching students about life

Subject role

Conflicted about role

Unsure about what they are supposed to be learning

Feels disconnect with learning goals (university)

Expectations of how he'll be treated

Conflicted feelings about role

Wants mutual understanding

Teach students a different perspective

Socially beneficial

Seeks a social connection

Social benefit over physical benefit

Emphasizes a desire for social connection

Didn't achieve desired social connection

Program doesn't consider some of his desires

Desire for mutual timing of program

Doesn't consider his desires

Develops a social relationship

Didn't achieve desired social connection

Social benefit

Unaware of student learning

Has idea of what he hopes they learn

Feels he could teach students

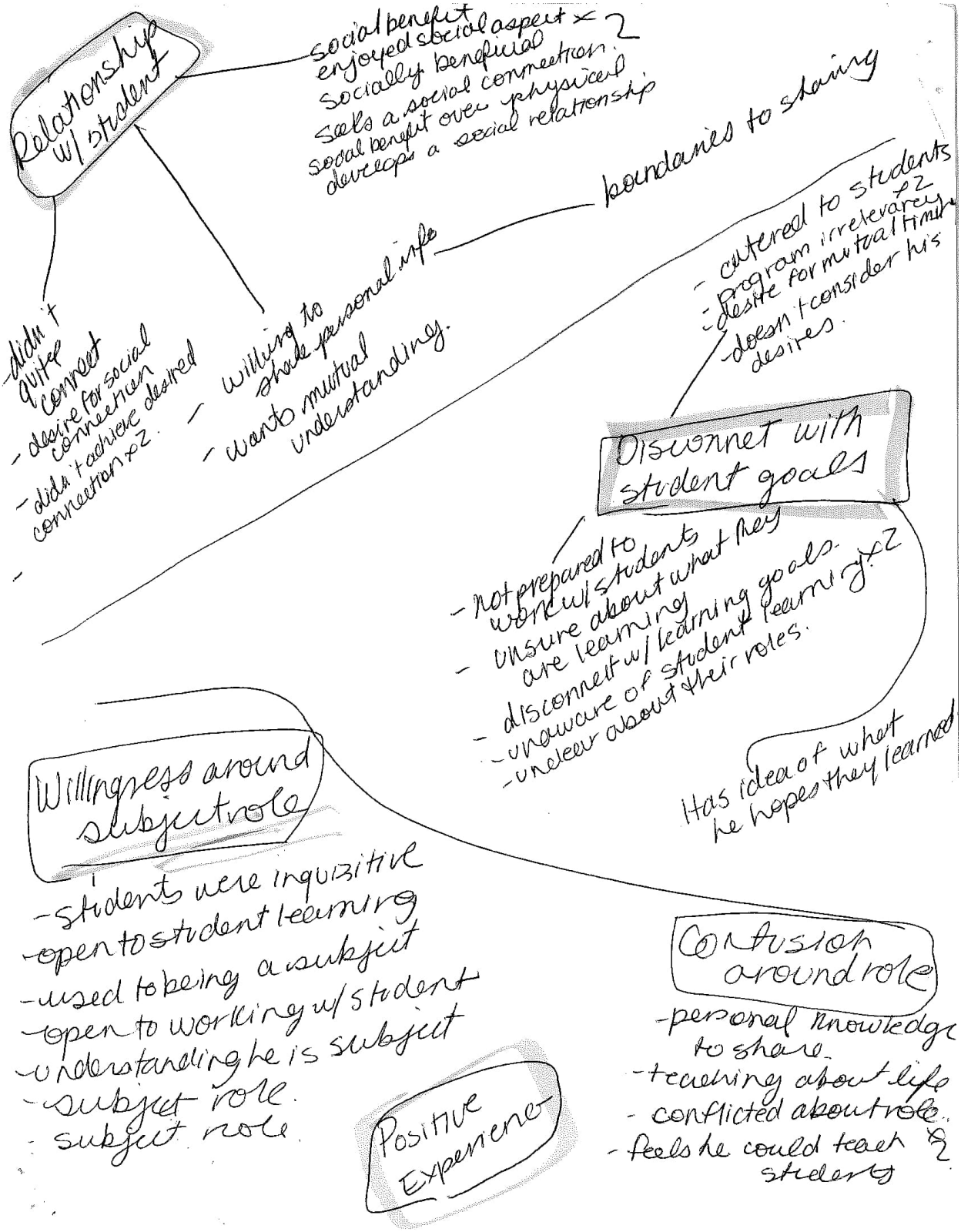
Unaware what they are learning

Unclear about roles

Program irrelevancy

Catered to students

Catered to students


Relationship w/ student
social benefit
enjoyed social aspect x 2
socially beneficial
Seels a social connection
social benefit over physical
develops a social relationship
didn't quite connect
- desire for social connection
- didn't achieve desired connection x2
- willing to share personal info
- wants mutual understanding.
boundaries to sharing
- catered to students
- program irrelevancy x2
- desire for mutual time
- doesn't consider his desires.
Disconnect with student goals
- not prepared to work w/ students
- unsure about what they are learning
- disconnect w/ learning goals
- unaware of student learning x2
- unclear about their roles.
Has idea of what he hopes they learned
Willingness around subject role
- students were inquisitive
- open to student learning
- used to being a subject
- open to working w/ student
- understanding he is subject
- subject role.
- subject role.
Positive Experience
Confusion around role
- personal knowledge to share.
- learning about life
- conflicted about role.
- feels he could teach x2 students