

**TEACHER/COACH-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS:
AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE EFFECTS ON GRADE 4-6 STUDENT
PARTICIPATION IN ORGANIZED SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

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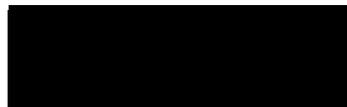
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family, friends, and students.

You encourage me to become a better educator, leader, friend, and human.

Thank you for your love!

ABSTRACT

Students are exposed to numerous opportunities to participate in elementary school activities—outside of regular class time. However, because students may be hesitant to participate in such activities, the teacher/coach must understand the motivational factors of students to encourage them to participate. For the purpose of this research project, organized school activities refer to athletics, extracurricular activities, clubs, and leadership opportunities based on activities offered at two school sites. Employing a mixed-methods research approach, student respondents (n=81) completed a quantitative survey reporting varying levels of agreement to potential reasons for participating in school activities. Teacher/Coach respondents (n=13) identified various characteristics of relationships, what they believe to be motivating factors for students to participate in school activities, and how they support students involved in school activities. After descriptive statistical analysis procedures were applied to the quantitative data, focus group interviews were conducted at the two school sites. Resulting from the focus group interview responses, a thematic analysis was applied. After fusing the quantitative data analyses with the emerging themes from the focus group interviews and the teacher/coach survey, findings suggested that students participate in school activities to increase their school connectedness, to engage in an activity in a social environment, and build relationships with their peers and teachers/coaches.

Keywords: elementary school, physical activity, physical literacy, school activity, school teachers/coaches, teacher/coach-student relationships

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INTRODUCTION

Reflections from a School Teacher/Athletics Coach

A plethora of experiences drove me to pursue a Master of Education degree and, more specifically, to conduct this research project. In 2011, I graduated from Concordia University of Edmonton (CUE; formerly known as Concordia University College of Alberta) with a Bachelor of Education (After Degree) specializing in teaching in the elementary school classroom. Since obtaining a Bachelor of Education degree, I have gained a rich amount of teaching experience in a variety of elementary school grades and subject areas. Moreover, throughout my teaching career, I have volunteered as a Grade 9 female Basketball Coach. Hence, stemming from all my teaching and coaching experiences in the school system, I have been afforded incalculable opportunities to explore various academic and extracurricular environments aimed to support student learning.

As an elementary school teacher, school athletics coach (i.e., Grade 4, 5, 6), and school activities and events organizer (e.g., community engagement, physical activity days), my interest grew as I wanted to develop a greater awareness concerning how and why students choose to participate in organized school activities. For the purpose of this research project, organized school activities and school activities refer to athletics, extracurricular activities, clubs, and leadership as identified at both research sites. I take pride in developing and nurturing relationships with students. Creating relationships to develop well-rounded students and contributing members of society is my ultimate goal as an educator. Happily, I already see some students going on to do valuable things for themselves and for the greater community (e.g., leadership roles, volunteering,

competitive sports). Getting to know the students' personality, interests, and motivation, while earning their trust is critical for developing and nurturing teacher/coach-student relationships. Students may come to school with a 'backpack' filled with different burdens and responsibilities. They may have challenges at home, extracurricular demands (e.g., sports), sibling interactions, parent work schedules to navigate, or struggles with friends. That said, through healthy teacher/coach-student relationships, educators can create a safe environment for students to feel connected to the school community and to passionately explore and discover their interests. Elementary school children are at an influential age and require positive role models for guidance and encouragement. Extracurricular environments provide an opportunity to develop these relationships, and to explore a variety of physical activities, both of which are beneficial for a child's growth and development.

As a teacher/coach, I understand the benefits of physical activity. Physical activity is vital for students' physical, social, emotional, and academic development. Moreover, as an athletics coach, I believe students need to feel connected and supported in their overall development. Although teamwork, community, communication, and commitment are examples of skills that are strengthened when engaged in organized sports, students may, or may not, be motivated by extrinsic factors when choosing to become and/or remain involved in optional school-related activities.

As I aim to complete my magistral work, I believe an investigation into the effects of teacher/coach-student relationships, if any, on Grade 4, 5, and 6 student participation in organized school activities is worthy of attention. Further, I believe, we, as educators, should support students by developing and nurturing relationships and assisting them in

their decisions to take advantage of extracurricular school activities. Based upon observations throughout my teaching career, the rewards for student participation are endless.

Need for Research

Throughout my time as a graduate student (e.g., class discussions, readings), I noticed areas for potential research. For example, I found the amount of research investigating the relationship between Grade 4, 5, and 6 students and school activity participation to be minimal. I became interested in this topic area as my school division provides school activity opportunities starting as early as Grade 3. Throughout my teaching career, I have recognized the impact of relationships on student participation in school activities. Students enjoy being involved in school activities. Hence, this research will serve as a source of information surrounding the importance of creating and maintaining teacher/coach-student relationships. Furthermore, elementary school children are building foundational knowledge and interest in their physical abilities as well as discovering the importance of relationships. From this research project's results, I hoped to gain a deeper understanding of how to encourage students to join school activities, specifically, athletics. Hence, this research project is worthy of attention as further knowledge in this area can lead to healthier students and school communities.

Purpose of Research Project

The purpose of this research project was to investigate whether or not the teacher/coach-student relationship impacts student participation in organized school activities. Such an understanding can inform teachers about the reasons why students choose to participate in school activities. Upon this understanding, educators can better

assist students to participate in their school community and contribute to their growth and development (e.g., physical, social, emotional) during their elementary school years.

Research Questions

This research project was guided by a general question:

What, if anything, motivates students to participate in elementary school activities?

Given this general question, sub-questions included:

- a. *In what ways, if any, can a teacher/coach encourage students to participate in elementary school activities?*
 - i. *If any, how does this impact student participation in subsequent years?*
- b. *In what ways, if any, are elementary school activities important to student development?*
 - i. *If any, is a variety of activities necessary?*
- c. *In what ways, if any, is student participation in elementary school activities impacted by ...*
 - i. *Social networks?*
 - ii. *The coach/leader of the activity?*

Significance of the Research Project

The significance of the research project was to advance the knowledge-base concerning the reasons for students becoming involved in school activities, and to employ this newly acquired knowledge to help encourage more students to engage in school activities. With this added knowledge, this research project was necessary and beneficial for multiple stakeholders including teachers, parents/guardians, policy makers, and communities.

Moreover, teacher-leaders, school divisions, and school community partners will find this information advantageous; it will help them further understand reasons why students choose to participate in school activities. Parents/guardians will be able to employ the results to initiate conversations with their child(ren) about key reasons to become involved and to encourage them to try new school activities.

This research project will also assist teachers/coaches in understanding the dynamics of effective coaching to ensure a positive environment for all participants. Likewise, these coaches will be better equipped to implement strategies to create a positive, healthy learning experience and to afford students with enjoyable activities. Overall, these benefits among others—discussed in the subsequent section—could improve students' school connectedness and growth and development, while building strong school communities for all stakeholders.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The review of related literature explores a variety of associated topics leading to this research project's primary focus. To prepare, as I began to formulate reasons for students engaging in school activities, an introduction of the various types of literacy is described (see Figure 1). Second, after a quick overview on physical literacy, a deeper look into the importance of physical literacy for students in elementary school follows with a specific focus on its relationship to student participation in school activities. Lastly, the final section culminates with a brief overview of student reasons to engage in school activities.

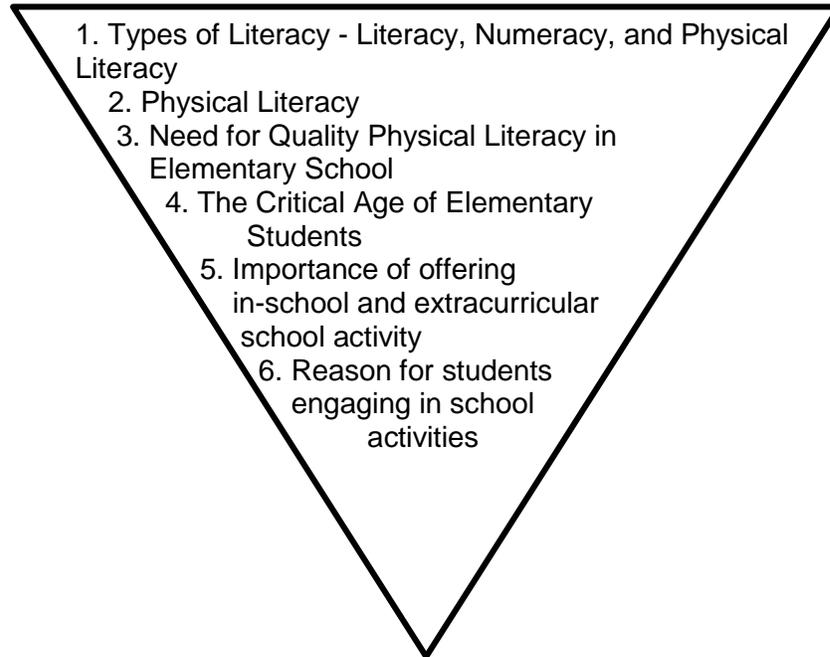


Figure 1. Research Context

Types of Literacy: Physical Literacy, Language Literacy, Numeracy

Three of the key types of literacy in today's schools refer to language literacy, numeracy, and physical literacy. Each type is defined below.

Language Literacy has been defined as a set of skills required for basic writing and reading activities which are developed in school (Ruvoletto, 2019).

Numeracy has been defined as the ability, confidence, and willingness to engage with quantitative and spatial information leading to informed decisions in daily living (Alberta Education, 2020).

Physical Literacy has been defined as the motivation, confidence, physical competence, and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in a wide variety of physical activities for life (International Physical Literacy Association, 2017; PHE Canada, 2020).

Although a need for physical literacy persists for student growth and development (ParticipACTION, 2018), other literacy areas, such as language literacy and numeracy, are considered to be of higher priority. National and global rankings are based on language literacy and numeracy, rather than physical literacy, causing teachers to focus primarily on teaching to these “literacy-related” assessments (Dollman, Boshoff, & Dodd, 2006). Teaching students to achieve success specific to these assessments can impact their understanding and knowledge in other subject areas. Research has suggested that when physical literacy is included among language literacy and numeracy, it ensures a consistent language and validates its equal importance (Mandigo, Francis, Lodewyk, & Lopez, 2009). Having an understanding of what physical literacy is and fostering this language among educators and students is important for students’ physical and academic development. Students are able to recall and apply concepts in multiple environments to provide a feeling of success. This consistent language also applies to teaching styles. Bradford and Hickson (2018) explained that teaching styles used in various subject areas are also applicable to teaching Physical Education, thus, making physical literacy of equal importance to language literacy and numeracy. Applying teaching strategies to multiple subject areas creates a continuity of ideas and learning experiences for students. When a positive, healthy learning environment is created students understand the importance of learning in all areas and apply strategies to connect their learning. Physical literacy incorporates strategies learned within the classroom subjects, and there is a reciprocal benefit for learning and executing new skills (Chen, 2015). As students apply strategies learned in activities involving language literacy and numeracy, there is a mutual benefit for physical literacy. Concepts learned in other subject areas transfer to

the understanding of movement, understanding and execution of instructions, and cause and effect, leading to other concepts being put into practice in environments requiring physical literacy.

Telford, Cunningham, Telford, and Abhayaratna (2012) found that language literacy, numeracy, and cardiorespiratory fitness have a positive relationship as there is also a relationship between cardiorespiratory fitness and physical activity. A healthy balance between language literacy, numeracy, and physical activity is necessary for child development. If a child's fitness levels increase, it may also improve their academic performance (Telford et al., 2012), leading to more thorough holistic development. It was also found that "fit" children produce better language literacy and numeracy results (Telford et al., 2012). Evidently, physical literacy must be considered as equal importance to language literacy and numeracy in students' academic and physical development.

Physical Literacy

Physical literacy prepares students to lead an active and healthy life (Mandigo et al., 2009), and is an understanding that, if taught and practiced at a young age, will continue through life. Physical literacy encourages students to engage in a variety of activities because they have the confidence and ability to do so (de Rossi Matthews, Maclean, & Smith, 2012). This allows students to employ the skills that they have learned in various learning environments to succeed, creating an opportunity for holistic development. Students must be interested in participating in routine physical activity (Chen, 2015) in order to experience the benefits. Students must participate in daily activity to benefit their physical health and understand the movement and concepts of the

activity to feel successful—leading to enhanced levels of confidence. Moreover, this is supported by Alberta’s Daily Physical Activity initiative; students need to be active for a minimum of 30 minutes each day (Alberta Education, 2006). Unorganized play (e.g., recess) assists in a students’ physical literacy as it affords opportunities to develop soft skills such as non-verbal interactions, body signals, and social skills to aid in their growth in organized activities (Bento & Dias, 2017; de Rossi et al., 2012). Further, unorganized play provides children with opportunities to apply the skills and movements that they acquire in structured environments, and explore other forms of interaction. Free play “provides an opportunity for motor skill acquisition during the stage of development that is crucial for children to ‘invest’ in the exploration and learning of a broad range of fundamental movement skills” (Zwolski, Quatman-Yates, & Paterno, 2017, p. 439). There is a reciprocity in learning in organized and unorganized environments.

Physical activity should not be limited to competitive sports. To build intrinsic motivation and long-term interest, students require balance and an effective Physical Education program that focuses on breadth and variety of movement (de Rossi et al., 2012; Gleddie, Hickson, & Bradford, 2018). When physical activity contains multiple forms of movement and occurs in varying environments, students become better equipped to develop an interest in applying them in various situations (Gleddie et al., 2018). Quality Physical Education programs must foster this learning and passion to help students develop their physical literacy and be physically active throughout their lives (Gleddie et al., 2018).

Need for Quality Physical Literacy in Elementary School

Quality Physical Education programs foster physical literacy and emphasize the importance of curricular outcomes, such as ‘Do it Daily...for Life!’ (Alberta Education, 2000). Teachers need to be educated and interested in the programs that they teach to their students. When educators are confident, supported, and knowledgeable in physical literacy, it impacts student learning and interest in Physical Education. Motivation, knowledge, and skills lead students to continue being physically active throughout their lives (Chen, 2015). Teachers need to effectively communicate the proper knowledge and skills to help elevate student motivation. Through this motivation, students are more inclined to continue being physically active as they more fully understand its importance and benefits.

Dollman et al. (2006) speak to the importance of having quality physical literacy programs, which encourage all students to participate and meet the required daily physical activity levels. Educators must understand the importance of including all students in structured and unstructured physical activity to help students develop their knowledge and skills related to movement. “We need to recognize that younger children should still be encouraged to engage in less formalized structured and unstructured activities to promote kinesthetic development as an essential element of physical literacy” (Roetert, Kriellaars, Ellenbecker, & Richardson, 2017, p. 62). Even in unstructured environments (e.g., recess), children participate in activities that involve various movements and interactions to develop an awareness of physical literacy and initiate a lifelong commitment to physical health.

Positive student and teacher attitudes influence academic achievement and physical activity (Telford et al., 2012). Although teachers create a safe learning environment so students can excel, they need to maintain healthy interactions to ensure growth and development occurs for all. Silverman and Mercier (2015) identified the need to teach the whole child to become well versed in the components of physical literacy as they continue their participation in physical activities throughout their lives.

The Critical Age of Elementary School Students

Elementary school-aged students are at a prime age to learn basic fundamental movement skills (Gleddie et al., 2018; PHE Canada, 2020) for development. “Establishing the building blocks of movement and physical activity at a young age will set the stage for developing physical literacy as students grow” (Roetert et al., 2017, p. 58). Additionally, these building blocks and fundamental movement skills taught in the early years of development are foundational to the advanced skills learned throughout their lives (Gleddie et al., 2018). Foundations and advanced skills in elementary school are key to maintaining an active lifestyle. Students are willing to try, take risks, and understand new material to create connections to their learning. Teachers influence students through various role modeling experiences (Arthur, 2011), such as verbal, non-verbal, and social interactions. Teachers need to be aware of their presence around students as they are a source of information—like the students they teach. Students also look to their teachers as role models for discipline and feedback. Through these interactions, students are constantly learning social cues and methods of learning new information. Primary school teachers help students develop values through relationships, showing kindness, spending time together, and acknowledging them and their attitude

(Arthur, 2011). Students require these essential interactions to develop skills beyond the mandated curriculum.

Educators need to understand the abilities and interests of their students to build Physical Education programs based on student needs (Bradford & Hickson, 2018; Lynch & McLoughlin, 2018). Students that feel connected to their learning are able to engage earlier and build a deeper understanding of the concept. Teachers need to create programs and select activities specific to student abilities while maintaining a positive attitude towards physical activity to afford all students opportunities to learn (Silverman & Mercier, 2015). If educators are intentional in their planning of Physical Education programs, each student will be better equipped to experience a unique sense of growth and challenge. All students will be able to understand the concept, be challenged in their ability, understand areas of growth, and experience success along the way. While teachers provide feedback in various school settings, the Physical Education environment is no different. Teachers must observe students to understand their abilities and performance to adjust their plan and activities (Silverman & Mercier, 2015). This is a cyclical structure in which student abilities influence a teachers' plan, and the teachers' plan creates the opportunity for students to express their abilities. Silverman and Mercier (2015) identified the importance of providing enough quality time to practice and engage in physical activities. While most quality time occurs during Physical Education classes, teachers need to evaluate their plan and students' abilities to ensure activities are at an appropriate developmental level for the individual (Gleddie et al., 2018).

Teachers need to express the purpose, benefits, impact, and reasoning of the physical activity (Gao, Lee, Kosma, & Solmon, 2010) as students will not always

participate or ‘buy in’ to participating (Lynch & McLoughlin, 2018). Through this explanation, students will be able to understand the activity complexities and its benefits to their growth and development. Students must understand the goal and purpose of being physically active (Chen, 2015). Although students may be motivated to be physically active, they must feel connected to the learning and understand the purpose, reason, and benefits of being involved.

According to Gao et al. (2010), students who feel supported and believe they can achieve more will perform better, will try new activities, and put forth more effort toward activities. This support is necessary at a young age to develop strategies to build their motivation (Fishburne, 2005). When we look at student participation in Physical Education, their intrinsic motivation is more effectively motivating than extrinsic motivation (Lynch & McLoughlin, 2018). Building perseverance and enhancing understanding of concepts contributes to the longevity of physical activity within students. That said, motivation helps children adapt and quickly change between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation (Chen, 2015). Children will constantly fluctuate between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in various situations and environments, and it is necessary that they can utilize both to their advantage. Chen (2015) suggested that physical literacy helps develop intrinsic motivation, even though “motivation is most likely to be regulated through external controlling mechanisms” (p. 126) such as teachers and peers. Students require a safe environment to develop their motivational strategies from various surrounding supports.

Physical education classes in elementary schools provide an opportunity for fundamental movement skills to be taught and create a foundation for movement and

physical activity (de Rossi et al., 2012; PHE Canada, 2020) which can be used throughout their lives. These physical activity foundations developed at a young age will impact their participation in other activities into adulthood (Gleddie et al., 2018; Haywood & Getchell, 2014; Kohl & Hobbs, 1998).

Importance of Offering In-School and Extracurricular School Activities

Quality Physical Education programs in schools bridge the gap to extracurricular activities and sports (Mandigo et al., 2009). Students need to understand basic skills and movement taught in Physical Education classes to enhance their interest in sports and/or a competitive activity (Silverman & Mercier, 2015). If students do not obtain the necessary skills during the regular school day, they are less likely to join an extracurricular activity to continue to develop those skills.

In addition to quality Physical Education programs, competitive sports programs that are offered to all students can enhance the impact of physical activity in children (Acar & Gündüz, 2017; Kohl & Hobbs, 1998). While most competitive teams are only offered to the elite athletes, programs that are available to all students can increase their passion and abilities. These activities provide opportunities to develop physical, emotional, and social skills (Carbonaro & Maloney, 2019). Organized school activities are usually offered outside of school hours and demonstrate commitment to a student's personal growth and development (Acar & Gündüz, 2017). This can serve as a pivotal role for students who have the desire to develop their physical skills and abilities.

Extracurricular activities need to provide a positive environment for students to learn and receive positive and constructive feedback (Drost, 2018; Stern, Bradley, Prince, & Stroh, 1990). Students join extracurricular activities to expand their skills (e.g.,

physical, social, emotional) and due to their interest level. However, the coach needs to continue nurturing the positive environment that is conducive to learning and is a safe space to foster student needs.

As adults, physical activity becomes more about extrinsic factors such as participating in a group setting, being physically active, and enjoyment rather than competition (Lynch & McLoughlin, 2018). Therefore, it is critical to help students develop their knowledge and skills, and to foster their desire to become involved in various activities at a younger age to enhance their understanding and movement skills in various activities (Fishburne, 2005).

Reason for Students Engaging in School Activities

Physical activity does not need to be organized, but can be done for the enjoyment of moving and being active (de Rossi et al., 2012). Children require various opportunities to move, including unstructured recess time, learning fundamental movement skills and activity, and building a deeper understanding of both cooperative and competitive activities. Those that desire to move and be more physically active may find a greater connection to school activities (Fischer & Theis, 2014). Through play, children can freely express who they are and build confidence and self-esteem (de Rossi et al., 2012) in a safe environment. This type of play aids in the development of their passion, interest, and enjoyment in activities.

If the physical activity experiences are educational rather than purely recreational, the child learns the values and benefits of physical activity for health and quality of life and develops knowledge and physical competence necessary for engaging in the physical activities valued and beneficial (Chen, 2015, p. 130).

Once a child demonstrates an understanding toward the value of physical activity, they are able to employ their own motivational strategies to continue their interest in activities for prolonged involvement (Chen, 2015). Motivation is “a process that involves a functioning mind along with a moving body, operating together with knowledge of competence, interest, environment, and purpose of action” (Chen, 2015, p. 130). Competence, interest, and self-regulation serve as motivating sources for students in physical activity (Chen, 2015). Students need to be able to feel competent in their abilities through training and practice. If they have the perception that their abilities are sufficient, they are able to express confidence in their practice. Therefore, teachers need to create various environments where students are able to be exposed to new skills, practice them, receive feedback, and continue to enhance their understanding through various forms (Gleddie et al., 2018). Teachers need to teach skills that are challenging, yet achievable for students to continue to express interest in other forms including school activities. Extrinsic motivation allows students to enhance self-worth, which leads to intrinsic motivation and their desire to continue to be involved in physical activities (Chen, 2015). Moreover, PHE Canada (2020) reminds us that is necessary for a school environment to foster a safe learning atmosphere with a quality Physical Education program if we want students to experience and develop both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation.

From a student perspective, positive influences make peers laugh, be kind, show care, be fair, and become a role model all of which serve as examples of positive relationships (Arthur, 2011). These positive influences on peers can help reduce student issues and enhance positive interactions, and even increase participation in school

activities. Teachers and parents serve as role models for children to participate in physical activity (ParticipACTION, 2018) and can decrease health related illnesses (Tucker, Bebeley, & Conteh, 2018). As role models, adults need to demonstrate an importance for physical activity in various forms. Students identify with adult role models and these adults need to be aware of the verbal and non-verbal language that is being used to communicate (Bradford, Hickson, & Evaniew, 2014; Stern et al., 1990). Ultimately, children want to enjoy the activities that they are participating in (Lubans et al., 2017; Stern et al., 1990), and as coaches or leaders, we have a responsibility to foster this environment.

For elementary school students, parents are a strong influence on their physical activity through direct or indirect interactions (Kohl & Hobbs, 1998). These influences can be a strong indicator of which extracurricular activities a student chooses to participate in. When parents involve their children in activities they are interested in, children sense the parents' passion and become more inclined to participate in a similar activity. As adolescents, influences shift from their parents to their peers and other students (Kohl & Hobbs, 1998). Within the upper elementary school years, this shift may occur earlier or later depending upon the development and influences around students. Peers with related interests grow and develop complementary habits and get involved in similar activities (Juvonen, Espinoza, & Knifsend, 2012). Peers with similar priorities and dedication to academic and socioemotional factors will influence their close friends' willingness to prioritize similar activities. As such, friends that are involved in activities impact others' desire to participate in the same activity. Juvonen et al. (2012) also indicated that "extracurricular activities can play an important role in helping students

form new relationships with peers with whom they might otherwise not interact” (p. 391-392). Extracurricular activities that involve a variety of students may result in relationships that would not have happened through regular class interaction. This supports the statement made earlier that extracurricular activities need to be available to all students, not only a select group. These unplanned relationships with other peers may positively influence student willingness to become involved in other school activities because of their new friends and/or opportunities for new relationships. Students who are hesitant to join school activities and are encouraged by teachers and other adults may find relationships that they did not expect and develop a sense of belonging (i.e., school connectedness) that did not previously exist (Juvonen et al, 2012). Other potential barriers for students to participate in school activities may include “lack of time, lack of interest or desire, unfavorable weather, or access to equipment and facilities” (Kohl & Hobbs, 1998, p. 552). These, along with other factors, may impact a child’s decision to participate in an extracurricular activity.

Students who feel a deep belonging and connection to their school community are more likely to become involved in school activities (Juvonen et al., 2012). It is not only the responsibility of the school to host extracurricular activities, but to create and nurture a school culture that supports and encourages student involvement and to promote school connectedness.

Summary of Related Literature

The review of related literature emphasized the importance of relationships as a motivating factor for students joining school activities. There is a need for equal importance, teaching strategies, and consistent language used among language literacy,

numeracy, and physical literacy. When addressed as equitable literacies, students are able to connect their learning and apply strategies to understand new skills and concepts. Physical literacy is required to develop the routine and continuation of physical activity throughout life. Developing physical literacy affords the exploration of various movements and skills to support student growth and development. Through quality Physical Education programs, students elevate their physical, social, and emotional skills through various interactions. When students can connect their abilities, the purpose and goal of the skills, and gain an understanding of new skills, they will experience more success in school activities. When students engage in school activities, it creates an atmosphere where they are able to develop and enhance skills, build school connectedness, and foster relationships with peers and teachers. These positive influences (e.g., peers, coaches) are motivating factors to participate in school activities, and they create an alternate learning environment to the classroom. It is the school's responsibility to provide various activities for student engagement—leading to the plethora of resulting benefits.

In conclusion, four primary statements point to the motivational factors of student participation in school activities:

1. Physical literacy is required for fostering lifelong commitment to physical activity.
2. Quality Physical Education programs are required for physical literacy development.
3. Extracurricular school activities are critical for students' physical, social, and emotional development.

4. School activities create a safe environment for students to develop their physical literacy and other related skills, create and nurture relationships with peers and teachers, develop a sense of school connection, and provide an alternate environment for expanding motivational strategies.

METHODOLOGY

A mixed-methods research project was conducted employing both quantitative and qualitative data collection. Three different data sets (i.e., quantitative [2], qualitative) were obtained throughout the project. Moreover, following the collection and analysis of the quantitative data (i.e., survey), an attempt to investigate the results in more depth through a qualitative phase occurred (i.e., focus group interviews).

Research Sites and Participants

To gain a stronger understanding of the results, the research was conducted at two sites. Each school site was selected based on convenience, proximity to one another, and similar demographics of families. Following an introduction of the research project to school division administrators and upon agreement to conduct the research within the two school sites, a meeting was set up with two school principals to discuss the project potentially occurring at their schools. Following the signed consent from the school division and school principals, an information letter and consent form informed the potential participants (i.e., teachers, students) and their parents/guardians (for student participants) that participation in the project was entirely voluntary. The information letter and consent form outlined the pertinent information related to participation. Hence, teachers and students with signed consent forms were permitted to participate.

Site A. Currently, Site A has approximately 250 students in Kindergarten to Grade 6 and approximately 100 Pre-Kindergarten students. Over the last five years, Site A experienced steady growth and it is anticipated that this increase will continue in alignment with the overall growth across northern Alberta, Canada.

Site B. Currently, Site B meets the needs of students from Pre-Kindergarten through to Grade 6 with 335 students. The majority of the students are bussed to school in northern Alberta, Canada and [the] attendance continues to be stable or slightly increasing with new development in the western part of the city. [The] attendance area has a high number of starter homes, townhomes/condos and apartments making it a transient area.

After receiving volunteer agreement from the school division, school principals, school teachers, school coaches, and Grade 4, 5, and 6 students, a convenient sample of teachers and students were selected for the study. A total of 13 teachers and 81 students participated in the project. All Grade 4, 5, and 6 students were invited to participate in the quantitative phase (Phase 1). According to grade level, the following breakdown occurred: 30.9% (n=25, Grade 4), 33.3% (n=27, Grade 5), and 35.8% (n=29, Grade 6). A small number of students (i.e., 3-4) were purposely selected from the quantitative phase to participate in the focus group interviews (Phase 2). All respondents were provided the option to not participate in the project at any time, even after Consent and/or Assent were provided.

Research Instrument

Phase 1: Quantitative Research Instrument. Two surveys were administered; one for students, and one for teachers. For the purposes of this research project, the survey questions were designed based on the primary research question along with the

sub-questions. Upon consultation with my research supervisor and thorough discussions with colleagues, specific questions were formulated and added to the final survey. The survey was specifically designed as many of the available surveys found in the literature were directed more to Grade 7-12 students, therefore, above the understanding of the intended student respondents.

For the Student Survey, the first three questions were selected to gather respondents' demographic information. The remaining questions focused on their involvement in school activities, dynamics of relationships, motivational factors for joining activities, and were designed to focus on one element of relationships or activities. The majority of the questions asked student participants to respond using a Likert scale, where, on the continuum, 1 represented 'strongly disagree' and 5 represented 'strongly agree'. Instructions about how to use the Likert scale were verbally explained before student participants responded. It was explained again in written form before the section of questions containing Likert scale responses. Overall, the survey approach allowed the participating elementary school students to complete a survey without taking a substantial amount of time out of the school day. For the Teacher/Coach Survey, the first two questions were selected to gather teachers' demographic information. The following six questions asked respondents to answer using a Likert scale, where, on the continuum, 1 represented 'strongly disagree' and 5 represented 'strongly agree'. The remaining questions called for written responses (qualitative) to allow teacher/coach participants to provide personal experiences and thoughts for in-depth responses. The results from the two surveys (i.e., student, teacher) impacted the focus group interview protocol in the qualitative phase (Phase 2).

Note: The two surveys and focus group interview protocol are attached as Appendices B, C, and E.

Phase 2: Qualitative Research Instrument. Upon completion of the two surveys, responses were evaluated for common responses. To obtain more specific information from a student's perspective, themes were identified and included in the focus group interview. The purpose of the focus group interview was to obtain a deeper level of understanding of *what factors*, if any, influence students to participate in school activities.

The focus group interview was semi-structured to allow the opportunity to alter questions due to the direction of the conversation. After both interviews were complete, a thematic analysis of the data was applied (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Thematic analysis included identification of emerging themes and their descriptors. The interviews were separately examined and then identified for consistency and overlap among the two school sites. The emerging themes became important descriptors of the research question as they appeared in various forms throughout the responses.

Procedures

This mixed-methods research project required three phases fusing quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. To identify trends in factors that influence student participation in school activities, Phase 1 included a 20-question survey for student and staff respondents.

Student Respondents

The following process was completed for both sites:

- Parental Consent was obtained either electronically or in written form

- The research project was explained using the information provided and allowed for any questions
- Student Assent was obtained in written form by each respondent
- The survey was distributed via electronic option of the classroom teachers' choice (e.g., email, Google Classroom)

Teacher/Coach Respondents

The following process was completed for both sites:

- Teacher/Coach Consent was obtained either electronically or in written form
- The research project was explained using the information provided and allowed for any questions
- Respondents were sent a website link via email to complete the survey at a time of their choosing

Data Analysis

Once all of the participants completed the two online surveys, descriptive statistical analyses were employed to organize and summarize the quantitative data set. Calculating and listing the descriptive statistics in an organized manner helped simplify the large data set (Gravetter & Wallnau, 2009). In addition to the quantitative data collected during Phase 1, a limited amount of qualitative data was collected. The teacher/coach survey provided the opportunity for written responses. These responses were analyzed, along with the quantitative data, to help develop questions for focus group interviews. Qualitative data obtained from teacher/coach respondents were coded (i.e., open coding) into themes (Braun & Clarke, 2012).

After this analysis, Phase 1 was complete. Trends and emerging themes found from Phase 1 assisted in the direction of Phase 2, which included semi-structured focus group interviews. Phase 2 involved a small number of participants (n=3 and 4) from each school site. For the two focus group interviews, the following process was completed:

- Students were selected by a staff member at each school site based on participation in school activities and Phase 1
- Parental Consent was obtained in written form
- The research project was explained using the information provided and allowed for any questions
- Student Assent was obtained in written form by each respondent
- The focus group interviews were conducted using pre-determined questions
- Researcher employed ‘member checking’ to ensure understanding of responses
- Researcher thanked the respondents for their participation

One focus group interview was conducted (by the Principal Investigator) outside of regular class hours (e.g., before or after school) at each of the participating school site locations. These times and locations were strategically selected to reduce distractions and were most suitable for the respondents. The focus group interview data was transcribed verbatim and initially reviewed to generate preliminary coding categories.

Content analysis is a detailed, systematic examination and interpretation of interviews to identify emerging patterns, themes, biases, and meanings (Berg, 2009; Merriam, 2009). Thus, developing a familiarity with the data along with a deep sense of the general ideas and meaning is an important element in the analysis process (Creswell, 2012). Hence, reflecting on each focus group interview, in addition to transcribing the

interviews, assisted in developing an overall sense of the data along with the identification of potential emerging themes.

The coding categorization process (e.g., open coding) was conducted independently by myself, my supervisor, and a volunteer research assistant (i.e., Master of Education degree holder, school teacher). The purpose of including an external influence in the categorization process was to increase research credibility as a form of triangulation (Patton, 2002). The research assistant was provided with copies of the focus group interview protocol to become more familiar with the foundations from which the data was obtained. To ensure the anonymity of the participants, all identifiers were removed from the transcripts prior to the analysis stage.

Phase 3 fused Phases 1 and 2 to organize, analyze, and interpret the entire data set as a whole to discover trends, emerging themes, and suggest strategies for future use.

Methods Triangulation

In mixed-methods research, establishing and assessing research validity is a cyclical and ongoing process (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). Methods triangulation was employed in this research project; the objective of methods triangulation is to fuse different methods of data collection that have no overlapping strengths and weaknesses which will result in better conclusive evidence (Johnson & Christensen, 2012). That said, the inclusion of surveys and focus group interviews afforded greater conclusive evidence as opposed to only using one method.

Ethical Credibility

Social scientists study the social lives of human beings. Hence, ethical considerations must be adhered to (Berg, 2009). To fulfill my ethical responsibilities,

several actions were taken. First, after obtaining approval from the University Research Ethics Board, consent forms were collected from the Superintendent of the School Division, school site principals, classroom teachers, teachers/coaches, and parents of respondents. Student Assent was also collected to ensure their understanding of the research and the data collection. All data collected remained confidential and did not contain any identifiable features.

Second, the surveys collected from student and teacher/coach respondents were collected anonymously. Focus group interview data were transcribed verbatim and will be retained as a paper copy, secured in locked possession at CUE for a period of 5 years.

Third, for the focus group interviews, each participant was given a pseudonym of their choice. This was to ensure that privacy was guaranteed to the highest degree and the researcher did not use real names during the interview.

Validity of Results

To ensure the data, responses, and results are valid, consistency among the research must exist. Lincoln and Guba (1985) contended the strength of research is in the trustworthiness of its study through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. That said, I included direct citations from the focus group interviews allowing readers to determine their own interpretation of results. Following the completion of the focus group interviews and the thematic analysis of the results, a second reader reviewed the transcribed interview to validate the results. In addition, an external third reader with a Master of Education degree (school teacher) confirmed the validity of the results gathered in both interviews. Credibility of the results was obtained through triangulation of employing a mixed-methods research project along with the

related literature. This facilitates a deeper comprehensive understanding of the results. Lastly, the transferability of this project allows the opportunity for similar results to occur in other Grade 4-6 schools of a similar time and setting. Through the “thick description of the context” (Guba, 1981, p. 86), details of this research project are applicable to contexts of similar nature.

FINDINGS

Phase 1: Student Survey

Demographically, of the 81 student respondents, 50.6% (n=41) identified as male, 48.1% (n=39) identified as female, and 1.2% (n=1) identified as non-binary. Each grade level displayed a balanced representation with 30.9% (n=25) Grade 4 students, 33.3% (n=27) Grade 5 students, and 35.8% (n=29) Grade 6 students. According to the data (Figure 2), the respondents are choosing to participate in a variety of activities. The majority of respondents participate in school athletics, and 46.9% participate in multiple athletics. However, according to Figure 3, the athletic opportunities take precedence. When asked if friends impact their decision to join a school activity, 49.4% (n=40) of respondents ‘strongly disagree’ (Figure 3). According to Figure 4, 74.1% (n=60) of respondents ‘strongly agree’ that they trust their coach. Illustrated in Figure 5, 40.7% (n=33) of respondents ‘strongly agree’ about feeling important to the school because they are involved in a school activity, while 19.8% (n=16) of respondents ‘disagree’ or ‘strongly disagree’.

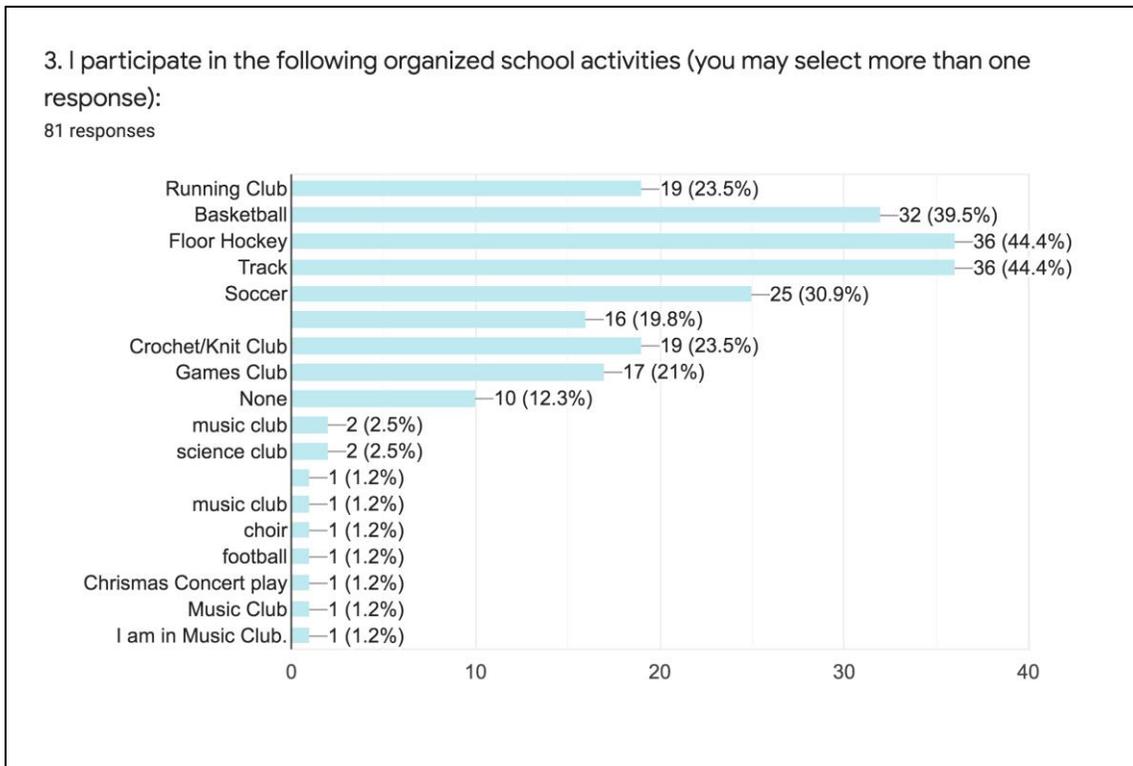


Figure 2. Student Survey - Organized School Activities

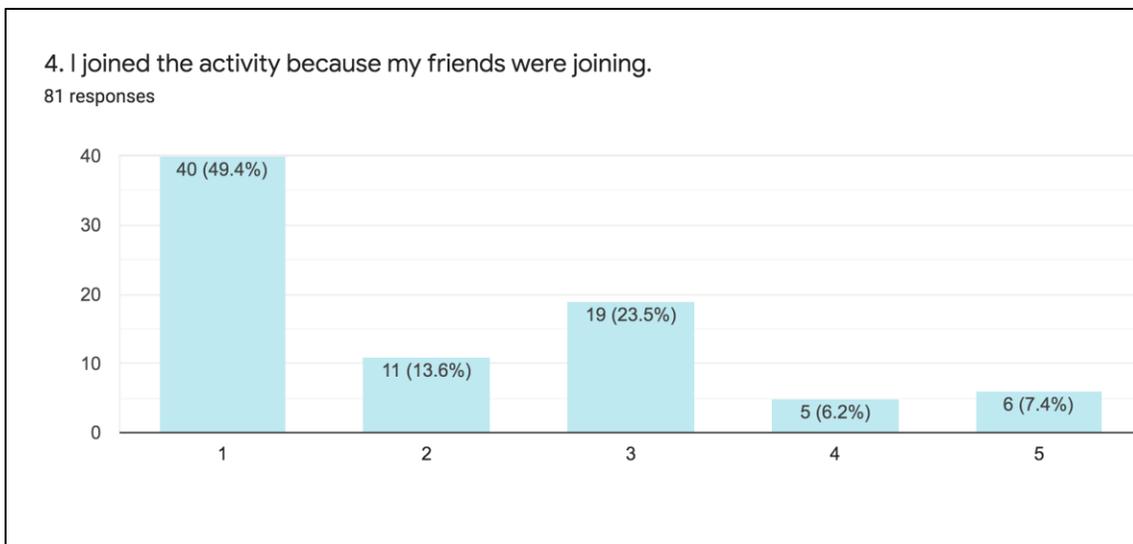


Figure 3. Student Survey - Impact of Friends on Participation

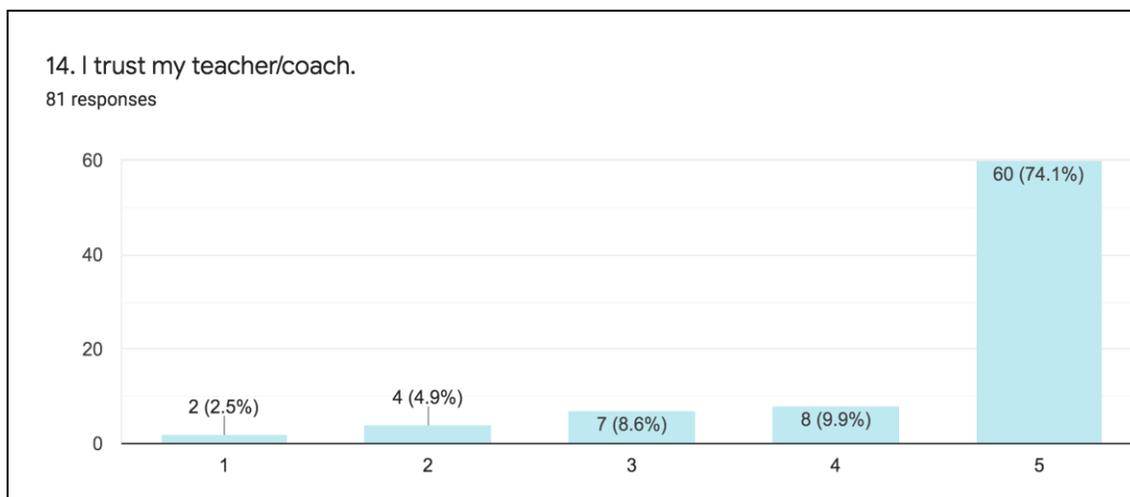


Figure 4. Student Survey - Teacher/Coach Trust

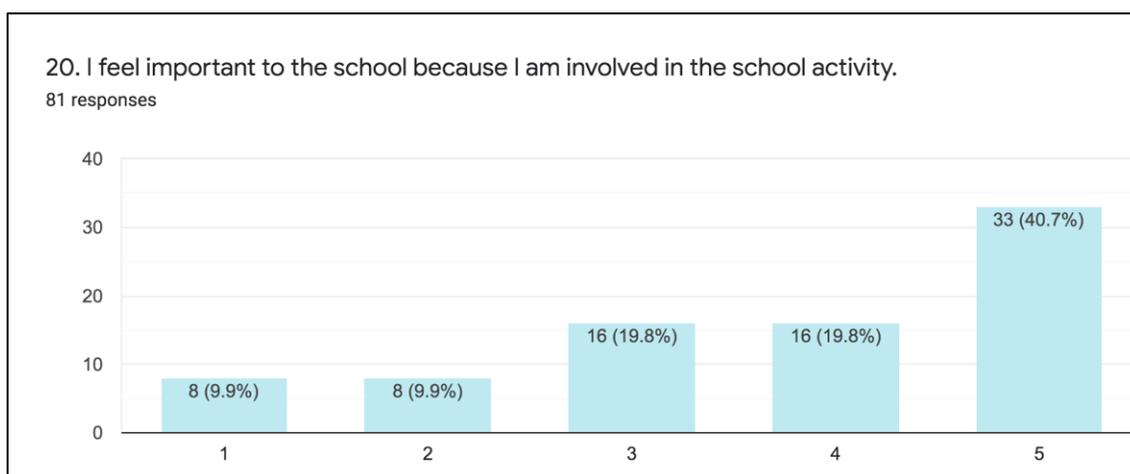


Figure 5. Student Survey - Connected to School

Phase 1: Teacher/Coach Survey

Of the participating group of teacher/coach respondents (n=13), 23.1% (n=3) identified as male and 76.9% (n=10) identified as female. 38.5% (n=5) of respondents were Grade 4-6 teachers. When asked if their school offered a variety of school activities for students, 46.2% (n=6) 'strongly disagree' (see Figure 6). 76.9% (n=10) of respondents responded 'strongly agree' to getting to know students beyond the classroom.

From the responses, common themes emerged. For example, 46.2% (n=6) of respondents mentioned that friends influence students' desire to become involved in school activities. When asked to provide qualities of a teacher/coach-student relationship, multiple respondents identified respect and trust as important characteristics. Respondents were asked to provide ways that they build relationships with their students that are involved in school activities. Of the responses, a resounding number of respondents identified 'connection' as a major component to building relationships with students in school activities. A Grade 1-3 male teacher identified that through *"mutual respect, getting to know the students on a personal level. Communicating outside of the classroom setting. Talking about the team/activity, when not at a practice or game (i.e., when passing in the hallway). It lets them know you care and have some invested energy."* A female respondent stated that *"knowing about the child beyond the activity, allowing them to know about yourself, laughing together, being right there in the experience with the child, encouraging, working through frustrations when needed together."* This female respondent was able to identify key components and forms that she connects with students beyond the school activity and the reciprocity that exists in building a relationship. Another female respondent recognized that spending *"time together, speaking and listening to one another, an opportunity for connection"* are important components through building a relationship with students.

Teacher/Coach respondents were asked to identify the importance of school activities to students. A common theme among responses was *having fun with their peers to build social skills and a sense of belonging*. A female respondent stated that *"they help build responsibility and new friendships, sometimes helps students come out of*

their shell, and builds self-esteem and some activities it is good for their health and getting exercise that they might not get elsewhere.” Another female respondent identified that school activities provide *“an opportunity for students to interact and build positive social skills and a sense of belonging.”* A third female respondent recognized that school activities *“are essential to creating a positive and welcoming school community. Providing children an opportunity to connect beyond the curriculum and often times outside of their own classroom is incredibly important.”*

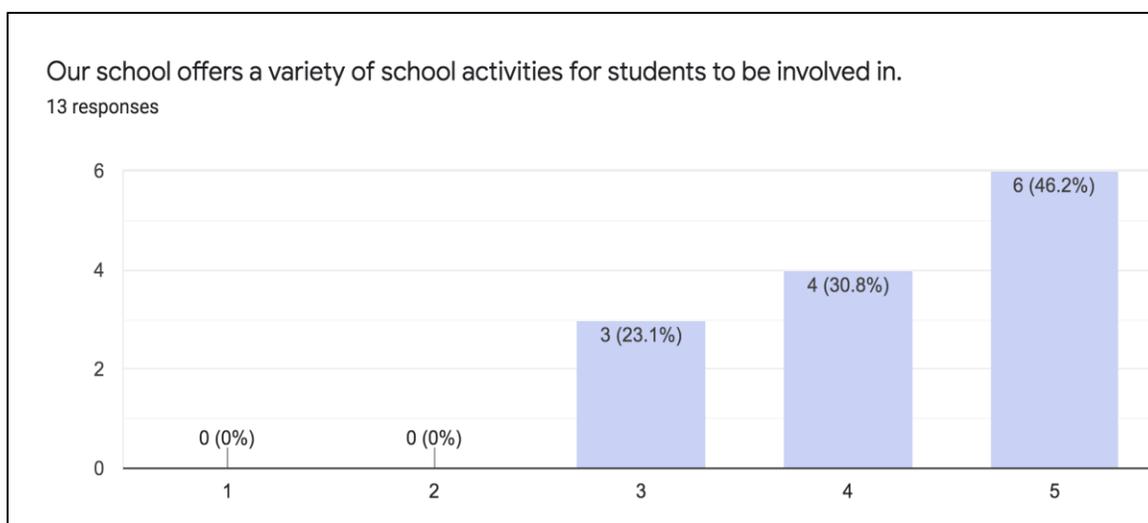


Figure 6. Teacher/Coach Survey - Variety of School Activities

Phase 2: Focus Group Interview

Demographically, Site A included four Grade 6 students, two females and two males. Site B included one female and two male students: one from Grade 4, one from Grade 5, and one from Grade 6. Of the two focus group interviews, consistent themes emerged between the dialogue: *school connectedness, social interactions, physical activity, and coaching characteristics.*

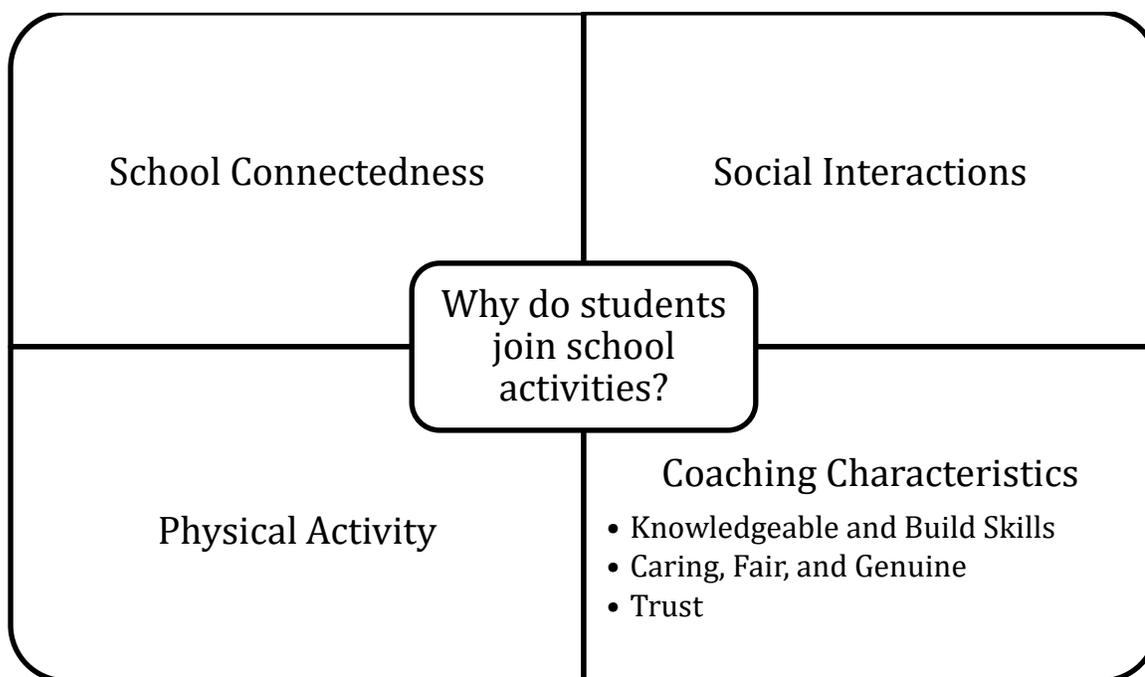


Figure 7. Themes Identified by Students in Focus Group Interviews

School Connectedness

Students identified the feeling of *school connectedness* when they participated in a school activity. When asked why they decided to be involved in school activities, a Grade 6 student at Site A felt the need to “*support my school and represent my school.*” He went on to add that “*if we had no team, then we wouldn’t be able to go to any other schools to like play so we wouldn’t be able to represent our school.*” This sense of feeling connected to their school is important. When asked about what they like about participating in school activities, another Grade 6 student at Site A responded “*that we have good team members on the team.*” This female respondent recognized her contribution and that of her teammates as a community.

Social Interactions

Participating in school activities added to *building a social environment* and being around their friends. A Grade 6 student from Site A stated that *“I have fun with the activity and hanging out with my friends.”* Likewise, a Grade 5 female from Site B recognized that students may join an activity because their friends are participating, however it opens the opportunity to meet new friends. When asked if a student would stay on the team because of their friend, a Grade 5 student replied that *“if their friend left, they probably would’ve already made a new friend.”* A Grade 6 student from Site A identified that peers may be a factor why students do not want to join an activity because *“kids may make fun of them.”*

Physical Activity

The third theme that emerged was the benefits of being physically active. A Grade 6 male student contended *“if you’re not physically active, you’re not strengthening all those like the parts of your body to feel like you could face like problems in with your body for not being physically active.”* The other respondents were in agreement about remaining physically active. During the conversation at Site B, a Grade 6 male identified the importance of being physically active because of personal experience. *“I got involved in sports because I didn’t want to be like the rest of my family, who did wasn’t that much active.”* The respondent continued to say *“The only other person in my family that’s really active is my cousin. Um but I just wanted to be in sports ‘cause I didn’t want to be like the same as my other family members.”* He also enjoys physical activity because *“I like just like being physically fit all the time and like running and active.”* A

Grade 5 female student agreed and recognized school activities as a way to stay busy so *“then you’re not always bored.”*

Coaching Characteristics

The final theme that emerged pointed to the range of teacher/coach characteristics and expectations. Respondents were able to identify that teachers/coaches need to be (1) knowledgeable and skill builders, (2) caring, fair, and genuine, and (3) trustworthy.

- Teachers/Coaches need to be *knowledgeable and know how to build skills*. A Grade 6 female student stated how *“if I need help with something, they’ll help us or make us try to do better.”* A Grade 6 male stated that *“they help us improve on our skills,”* with another Grade 6 male replying how *“sometimes they give us useful tips depending on like what skill level we’re at in the certain sports.”* These respondents were able to recognize the importance of feedback in their activity to develop their skills. Both Grade 6 male students agreed that it is important for coaches to know how to coach because *“maybe they know how to play the sport that they’re coaching,”* which may bring more knowledge to the activity.
- Teachers/Coaches need to be *caring, fair, and genuine*. When asked what makes them feel like they can go talk to their coach at any time, a Grade 6 male student stated that they were *“kind and caring,”* while another Grade 6 student continued to state that the coach *“cares about my feelings”* and *“actually cares what we’re doing.”* A Grade 5 female student recognized that teachers/coaches are *“able to understand you and like and they don’t like judge you for like not being who you are.”* As a Grade 4 student at Site B identified, teachers/coaches demonstrate fairness in playing time because *“they don’t like send out all the best players and*

you know keep all the worst players sitting, or benched” and know the students’ abilities and strengths.

- Students need to *trust* their Teachers/Coaches. A Grade 5 female student recognized that *“they’re easy to talk to and they like can understand you.”* This was made evident in an example provided by a Grade 6 male student about bullying: *“like letting the coach know if you’re being bullied at school or being bullied in the practice or game.”* When there is trust in the relationship, they identified a level of comfort and trust with their teacher/coach.

Phase 3: Thematic Analysis

Through the quantitative and qualitative data analysis, emerging themes arose throughout the responses. Overall, both student and teacher/coach respondents identified the importance of *building relationships through trust, care, and respect, develop a sense of connection with the school including staff and students, and the importance of building a social atmosphere.* As discussed throughout the Findings section, it is clear that these themes emerge through the literature and are bound through the data.

DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research project was to determine the motivating factors for students participating in school activities and if the teacher/coach-student relationship impacted their decision. From the data collected in this research project, it is clear that teacher/coach characteristics were influential for students when choosing to participate in school activities. Respondents identified the importance of building trust, being knowledgeable and providing the opportunity to build their skills, along with the caring, fair, and genuine nature of the teacher/coach. Interestingly, because the activities were

focused on the Grade 4-6 activities, it was expected that more teacher/coach respondents would teach in this grade range. However, 46.2% (n=6) of teacher/coach respondents were staff from Grade 1-3, while 38.5% (n=5) were staff from Grade 4-6.

When respondents were asked if they trust their teacher/coach, 74.1% (n=60) responded 'strongly agree'. However, during the focus group interview, respondents did not identify 'trust' as an important characteristic. Instead, they were able to express the qualities in which they trust their teacher/coach. One Grade 6 respondent from Site B, for example, identified the ability to talk to their teacher/coach if they were experiencing bullying, while another Grade 6 respondent from Site A recognized the comfortability of having a conversation with her coach. This supports the literature as students experience higher success, interest, and enjoyment in school activities when they view their teacher/coach to be open, honest, and trustworthy (Bandura & Kavussanu, 2018). Likewise, a teacher/coach respondent identified the importance of these characteristics by stating that "*positive relationships are fostered if the relationship is built on authenticity, trust and acceptance.*" A student, therefore, who trusts their teacher/coach will experience more success in the school activity.

Fry and Moore (2019) identified the importance of adults teaching and demonstrating care through interactions in various learning environments. Student respondents noted that "*they actually care what we're doing*" and "*they're able to understand you.*" Teacher/Coach respondents recognized their ability to show care by "*being approachable and personable*" and "*asking the students about their day/hobbies.*" This clearly supports the need for the teacher/coach to demonstrate care towards students in school activities (Fry & Moore, 2019).

Teacher/coach respondents identified characteristics of fairness as “*non-judgmental,*” having “*clear boundaries,*” and “*having understanding.*” Student respondents identified situations of fairness as “*they don’t like they send out all the players equally not only the best players and leave all the worst players on the bench*” and “*giving everyone a chance*” to play. The students were able to recall situations where they experienced a fair/unfair teacher/coach; whereas the teacher/coach listed fairness in how they treat students outside of the activity and not activity-related situations. They were able to identify their approach to interactions with students, rather than how they demonstrate fairness in a school activity situation. As educators, it is important to note that students recognize what they perceive to be fair in the various activities (Haywood & Getchell, 2014). Interestingly, from my experience, understanding the student’s perspective in these stressful situations is important, as it may create frustration or decrease their motivation to perform.

Student respondents understand the need for a knowledgeable coach who is able to help develop their skills. One Grade 6 student respondent said it is important “*that they know who you are as a person and like they know how you would do a thing like differently than that other person.*” He was able to comprehend the need for a teacher/coach to understand the dynamics of a student group and the varying levels of their ability, and that a teacher/coach needs to be able to diversify their instruction. Likewise, a Grade 4 respondent had a similar response about having a knowledgeable teacher/coach as “*you will still learn stuff and they will understand you.*” Gould (2016) identified the various coach qualities including that “*effective coaches are knowledgeable and good teachers*” (p. 14). This identification of a teacher/coach that is knowledgeable

should be addressed in school activities to ensure students receive the best instruction possible that is specific to the activity.

To develop a lifelong commitment to physical activity, students must be exposed to quality physical literacy at a developmental age (Gleddie et al., 2018). I was impressed to hear from the student respondents that one of the motivating factors for participating in school activities was to remain physically active. At Site A, when asked if they understood the importance of being physically active, they unanimously agreed. A Grade 6 respondent stated that *“if you’re not physically active, you’re not strengthening all those like the parts of your body to feel like you could face like problems in with your body for not being physically active.”* Another Grade 6 respondent was able to identify the need to be physically active as a preventative measure for health issues later on in life. One Grade 6 respondent at Site B recognized the lack of physical activity in his family members and stated *“I didn’t want to be like the same as my other family members.”* Interestingly, all of the student respondents in the focus group interview identified the importance of being physically active and intend to continue with a school activity the following year. Teacher/coach respondents stated that *“this is the only place that some of our students will get the opportunity to participate”* and *“it is good for their health and getting exercise that they might not get elsewhere.”* If students are not receiving ample opportunities to participate in school or community activities, it is possible that they are not reaching the recommended daily physical activity guidelines (Alberta Education, 2006). Meeting the physical activity baseline measure as set out through the Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines (Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology, 2018) helps to reduce the likelihood of non-communicable diseases such as

cardiovascular illnesses, anxiety, depression, and obesity (World Health Organization, 2019). As teachers/coaches, we need to understand the necessity to “get students moving” and even more importantly, to help develop their motivation to become more active (Lang et al, 2018). Educators must stress the importance of these areas in their everyday academic teaching.

From the survey, 40.7% (n=33) of student respondents felt their participation in a school activity connected them to the school. As a teacher and coach, I was pleasantly surprised to hear that students recognize their impact on building school community and their feelings towards school connectedness. School connectedness is enhanced when students participate in extracurricular activities, most likely because of the relationships that are enhanced during their participation (Knifsend, Camacho-Thompson, Juvonen, & Graham, 2018). Student respondents at Site A were able to weave their involvement in school activities to school connectedness and culture, however the respondents at Site B were unable to identify their role in the school community through their participation. It is possible that they do not feel as cohesive as a group, or identify how they contribute to the school culture. One female Grade 5 respondent stated that even after she tries an activity, she may not enjoy it, because *“it's not really fun and I'm not really enjoying it.”* When implementing a school activity, it is important to recognize the students' energy they are bringing to the activity and their role in building *community*. If they enjoy the activity and find it ‘fun’, they are going to promote the activity to their friends and build a larger community through word-of-mouth. At an elementary school age, it is necessary to maintain a high level of enjoyment to maintain long-term participation of a physically active lifestyle (ParticipACTION, 2018).

The most surprising responses from students (see Figure 3) was the lack of impact that friends have on student participation in school activities. According to Figure 3, almost half of the respondents ‘strongly disagree’ that their peers impacted their decision. However, I wonder if the impact of peer relationships arrives after they have joined the school activity (Knifsend et al., 2018). This was confirmed through a Grade 5 respondent indicating that they may stay involved in a school activity because they would have already built relationships. The student responses from the focus group interviews did not specifically identify friends as being the focus of the school activity. When asked “*is it just fun because of your teammates?*” two student respondents replied “*no.*” This causes me to reflect upon the previous themes identified from their responses and recognize the importance of the teacher/coach characteristics and being physically active. Although school activity environments offer opportunities to develop relationships and a variety of peer interactions (Fredricks & Simpskins, 2013), the result of these relationships may not appear until after they join a school activity and create relationships with other students participating in the same activity.

LIMITATIONS

This research project did not go without limitations. Limitations included the number of school sites involved in collecting data. This limitation was purposeful as the two school sites have similarities in location, demographics, activities offered, and school enrollment. Another limitation was that the school sites were located in the same geographical area and within the same school division. As both schools experience the transient nature of the families, the results may be impacted based on the student involvement in school activities.

At the time of the study, few school activities had been available to students. Grade 4 students would have few school activities to become involved in and may not have many experiences to draw upon. In Grade 3, students are able to join floor hockey, running club, track, and a minimal number of other clubs. As students progress through the grades, more opportunities become available (e.g., basketball, soccer, badminton, Student Wellness Action Team, music club).

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Throughout this research project, I recognized gaps in specific areas that I would like to extend into future research projects. For example, I would refine my scope to include only school athletics, as the majority of respondents participated in this area. To continue further research, I would collect data from the participants' parents/guardians to expand upon their influence in which school athletics their child participates in. It is possible that children are influenced by their parents to join specific activities because they were/are involved in similar activities. To further my data collected from teachers/coaches, I would want to know their credentials and levels of experience in the areas of which they are coaching. I would like to understand their motivation, reasons, and passion for coaching various sports.

Moreover, I would like to look into the number of students that participate in multiple sports, if their participation impacts other students to join a team, and why they participate in multiple sports. When the same group of students continuously participates in similar activities, this can be daunting to new students who want to try the activity. Further, if these students participate in community or competitive sports, are the dynamics of the relationship with their coach similar to that of a school coach?

Competitive sports provide a different atmosphere, experience, and levels of pressures for children, which may impact their interaction with the coaching staff and their parents.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Evidently, there is a need to understand motivating factors of students in today's classrooms, particularly in regards to school activities. Although, student respondents identified that they participate in school activities due to interest and enjoyment, other suggested factors included, but are not limited to: developing peer and teacher/coach relationships built on trust, care, and respect, enhancing school connectedness, and being involved in a similar opportunity with their peers. When teachers/coaches interact with students to promote a school activity, these are key factors to encouraging their participation. While a small number of teacher/coach respondents identified that it is becoming more difficult to engage students in school activities, Canadian children and youth are experiencing below recommended physical activity, above average sedentary rates (ParticipACTION, 2018), and increased screen time (Twenge, 2017); this is concerning. Increasing involvement in school activities creates a safe environment for students' physical, emotional, and social development. All of the teacher/coach respondents identified various ways that they engage in positive relationships with the students and recognized the importance of a relationship to the students' feelings towards the activity. As student and teacher/coach respondents recognized the increased interactions and development of relationships through school activity, it is beneficial for all staff to contribute to the school community by leading an activity within their school. This will provide an opportunity for students to connect with teachers/coaches beyond the

regular classroom walls and build deeper, more meaningful relationships while serving as role models for younger students.

Resulting from this research project, I hoped to share a few key points related to relationships and the motivational factors involving school activities for Grade 4-6 students. If educators can develop further understanding about what young learners require for their growth and development, and provide conducive learning environments in both formal classroom instruction and extracurricular school activities, I believe this will lead directly to stronger, more productive citizens in our society. This research project shed light on a topic of interest for me. That said, as a result of my entire time as a graduate student at CUE, I believe I am much more equipped to help lead today's students toward a brighter and physically active future.

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Appendix A

Letters of Consent and Assent

**Teacher/Coach-Student Relationships: An Investigation into the Effects on
Grade 4-6 Student Participation in Organized School Activities
School District Consent Form**

Research Investigator:

Jennifer Kruse
Master of Education Student
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Supervisor:

Dr. Brent Bradford
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780-479-9274

Background

My name is Jennifer Kruse. I am currently a Grade 5 teacher at East Elementary School. In addition to my teaching duties, I am working towards a Master of Education Degree at Concordia University of Edmonton.

Purpose

The purpose of my research project is to develop a greater understanding of the effects of teacher/coach-student relationships on the participation of Grade 4, 5, and 6 students in organized school activities (e.g., athletics, clubs, leadership groups, etc). The results could indicate if there is a correlation between teachers/coaches creating authentic relationships with students to help encourage them to participate in organized school activities. The results may inform educators on the importance of creating teacher/coach-student relationships with students to encourage student involvement with a variety of foundational activities.

Procedure

If you grant permission to allow Black Gold School Division to participate in the research project, the Grade 4, 5, and 6 students from two Leduc locations will be asked to participate in a 20-question online survey (available through Google Forms). The online survey will be delivered by the classroom teacher at a time that is most convenient for them, and will take approximately ten minutes to complete. Each Grade 4, 5, and 6 teacher will be provided with a brief introduction for the students that will be read prior to the start of the survey. All surveys should be completed by November 29, 2019. Once all of the surveys are collected, four students from each location will be asked to participate in a short focus group interview. The interview will take place outside of regular classroom hours (e.g., after school) in January 2020 at the school location. If requested, transcripts of the interviews will be available after the project for administration.

In addition to the student component to this research project, I would like to ask any teachers and staff who lead or coach activities, as well as any non-staff volunteer coaches to participate. They will each be asked to complete a 20-question online survey (available

through Google Forms). This online survey can be completed at a time that is most convenient for them prior to November 29, 2019.

The findings of this research project will be provided to Black Gold School Division after all data is received and overall findings have been processed. Upon request, resulting information may be made available to interested staff and parents connected to the research sites. All data collected will remain anonymous and pseudonyms will be used to ensure privacy.

Potential Risks

There are no known risks by voluntarily joining this research project. I will follow Concordia University of Edmonton's Research Ethics Board's rules and all participants will be treated in a respectful manner at all times. Participants are allowed to discontinue their participation in the project at any time until they have submitted data through the online survey. Students who participate in the focus group interview portion of the research project can be assured that their identity will be kept anonymous as pseudonyms will be used. Students who wish not to further participate in the focus group interview will have the option to withdraw at any time until the completion of the interview.

Potential Benefits

Encouraging students to participate in organized school activities is vital to the growth and development of a child. Teacher/coach-student interactions in and out of the classroom are beneficial to student's holistic development. Students who explore diverse opportunities in a safe environment can determine their interests and develop relationships with their peers and adults around them.

Confidentiality

Participation in this research project is free and voluntary. Participants may withdraw at any time without penalty or prejudice until submission of the online survey. Focus group interview participants may withdraw at any time until the completion of the interview. Participants are asked to respect the confidentiality of the discussions, however, the researcher cannot ensure that all participants will comply with this request. All hard-copy documents, transcripts, and encrypted and unencrypted data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet or securely in a protected database for a period of 5 years. The participating schools and participants will not be identified by name in any reports or presentations upon completion of this research project. At the end of the 5-year period, all electronic data will remain available to the researcher and all hard copy materials will be destroyed by the researcher.

Contact

If you have any questions or desire any further information with regard to this project, you may contact Jennifer Kruse by email at jnkruse@student.concordia.ab.ca. You may also contact Dr. Brent Bradford at (780) 479-9274, or by email at brent.bradford@concordia.ab.ca.

Sincerely,



**Teacher/Coach-Student Relationships: An Investigation into the Effects on
Grade 4-6 Student Participation in Organized School Activities
School District Consent Form**

Study Title: Teacher/Coach-Student Relationships: An Investigation into the Effects on Grade 4-6 Student Participation in Organized School Activities

Principal Investigator: Jennifer Kruse, Concordia University of Edmonton

Supervisor: Dr. Brent Bradford, Concordia University of Edmonton: 780-479-9274

Consent

Black Gold School Division's participation in this research project is entirely voluntary and you may refuse permission for the staff and students to participate or withdraw from the research project at any time without consequence.

Your signature indicates that you give consent for Black Gold School Division (specifically [1] East Elementary School and [2] Willow Park School) to participate in this research project.

Subject Signature

Date

Printed Name of the Subject signing above

**Teacher/Coach-Student Relationships: An Investigation into the Effects on
Grade 4-6 Student Participation in Organized School Activities
School Principal Consent Form**

Research Investigator:

Jennifer Kruse
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Supervisor:

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780-479-9274

Background

My name is Jennifer Kruse. I am currently a Grade 5 teacher at East Elementary School. In addition to my teaching duties, I am working towards a Master of Education Degree at Concordia University of Edmonton.

Purpose

The purpose of my research project is to develop a greater understanding of the effects of teacher/coach-student relationships on the participation of Grade 4, 5, and 6 students in organized school activities (e.g., athletics, clubs, leadership groups, etc). The results could indicate if there is a correlation between teachers/coaches creating authentic relationships with students to help encourage them to participate in organized school activities. The results may inform educators on the importance of creating teacher/coach-student relationships with students to encourage student involvement with a variety of foundational activities.

Procedure

If you agree to allow your elementary school to participate in the research project, the Grade 4, 5, and 6 students will be asked to participate in a 20-question online survey (available through Google Forms) that should take approximately 10 minutes. The survey will be delivered by the classroom teacher at a time that is most convenient for them. Each Grade 4, 5, and 6 teacher will be provided with a brief introduction for the students that will be read prior to the start of the survey. All surveys should be completed by November 29, 2019. In addition to the student component to this research project, I would also like to ask any teachers and staff who lead or coach activities, as well as any non-staff volunteer coaches to participate. They will each be asked to complete a 20-question online survey (available through Google Forms). This survey can be completed at a time that is most convenient for them prior to November 29, 2019.

Once all of the surveys are collected, four students will be asked to participate in a short focus group interview. This interview will take place outside of regular classroom time (e.g., after school) in the school in January 2020. Transcripts of the interview will be available after the project if staff or administration would like to view them.

The findings of this research project will be provided to your school after all data is received and overall findings have been processed. Upon request, resulting information may be made available to other staff and parents connected to the research sites. All data collected will remain anonymous and pseudonyms will be used to ensure privacy.

Potential Risks

There are no known risks by voluntarily joining this research project. I will follow Concordia University of Edmonton's Research Ethics Board's rules and all participants will be treated in a respectful manner at all times. Students and staff are allowed to discontinue their participation in the project at any time until they have submitted data through the online survey. Students who participate in the focus group interviews can be assured that their identity will be kept anonymous as pseudonyms will be used. Students who wish not to continue participating in the interview will have the option to withdraw at any time until the completion of the interview.

Potential Benefits

Encouraging students to participate in organized school activities is an important element in children's growth and development. Teacher/coach-student interactions in and out of the classroom are beneficial to student's holistic development. Students who explore diverse opportunities in a safe environment can determine their interests and develop relationships with their peers and adults around them.

Confidentiality

Participation in this research project is free and voluntary. Participants are asked to respect the confidentiality of the discussions, however, the researcher cannot ensure that all participants will comply with this request. Participants may withdraw at any time without penalty or prejudice until submission of the survey. Students participating in the interview may withdraw participation at any time until the completion of the interview. All hard-copy documents, transcripts, and encrypted and unencrypted data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet or securely in a protected database for a period of 5 years. The school and participants will not be identified by name in any reports or presentations upon completion of this research project. At the end of the 5-year period, all electronic data will remain available to the researcher and all hard copy materials will be destroyed by the researcher.

Contact

If you have any questions or desire any further information with regard to this research project, you may contact Jennifer Kruse by email at jnkruse@student.concordia.ab.ca. You may also contact Dr. Brent Bradford at (780) 479-9274, or by email at brent.bradford@concordia.ab.ca.

Sincerely,



**Teacher/Coach-Student Relationships: An Investigation into the Effects on
Grade 4-6 Student Participation in Organized School Activities
School Principal Consent Form**

Study Title: Teacher/Coach-Student Relationships: An Investigation into the Effects on Grade 4-6 Student Participation in Organized School Activities

Principal Investigator: Jennifer Kruse, Concordia University of Edmonton

Supervisor: Dr. Brent Bradford, Concordia University of Edmonton: 780-479-9274

Consent

Your school's participation in this research project is entirely voluntary and you may refuse permission for the staff and students to participate, or withdraw from the project at any time without jeopardy.

Your signature indicates that you give consent for your elementary school to participate in this research project.

Subject Signature

Date

Printed Name of the Subject signing above

**Teacher/Coach-Student Relationships: An Investigation into the Effects on
Grade 4-6 Student Participation in Organized School Activities
Teacher - Classroom Consent Form - Online Survey**

Research Investigator:

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Supervisor:

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780-479-9274

Background

My name is Jennifer Kruse. I am currently a Grade 5 teacher at East Elementary School. In addition to my teaching duties, I am working towards a Master of Education Degree at Concordia University of Edmonton.

Purpose

The purpose of my research project is to develop a greater understanding of the effect of teacher/coach-student relationships on the participation of Grade 4, 5, and 6 students in organized school activities (e.g., athletics, clubs, leadership groups, etc). The results could indicate if there is a correlation between teachers/coaches creating authentic relationships with students to help encourage them to participate in organized school activities. The results may inform educators on the importance of creating teacher/coach-student relationships with students to encourage student involvement with a variety of foundational activities.

Procedure

If you agree to participate in this research project, you will each be asked to provide students with time to complete a 20-question online survey (available through Google Forms) that should take approximately 10 minutes. This online survey can be completed at a time that is most convenient for you before November 29, 2019.

In addition, each Grade 4, 5, and 6 teacher will be provided with a brief introduction for the students that will be read prior to the start of the online survey. Each participant will be provided with a 20-question online survey to complete. All surveys should be completed by November 29, 2019. The findings of this research project will be provided to your school after all data is received and overall findings have been processed. Upon request, this information may be made available to interested staff and parents connected

to the research sites. All data collected will remain anonymous and pseudonyms will be used to ensure privacy.

Potential Risks

There are no known risks by voluntarily joining this research project. I will follow Concordia University of Edmonton's Research Ethics Board's rules and all participants will be treated in a respectful manner at all times. Students and staff are allowed to discontinue their participation in the research project at any time until they have submitted data through the online survey.

Potential Benefits

Encouraging students to participate in organized school activities is an important element in children's growth and development. Interactions between staff and students in and out of the classroom are beneficial to a student's holistic development. Students who explore diverse opportunities in a safe environment can determine their interests and develop relationships with their peers and adults around them.

Confidentiality

Participation in this research project is free and voluntary. Participants may withdraw at any time without penalty or prejudice until submission of the online survey. Students participating in the focus group interview may withdraw participation at any time until the completion of the interview. Focus group interview participants are asked to respect the confidentiality of the discussions, however, the researcher cannot ensure that all participants will comply with this request. All hard-copy documents, transcripts, and encrypted and unencrypted data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet or securely in a protected database for a period of 5 years. The participating schools and participants will not be identified by name in any reports or presentations upon completion of this research project. At the end of the 5-year period, all electronic data will remain available to the researcher and all hard copy materials will be destroyed by the researcher.

Contact

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Sincerely,



**Teacher/Coach-Student Relationships: An Investigation into the Effects on
Grade 4-6 Student Participation in Organized School Activities
Teacher - Classroom Consent Form - Online Survey**

Study Title: Teacher/Coach-Student Relationships: An Investigation into the Effects on Grade 4-6 Student Participation in Organized School Activities

Principal Investigator: Jennifer Kruse, Concordia University of Edmonton

Supervisor: Dr. Brent Bradford, Concordia University of Edmonton: 780-479-9274

Consent

Your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary and you may refuse permission to participate or withdraw from the research project at any time without consequence. If you choose to withdraw (your class) from the research project prior to having the students complete the online survey, it will remain confidential without consequence. Your students' responses will be omitted from the project up until their online survey responses are submitted.

Your signature indicates that you give consent to participate in this research project.

Subject Signature

Date

Printed Name of the Subject signing above

**Teacher/Coach-Student Relationships: An Investigation into the Effects on
Grade 4-6 Student Participation in Organized School Activities
Teacher/Coach Consent Form - Online Survey**

Research Investigator:

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Procedure

If you agree to participate in this research project, you will each be asked to complete a 20-question online survey (available through Google Forms) that should take approximately 10-15 minutes. This online survey can be completed at a time that is most convenient for you before November 29, 2019.

The findings of this research project will be provided to your school after all data is received and overall findings have been processed. Upon request, this information may be made available to interested staff and parents connected to the research sites. All data collected will remain anonymous and pseudonyms will be used to ensure privacy.

Potential Risks

There are no known risks by voluntarily joining this research project. I will follow Concordia University of Edmonton's Research Ethics Board's rules and all participants will be treated in a respectful manner at all times. Students and staff are allowed to

discontinue their participation in the research project at any time until they have submitted data through the online survey.

Potential Benefits

Encouraging students to participate in organized school activities is an important element in children's growth and development. Interactions between staff and students in and out of the classroom are beneficial to student's holistic development. Students who explore diverse opportunities in a safe environment can determine their interests and develop relationships with their peers and adults around them.

Confidentiality

Participation in this research project is free and voluntary. Participants may withdraw at any time without penalty or prejudice until submission of the online survey. Students participating in the focus group interview may withdraw participation at any time until the completion of the interview. Focus group interview participants are asked to respect the confidentiality of the discussions, however, the researcher cannot ensure that all participants will comply with this request. All hard-copy documents, transcripts, and encrypted and unencrypted data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet or securely in a protected database for a period of 5 years. The participating schools and participants will not be identified by name in any reports or presentations upon completion of this research project. At the end of the 5-year period, all electronic data will remain available to the researcher and all hard copy materials will be destroyed by the researcher.

Contact

If you have any questions or desire any further information with regard to this research project, you may contact Jennifer Kruse by email at jnkruse@student.concordia.ab.ca. You may also contact Dr. Brent Bradford at (780) 479-9274, or by email at brent.bradford@concordia.ab.ca.

Sincerely,



**Teacher/Coach-Student Relationships: An Investigation into the Effects on
Grade 4-6 Student Participation in Organized School Activities
Teacher/Coach Consent Form - Online Survey**

Study Title: Teacher/Coach-Student Relationships: An Investigation into the Effects on Grade 4-6 Student Participation in Organized School Activities

Principal Investigator: Jennifer Kruse, Concordia University of Edmonton

Supervisor: Dr. Brent Bradford, Concordia University of Edmonton: 780-479-9274

Consent

Your participation in this research project is entirely voluntary and you may refuse permission to participate or withdraw from the research project at any time without consequence. If you choose to withdraw from the research project prior to completing the online survey, it will remain confidential.

Your signature indicates that you give consent to participate in this research project.

Subject Signature

Date

Printed Name of the Subject signing above

**Teacher/Coach-Student Relationships: An Investigation into the Effects on
Grade 4-6 Student Participation in Organized School Activities
Parent Consent Form - Online Survey**

Research Investigator:

Jennifer Kruse
Master of Education Student
Concordia University of Edmonton
7128 Ada Blvd
Edmonton, AB T5B4E3
jnkruse@student.concordia.ab.ca

Supervisor:

Dr. Brent Bradford
Associate Professor; Faculty of Education
Concordia University of Edmonton
7128 Ada Blvd
Edmonton, AB T5B 4E4
brent.bradford@concordia.ab.ca
780-479-9274

Background

My name is Jennifer Kruse. I am currently a Grade 5 teacher at East Elementary School. In addition to my teaching duties, I am working towards a Master of Education Degree at Concordia University of Edmonton.

Purpose

The purpose of my research project is to develop a greater understanding of the effects of teacher/coach-student relationships on the participation of Grade 4, 5, and 6 students in organized school activities (e.g. athletics, clubs, leadership groups, etc). The results could indicate if there is a correlation between teachers/coaches creating authentic relationships with students and their participation in organized school activities. The results may inform educators on the importance of creating teacher/coach-student relationships to encourage student involvement with a variety of foundational activities.

Procedure

If you agree to have your child participate in the project, your child will be asked to participate in a 20-question online survey (available through Google Forms) that should take approximately 10 minutes. The survey will be delivered by the classroom teacher at a time that is most convenient for your child's class. Each classroom teacher will read a brief introduction to the students prior to the start of the survey to ensure consistency and understanding.

The research results will be provided to your school after all data is received and the overall findings have been processed. Upon request, this information will be made available to you. All data collected will remain anonymous and pseudonyms will be used to ensure privacy.

Potential Risks

There are no known risks by voluntarily joining this research project. I will follow Concordia University of Edmonton's Research Ethics Board's rules and all participants will be treated in a respectful manner at all times. Participants are allowed to discontinue

their participation in the project at any time until they have submitted data through the online survey.

Benefits

Encouraging students to participate in organized school activities is an important part of their growth and development. Teacher/coach-student interactions in and out of the classroom are beneficial to student's holistic development. Students who explore diverse opportunities in a safe environment can determine their interests and develop relationships with their peers and adults around them.

Confidentiality

Participation in this research project is free and voluntary. At any time, you may withdraw your child without penalty or prejudice. Students also have the option to withdraw at any time until they have submitted the online survey. All resulting data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet or securely in a protected database for a period of 5 years. The research site (i.e., school) and participants will not be identified by name in any reports or presentations upon completion of this project. At the end of the 5-year period, all electronic data will remain available to the researcher and all hard copy materials will be destroyed (shredded) by the researcher.

Contact

If you have any questions or desire any further information in relation to this research project, you may contact Jennifer Kruse by email at jnkruse@student.concordia.ab.ca. You may also contact Dr. Brent Bradford at (780) 479-9274, or by email at brent.bradford@concordia.ab.ca.

Note to Parents

This consent form is available on your child's PowerSchool account. This information is for your records.

Sincerely,



**Teacher/Coach-Student Relationships: An Investigation into the Effects on
Grade 4-6 Student Participation in Organized School Activities
Parent Consent Form - Online Survey**

Study Title: Teacher/Coach-Student Relationships: An Investigation into the Effects on Grade 4-6 Student Participation in Organized School Activities

Principal Investigator: Jennifer Kruse, Concordia University of Edmonton

Supervisor: Dr. Brent Bradford, Concordia University of Edmonton: 780-479-9274

Consent

Your child's participation in my research project is entirely voluntary and you may refuse permission for the child to participate or withdraw from the project at any time without any consequences.

Your signature indicates that you give consent for your child to participate in this research project.

Child's Name

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Printed Name of the Parent/Guardian signing above

**Teacher/Coach-Student Relationships: An Investigation into the Effects on
Grade 4-6 Student Participation in Organized School Activities
Student Assent Form - Online Survey**

Research Investigator:

Jennifer Kruse
Master of Education Student
Concordia University of Edmonton
7128 Ada Blvd
Edmonton, AB T5B4E3
jnkruse@student.concordia.ab.ca

Supervisor:

Dr. Brent Bradford
Associate Professor; Faculty of Education
Concordia University of Edmonton
7128 Ada Blvd
Edmonton, AB T5B 4E4
brent.bradford@concordia.ab.ca
780-479-9274

Background

My name is Jennifer Kruse. I am currently a Grade 5 teacher at East Elementary School. In addition to my teaching duties, I am working towards a Master of Education Degree at Concordia University of Edmonton.

Purpose

I am aiming to conduct a research project to learn more about the relationship between coaches/teachers and students and, if any, its impact on joining organized school activities. I would like to learn about your thoughts about the organized school activities you are involved in, along with the relationships you have developed with your coaches/teachers. I would be grateful if you would choose to voluntarily participate in my research project.

Procedures

If you choose to join my research project, you will be asked to join other Grade 4, 5, and 6 students at your school and another participating school. You will be asked to complete an online 20-question survey. The questions will be about what activities you are involved in, why you joined those activities, and the relationship that you have with your coach/teacher that leads to participating in those activities. This survey should take about 10 minutes and you can complete it on your device.

Benefits

I hope that you choose to voluntarily join my research study. With your help, I can learn more about how teachers can get more students involved in school activities. After I collect all of the information from the survey and interviews, I will summarize the information. I will not be able to tell what answers you chose in the survey, and I will use pseudonyms (made up names) so no one can tell who said what during the interviews. Once I do that, I will share all of the information with teachers, parents, guardians, and principals. Being able to participate doesn't cost you anything!

Risk

There are no known risks by voluntarily joining my research project. I will follow Concordia University of Edmonton's Research Ethics Board's rules and you will be treated in a respectful manner at all times.

Voluntary Participation

You do not have to participate in my research project. Choosing to voluntarily participate is free and completely your choice. Once you decide to participate, if you want to stop being a part of the project, you can do that without any consequences. It is your choice to stop participating until you submit your results in the online survey. Once I have collected those survey results, I will keep the results confidential (that means no one will know how you answered each question). After I collect the survey responses, I will ask four students from each school to be part of a focus group interview. While I would be happy if you participated, I understand if you do not want to participate. Remember, it is your choice.

Confidentiality

All of the survey and interview responses that I collect from you during my research project will be secured and remain confidential. Your responses will be stored privately. All survey responses will be anonymous (that means I cannot figure out which student answered each question). For the interview, you will be given a pseudonym (which means that you will be given a different name). This will ensure that privacy is guaranteed to the highest degree and we will not use your real names during the interview. The only people who will have access to your responses will be Dr. Brent Bradford (my Research Project Supervisor) and myself. Your responses will be used to help me with my graduate work.

After my research is completed, I will keep all of the papers, documents, and forms from the research project in a locked cabinet for five years. After that, I will shred or destroy all of the collected documents. If you or your family are interested in the results of the research project, you can email me to receive the final report.

Further Information

If you have any other questions about my research study, you can contact me at jnkruse@student.concordia.ab.ca or Dr. Brent Bradford at brent.bradford@concordia.ab.ca. Thank you for taking the time to read this information and thinking about participating in my research project. I look forward to working with you!

Sincerely,



**Teacher/Coach-Student Relationships: An Investigation into the Effects on
Grade 4-6 Student Participation in Organized School Activities
Student Assent Form - Online Survey**

Study Title: Teacher/Coach-Student Relationships: An Investigation into the Effects on Grade 4-6 Student Participation in Organized School Activities

Principal Investigator: Jennifer Kruse, Concordia University of Edmonton

Supervisor: Dr. Brent Bradford, Concordia University of Edmonton: 780-479-9274

Do you understand that you have been asked to be in a research project?	yes	no
Have you received and read a copy of the attached Information Sheet?	yes	no
Do you understand the benefits and risks for you while participating in this Research project?	yes	no
Have you had the chance to ask questions and discuss this research project with an adult (e.g., parent, teacher)?	yes	no
Do you understand that you do not have to participate or can stop participating in this research project at any time, without any consequences?	yes	no
Do you understand confidentiality? Do you understand who will have access to your information?	yes	no

This study was explained to me by: _____

I have read and understand the attached information letter and agree to participate in this research project:

Signature of Research Participant

Date

Printed Name of Research Participant

I believe that the person signing this form understands what is involved in the research project and voluntarily agrees to participate.

Signature of Investigator or Designee

Date

A copy of this signed document will be provided for the participant.

**Teacher/Coach-Student Relationships: An Investigation into the Effects on
Grade 4-6 Student Participation in Organized School Activities
Parent Consent Form - Focus Group Interview**

Research Investigator:

Jennifer Kruse
Master of Education Student
Concordia University of Edmonton
7128 Ada Blvd
Edmonton, AB T5B4E3
jnkruse@student.concordia.ab.ca

Supervisor:

Dr. Brent Bradford
Associate Professor; Faculty of Education
Concordia University of Edmonton
7128 Ada Blvd
Edmonton, AB T5B 4E4
brent.bradford@concordia.ab.ca
780-479-9274

Background

My name is Jennifer Kruse. I am currently a Grade 5 teacher at East Elementary School. In addition to my teaching duties, I am working towards a Master of Education Degree at Concordia University of Edmonton.

Purpose

The purpose of my research project is to develop a greater understanding of the effects of teacher/coach-student relationships on the participation of Grade 4, 5, and 6 students in organized school activities (e.g. athletics, clubs, leadership groups, etc). The results could indicate if there is a correlation between teachers/coaches creating authentic relationships with students to help encourage them to participate in organized school activities. The results may inform educators on the importance of creating teacher/coach-student relationships to encourage student involvement with a variety of foundational activities.

Procedure

If you agree to have your child participate in Phase 2 of this project, your child will be one of four students asked to participate in a short focus group interview. This focus group interview will take place outside of regular classroom time (e.g., after school) in the school in January 2020. Transcripts of the focus group interview will be available after the project if staff or administration would like to view them.

The research results will be provided to your school after all data is received and the overall findings have been processed. Upon request, this information will be made available to you. All data collected will remain anonymous and pseudonyms will be used to ensure privacy.

Potential Risks

There are no known risks by voluntarily joining this research project. I will follow Concordia University of Edmonton's Research Ethics Board's rules and all participants will be treated in a respectful manner at all times. Participants are allowed to discontinue their participation in the project at any time until they have submitted data through the online survey.

Benefits

Encouraging students to participate in organized school activities is an important part of their growth and development. Teacher/coach-student interactions in and out of the classroom are beneficial to student's holistic development. Students who explore diverse opportunities in a safe environment can determine their interests and develop relationships with their peers and adults around them.

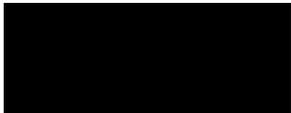
Confidentiality

Participation in this research project is free and voluntary. At any time, you may withdraw your child without penalty or prejudice. Students also have the option to withdraw at any time until they have submitted the online survey. All resulting data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet or securely in a protected database for a period of 5 years. The research site (i.e., school) and participants will not be identified by name in any reports or presentations upon completion of this project. At the end of the 5-year period, all electronic data will remain available to the researcher and all hard copy materials will be destroyed (shredded) by the researcher.

Contact

If you have any questions or desire any further information in relation to this research project, you may contact Jennifer Kruse by email at jnkruse@student.concordia.ab.ca. You may also contact Dr. Brent Bradford at (780) 479-9274, or by email at brent.bradford@concordia.ab.ca.

Sincerely,



**Teacher/Coach-Student Relationships: An Investigation into the Effects on
Grade 4-6 Student Participation in Organized School Activities
Parent Consent Form - Focus Group Interview**

Study Title: Teacher/Coach-Student Relationships: An Investigation into the Effects on Grade 4-6 Student Participation in Organized School Activities

Principal Investigator: Jennifer Kruse, Concordia University of Edmonton

Supervisor: Dr. Brent Bradford, Concordia University of Edmonton: 780-479-9274

Consent

Your child's participation in my research project is entirely voluntary and you may refuse permission for the child to participate or withdraw from the project at any time without any consequences.

Your signature indicates that you give consent for your child to participate in this research project.

Child's Name

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Printed Name of the Parent/Guardian signing above

**Teacher/Coach-Student Relationships: An Investigation into the Effects on
Grade 4-6 Student Participation in Organized School Activities
Student Consent Form - Focus Group Interview**

Research Investigator:

Jennifer Kruse
Master of Education Student
Concordia University of Edmonton
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Edmonton, AB T5B4E3
jnkruse@student.concordia.ab.ca

Supervisor:

Dr. Brent Bradford
Associate Professor; Faculty of Education
Concordia University of Edmonton
7128 Ada Blvd
Edmonton, AB T5B 4E4
brent.bradford@concordia.ab.ca
780-479-9274

Background

My name is Jennifer Kruse. I am currently a Grade 5 teacher at East Elementary School. In addition to my teaching duties, I am working towards a Master of Education Degree at Concordia University of Edmonton.

Purpose

I am aiming to conduct a research project to learn more about the relationship between teachers/coaches and students and, if any, its impact on joining organized school activities. I would like to learn about your thoughts about the organized school activities you are involved in, along with the relationships you have developed with your teachers/coaches. I would be grateful if you would choose to voluntarily participate in my research project.

Procedures

If you choose to join Phase 2 of my research project, I will ask four students from each school to participate in a 30-minute focus group interview. I will ask you some questions that will allow you to tell me more specifically what you think. The survey and interviews will help me finish my research project.

Benefits

I hope that you choose to voluntarily join my research study. With your help, I can learn more about how teachers can get more students involved in school activities. After I collect all of the information from the survey and interviews, I will summarize the information. I will not be able to tell what answers you chose in the survey, and I will use pseudonyms (made up names) so no one can tell who said what during the interviews. Once I do that, I will share all of the information with teachers, parents, guardians, and principals. Being able to participate does not cost you anything.

Risk

There are no known risks by voluntarily joining my research project. I will follow Concordia University of Edmonton's Research Ethics Board's rules and you will be treated in a respectful manner at all times.

Voluntary Participation

You do not have to participate in my research project. Choosing to voluntarily participate is free and completely your choice. Once you decide to participate, if you want to stop being a part of the project, you can do that without any consequences. It is your choice to stop participating until you submit your results in the online survey. Once I have collected those survey results, I will keep the results confidential (that means no one will know how you answered each question). After I collect the survey responses, I will ask four students from each school to be part of a focus group interview. While I would be happy if you participated, I understand if you do not want to participate. Remember, it is your choice.

Confidentiality

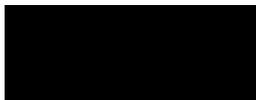
All of the survey and interview responses that I collect from you during my research project will be secured and remain confidential. Your responses will be stored privately. All survey responses will be anonymous (that means I cannot figure out which student answered each question). For the interview, you will be given a pseudonym (which means that you will be given a different name). This will ensure that privacy is guaranteed to the highest degree and we will not use your real names during the interview. The only people who will have access to your responses will be Dr. Brent Bradford (my Research Project Supervisor) and myself. Your responses will be used to help me with my graduate work.

After my research is completed, I will keep all of the papers, documents, and forms from the research project in a locked cabinet for five years. After that, I will shred or destroy all of the collected documents. If you or your family are interested in the results of the research project, you can email me to receive the final report.

Further Information

If you have any other questions about my research study, you can contact me at jnkruse@student.concordia.ab.ca or Dr. Brent Bradford at brent.bradford@concordia.ab.ca. Thank you for taking the time to read this information and thinking about participating in my research project. I look forward to working with you!

Sincerely,



**Teacher/Coach-Student Relationships: An Investigation into the Effects on
Grade 4-6 Student Participation in Organized School Activities
Student Consent Form - Focus Group Interview**

Study Title: Teacher/Coach-Student Relationships: An Investigation into the Effects on Grade 4-6 Student Participation in Organized School Activities

Principal Investigator: Jennifer Kruse, Concordia University of Edmonton

Supervisor: Dr. Brent Bradford, Concordia University of Edmonton: 780-479-9274

Do you understand that you have been asked to be in a research project?	yes	no
Have you received and read a copy of the attached Information Sheet?	yes	no
Do you understand the benefits and risks for you while participating in this Research project?	yes	no
Have you had the chance to ask questions and discuss this research project with an adult?	yes	no
Do you understand that you do not have to participate or can stop participating in this research project at any time, without any consequences?	yes	no
Do you understand confidentiality? Do you understand who will have access to your information?	yes	no

This study was explained to me by: _____

I have read and understand the attached information letter and agree to participate in this research project:

Signature of Research Participant

Date

Printed Name of Research Participant

I believe that the person signing this form understands what is involved in the research project and voluntarily agrees to participate.

Signature of Investigator or Designee

Date

A copy of this signed document will be provided for the participant.

Appendix B
Student Survey Questions

Student Survey Questions

* The following survey questions were placed into an online survey in Google Forms

1. (multiple choice) I identify as:
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Non-Binary
2. (multiple choice) I am in Grade:
 - a. 4
 - b. 5
 - c. 6
3. (checkbox) I participate in the following organized school activities (may select more than one response):
 - a. Running club
 - b. Basketball
 - c. Floor Hockey
 - d. Track
 - e. Soccer
 - f. SWAT (student wellness action team)
 - g. Crochet/Knit club
 - h. Games club
 - i. None
 - j. Other

Thinking of the organized school activities (activity) you participate in at school, respond to the following questions. If you participate in more than one activity, think of one specific activity that you participate in most often. Once you have chosen one specific activity, refer to your experience as you answer the following questions.

4. (scale) I joined the activity because my friends were joining.
5. (scale) I joined the activity because I liked the teacher/coach who was leading it.
6. (scale) I am interested in joining a new school activity this year because my friends are joining.
7. (scale) I am interested in joining a new school activity this year because of the teacher/coach.
8. (scale) I knew the teacher/coach before joining the school activity.
9. (scale) The teacher/coach encouraged me to join the school activity.
10. (scale) During the practice or activity, I feel comfortable talking to the teacher/coach.
11. (scale) I feel comfortable talking to the teacher/coach outside of regular class time.
12. (scale) I feel that the coach/teacher cares about me.

13. (scale) I feel that the teacher/coach wants me to improve my skills.
14. (scale) I trust my teacher/coach.
15. (scale) I remained involved in the school activity because I wanted to.
16. (scale) I remained involved in the school activity because of my teammates.
17. (scale) I remained involved in the school activity because of my teacher/coach.
18. (scale) I would join other school activities if it had a different teacher/coach.
19. (scale) After the school activity is over, I still talk to my teacher/coach often.
20. (scale) I feel important to the school because I am involved in the school activity.

Likert scale: 1 (Strongly Disagree) \Leftrightarrow 5 (Strongly Agree)

Important Note: Teachers conducting the survey will explain the meaning behind the number scale.

Appendix C

Teacher/Coach Survey Questions

Teacher/Coach Survey Questions

* The following survey questions were placed into an online survey in Google Forms

1. (multiple choice) I identify as:
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Non-binary
2. (check boxes) Within my school, I am primarily a (may select multiple answers):
 - a. Pre-Kindergarten or Kindergarten teacher
 - b. Grade 1-3 teacher
 - c. Grade 4-6 teacher
 - d. Staff member
 - e. Volunteer
 - f. Coach (Athletics)
 - g. Leader (Clubs)

Thinking of the organized school activities you coach/lead at your school, refer to those as you respond to the following questions.

3. (scale) I get to know the students on a personal level.
4. (scale) I know the students' parents/guardians by first name.
5. (scale) I know what interests and other activities students are involved in outside of school.
6. (scale) Our school offers a variety of school activities for students to be involved in.
7. (scale) I have a stronger relationship with those students that participate in my school activity.
8. (scale) The activity allows me to get to know the students beyond the classroom.
9. (short answer) How come students join organized school activities?
10. (short answer) How come students remain in organized school activities?
11. (short answer) Three important characteristics to a healthy teacher/coach-student relationship include ...
12. (short answer) Healthy teacher/coach-student relationships are developed through the following ways ...
13. (short answer) How come you believe these characteristics/actions are important?
14. (short answer) In organized school activities, some relationship challenges that I face with students are...
15. (short answer) How, if at all, do you support the students' interests in organized school activities?

16. (short answer) How, if at all, do you promote your organized school activity to students who have participated in previous years?
17. (short answer) How, if at all, do you promote your organized school activity to students who have never participated before?
18. (short answer) How, if at all, do you build relationships with students?
19. (short answer) How, if at all, are organized school activities important to students?
20. (short answer) In your opinion, how come students join organized school activities?

Question 3-8 Likert scale: 1 (Strongly Disagree) \Leftrightarrow 5 (Strongly Agree)

Appendix D

Focus Group Interview Questions

Focus Group Interview Protocol

Questions

1. How come you decided to be involved in school activities?
2. How would you further explain the reason you chose to be involved in organized school activities?
 - a. Will you choose to be involved in organized school activities in the future, like next year?
 - b. If so, what are the main reasons of choice to either choose to participate or not?
3. How would you describe your relationship with your coach? (Thinking about the relationship you have with your coach, what do you like most about your coach?)
 - a. Why do you believe those coach characteristics are important for you to choose to participate in organized school activities?
4. Have you ever had a coach that you did not like when participating in organized school activities?
 - a. If so, what are the main reasons as to why you did not like this coach?
5. What do you think is the most important part about a coach when coaching organized school activities?
 - a. What can you add to further explain what you believe to be important characteristics in your coach?

6. Would you like to add any more information that may help me understand any effects that exist between a teacher-coach and students in relation to student willingness to participate in organized school sports?

Thank you for your time. I do appreciate your willingness to share your thoughts today.

Important Note: Member checking will take place following participant responses, if needed, to help me develop a full understanding of responses.

Appendix E
Student Survey Instruction

**Teacher/Coach-Student Relationships: An Investigation into the Effects on
Grade 4-6 Student Participation in Organized School Activities
Information for Classroom Teachers - Survey Instructions**

Instructions for Teacher:

1. Please confirm the list of students allowed to participate in the following survey.
If they do not have permission to participate in the study, feel free to provide them with an alternate assignment of your choosing.
2. Please share the survey with each student participating on a platform of your choice (e.g., Google Classroom, email).
3. Ensure 10 minutes to complete the survey.
4. If a child chooses not to complete the survey, there is no consequence. They can move on to another activity of the teacher or students' choice. Record the number of students who withdraw prior to submitting the survey. Please do not indicate students by name. The researcher will collect this information in the coming weeks.

Materials for each student:

Each student will need a device (e.g., chromebook, tablet, personal device) and connection to the Internet to access the online survey.

Please read the following to the participants prior to starting the Online Survey:

You have all received parent permission and given assent to participate in the study

“Teacher/Coach-Student Relationships: An Investigation into the Effects on Grade 4-6

Student Participation in Organized School Activities”. I have provided you the Google Form on (*indicate platform: Google Classroom, Email*). There are 20 questions. Please answer honestly and to the best of your ability.

The first three questions are informational questions about you as a student. The remainder of the survey are questions about your participation in activities. You will respond using a scale from one to five. One means you strongly disagree, five means you strongly agree.

If you do not want to participate, please let me know. You can withdraw your participation at any time until you submit your responses. This survey is voluntary.

There is no consequence if you choose not to participate.

Your name and email will not be collected on the form, so your response is anonymous.

You may now click on the link to access the form. When you are complete, please let me know.