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PROCESSING YOUTH ADVENTURE WELLNESS EXPERIENCES:
POETIC REPRESENTATIONS OF YOUTH'S PEACE BUS EXPERIENCES

by

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Bachelor of Arts, Brock University, 2012

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THESIS

Submitted to the Faculty of Social Work in partial fulfillment of the requirements for

Master of Social Work Degree

Wilfrid Laurier University

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Abstract

This narrative inquiry explored how youth are processing their Peace Bus program experiences two and a half years after program completion. The purpose was to gain an understanding of (1) what program components the participants reflect on, (2) how they conceptualize their program experiences, and (3) what factors contribute to their reflection processes. This research sought to address the gap in literature where little is understood about the ongoing experiences of program participants of adventure wellness programs and the processes that lead to positive changes. As the researcher, I conducted a qualitative study using narrative inquiry and poetic representation methods. For data generation, I used semi-structured one and a half hour interviews with five participants from the Peace Bus, an adventure wellness program that I co-led in 2015. Using the field texts captured from the co-constructed narratives, I crafted poetry to capture the evocative stories told by the participants. How the youth are processing their adventure wellness program experiences can be understood through each distinctive poem alone or through the collection of poems. Adventure wellness program experiences can serve as a platform for continual learning whereby the passage of time and reflection can further enhance self-concept, competencies, emotional and spiritual fulfillment and psychosocial integration. Learning from how the youth process their Peace Bus program experiences, I provide implications for how participants and social work practitioners can better support one's ongoing growth upon completing an adventure wellness program.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to
all my fellow adventure wellness friends and family from
Katimavik and CISV Peace Bus.
Each one of you have shaped me to be the person I am today and
cultivated the spirit behind this project.

Acknowledgements

The traditional territory of the Neutral, Anishnawbe and Haudenosaunee peoples.

In honour and respect, I acknowledge the land where I work in Kitchener, Ontario.

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Jeremy Willems

My beloved partner who supports me unconditionally with all my adventurous endeavors.

Family and friends

To everyone who have provided me with words of encouragement and understanding throughout this process and beyond. With special thanks to Heather, Amanda, Natalie, Jeff and Caitlin.

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SECTION 1: THE RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Prologue

The alluring magic of experiential learning is that a single event can disrupt an individual's understanding of the world so intensely that in order to understand the depth of its significance, one must process the moment. This process, unique to everyone, can take a lifetime.

Chapter One: Introduction

Adventure wellness programming, such as wilderness and adventure therapies, is a growing practice that uses adventure as a central component to elicit an unfamiliar experience and induce one's change process (Itin & Mitten, 2009). These programs can be effective in encouraging positive emotional (Russell, 2005), psychological (Bettmann, Tucker, Behrens, Vanderloo, 2017), physical (Tucker, Norton, DeMille, & Hobson, 2016) and social (Paquette & Vitaro, 2014) changes, where it is increasingly used as an intervention in the mental health field (Tucker, et. al, 2016). My research is interested in the long-term processes of adventure wellness experiences.

Statement of Research Issue

While existing research has examined critical features, therapeutic mechanisms, and outcomes of adventure wellness programs (Deane & Harré, 2014; Fernee, Gabrielsen, Andersen & Mesel, 2017; Russell & Farnum, 2004; Walsh & Golins, 1976), little is understood about the experiences of participants after their program participation and the processes that occur to enrich post-program experiences. Numerous studies have conducted post-program evaluation that investigates program outcomes; however, few studies investigate theoretical processes (Hattie, Marsh, Neill, & Richards, 1997). More specifically, there remains a gap in the literature that explores how outdoor (adventure wellness program) experiences are experienced and understood by participants in the long-term (Takano, 2010).

I sought to address the gap in literature where little is understood about post-program reflection processes and the mechanisms that transform adventure wellness experiences where it becomes educational in the long-term. It is important to understand post-program reflection

processes because it can provide insight into how social work and mental health practitioners can use adventure wellness programs to promote ongoing development and wellness with the populations they serve. In addressing this gap, I interviewed five participants two and a half years after their adventure wellness program completion to gain an understanding of how youth are processing their experiences. The rationale for this two-and-a-half-year distance from their program is because evidence has shown that this timeframe provides adequate processing time after an experience that is still temporally close to when the events occurred. For the purposes of this paper, in brief, an *experience* is an encounter or observation of an event or several events occurring over time. Furthermore, *processing* refers to how participants reflect about their adventure wellness program experiences and attribute meaning to these events. I used narrative inquiry methodology as a framework to unpack experiences since “narrative is retrospective meaning making—the shaping or ordering of past experiences” (Chase, 2005, p.214). Examining how five youth are processing their adventure wellness program experiences provides insight into the rich thought and emotions that can stem from reflections. Learning from their experiences can offer suggestions to how social work practitioners can better support their participants' ongoing growth.

Researcher Positionality

The research gap in exploring the long-term perspectives of adventure wellness programs is surprising to me as an individual who has completed four adventure wellness programs with Katimavik and CISV, and other experiential learning programs, including two French immersion programs, an international study course, and two international volunteer placements. I believe more research is needed in this area because from the perspective of both participant and

practitioner in adventure wellness programs, I noticed how many of the powerful and transformative changes in myself occurred *after* participating in these programs. When I had time to process and make sense of my experiences, I discovered how it had positively influenced my self-concept, beliefs, values, and perceptions on life. With the passage of time, I had the opportunity to develop meaning from those experiences by comparing it to life before and after the program. The quote that I wrote for the prologue alludes to the magnitude of this reflection process as I have experienced it. My observations about rich knowledge development emerging after program participation align with experiential learning theory, where Kolb (1984) suggested that learning is a holistic, adaptive and lifelong process. While I cannot infer that positive post-program transformations occur for every participant, as numerous factors have contributed to our learning experiences, I was curious how other participants have experienced life after an adventure wellness program.

To provide further context of my role as the sole researcher in this study, I position myself within the social and political contexts in which I participate and how they may influence my understanding of the world. Positionality is an understanding of personhood as a product of discursive practices whereby it is continuous and fluid (Davies & Harré, 1990). While positioning myself within societal relations of power in this way, I also present my social location. Social location refers to how people are positioned in groups within society, such as how people are defined by their gender, age, race, ability, social class, sexual orientation, belief systems, and geographic location. Positionality addresses the more fluid and flexible aspects of discursive identification; social location addresses the more rigid and obstinate aspects of identity. It is important that I position and locate myself because my identities, values, assumptions and experiences are critical elements that influenced this study.

I identify as a Vietnamese-Canadian woman in my late twenties. I also assume the ascribed identities as a racialized person from Asian descent, abled-bodied, cis-gender, and a member of the working class. Although I am born in Canada, I consider myself a settler in relation to the Indigenous peoples of this land. I acknowledge that this land on which I live and work (Kitchener, Ontario) is the traditional territory of the Anishnawbe, Haudenosaunee and Neutral peoples. I was born in Southwestern Ontario shortly after my Vietnamese parents immigrated from Hong Kong where they sought refuge for eight years after Vietnam, their homeland, became war-torn due to the Vietnam War. In a family of seven, I am the fourth child of five, where my three older siblings were born in Hong Kong and my youngest brother was born in Canada following my birth. Born into a Vietnamese family that has collectivistic values in a Canadian society that values individualism, I have learned to find value within both types of cultures. My blended cultural identity and large family upbringing influenced my understanding of the world and my adventure wellness experiences. I attributed my ability to quickly adapt to and enjoy cohabitating with eleven to fourteen other people to my cultural and family influences. My experiences are connected to my multiple and intersecting (Crenshaw, 1991) identities. Locating myself in this way and acknowledging that my knowing can only be partial, I seek to understand how people who identify with other social locations experienced their adventure wellness experiences. I sought to learn how they attributed meaning to these experiences and how their experiences have changed over time.

Peace Bus

To gain knowledge of how people process their adventure wellness experiences, I investigated the post-program experiences of youth participants from a CISV (formerly known as

Children's International Summer Villages) program called Peace Bus, two and a half years following their program completion. CISV is a not-for-profit organization with the mission to educate and inspire youth to create a more peaceful world where participants learn about its four pillars: conflict and resolution, diversity, sustainable development, and human rights. Peace Bus is an intensive 41-day program where thirteen youth and two leaders from across Canada travel coast-to-coast to learn about these four pillars through experience and volunteering. The program's target age group is from 15 to 18 which is a common within adventure wellness programming.

The participants are recruited to the program based on interest where prospective candidates apply through an application process and are selected by the local CISV chapters. There are eleven chapters from Victoria, BC to Halifax, NB. The program is typically marketed throughout Canada by CISV communication channels, public social media mediums, and word-of-mouth. As CISV culture strives to be accepting of all persons, these programs often see a diversity in participants from various social locations, such as gender, race, sexual orientation, and belief systems. Due to the nature of this program being fast-paced, moving through continually changing environments, people with physical disabilities or mental health concerns who would be affected by this setting may be reluctant to apply to the program.

The Peace Bus program fee ranged from a \$1500-\$1700 application fee, which included the accommodations, food and travel during the program. There were associated fees to the program which ranged per person depending on their geographical location, as chapter membership fees and travel fees associated with arrival to and departure from the program varied. Furthermore, the participants' families are requested to commit to considerable time and energy in the involvement of the program, such as by providing billet homes, meals and support

during the group's visit. Therefore, the application process is a barrier to candidates who cannot afford the program fees, live far from a local chapter, or cannot host the Peace Bus group when they visit. The program has progressed since its inception to make it more accessible financially and logistically by acquiring a major sponsorship through K+S Windsor Salt, offering discounts, and providing coordination support. In 2018, the program also offered its first bursary, which covered the cost of the program for one youth.

I chose to conduct my research with the Peace Bus program because of my familiarity with it since I had led two of their programs at the start of this research. This connection to the program provided access to potential research participants, where the group of youth I interviewed were from the Peace Bus programs I co-lead in 2015. Being a partial insider of the program helped this study immensely. Being familiar with the program and many of the events that took place, the youth were able to fluidly share their stories without providing an abundance of context that an outsider would require. Also, it was beneficial to have a pre-established, trusting working relationship with the youth because in many cases, they felt comfortable to be vulnerable with me when sharing their personal reflections. More about the participant-researcher relationships is discussed in the Methodology chapter.

During the 2015 Peace Bus program, the participants stayed at twenty-six different homestays, camped in tents for fifteen days, visited over thirty-five community agencies, historical sites and museums, and volunteered with fifteen community service projects. The youth were challenged to work together to manage the logistics and foreign dynamics of the program in order to successfully navigate the continuously changing, unfamiliar environments and to engage in the programming. The youth participants consisted of five girls and eight boys between the ages of fourteen to seventeen. They were recruited from across Canada, living in

regions from Vancouver Island, to a rural town in Quebec, to eastern Nova Scotia. The demographics of the group were multicultural, including three participants who immigrated to Canada from Mexico, France, and Belgium. There were also individuals who self-identified as Indigenous, Dutch, Mexican, French, Korean, Korean-Canadian, Vietnamese and a blend of European ethnicities. The members were also diverse among other social location factors, such as their family history, religious beliefs and socio-economic status.

This study aimed to develop an understanding of the value of post-program experiences by exploring how these youth participants are processing their Peace Bus program experiences after two and a half years of completing the program. Although these participants completed the same adventure wellness program, each of their experiences are unique, impacted by their intersecting and fluid positionings. More on positioning theory will be discussed in the Methodology chapter.

Relevance to Social Work

I was interested in studying the field of adventure wellness because I have seen significant positive changes with long-term effects in myself and others from participating in these programs and believe that it offers a platform for people to do incredible self work. A decade after participating in a Katimavik program, a dear friend of mine has shared how the program helped her to work through her experiences with anxiety, believing that it helped her to live a more empowered life. Additionally, I wanted to study adventure wellness because I think social work research needs to highlight some of the important work that Canadians do in this field. Although the “use of adventure in social work practice is not a new concept” (Tucker & Norton, 2013, p. 334), adventure wellness is not a renowned field in social work and its

development in Canada have been slower than the United States, Australasia, the United Kingdom and across Europe (Ritchie, Patrick, Corbould, Harper & Oddson, 2016). As theory development continues to grow within this field, my hope is that adventure wellness programming will increasingly become a viable option for social workers and other mental health care practitioners in delivering developmental and clinical interventions for young persons and adults. There is a big gap in services that support youth wellness, such as a lack of mental health care services, and I believe that adventure wellness can help to address this gap.

Organization of the Thesis

Continuing with the first section of my thesis, the research background, I describe my literature review in the next chapter. Conducting a literature review was the first step to my research process. I examined the current knowledge and theoretical contributions related to adventure wellness field, researching adventure wellness programming, experiential learning theory, post-program studies, and gaps in literature. Utilizing my findings from my literature review, I developed my research question and sub-questions. In Chapter Three, I provide a summary of my methodology. I give an overview of my methodological framework where I used narrative inquiry with poetic representation and thematic analysis methods. I then discuss how I conducted my participant invitation, data generation and analysis.

In the second section of my thesis, I present my findings and discussion. In the first chapter of this section, I provide an overview of my findings where I retell the youths' narratives using my poetic representation findings. I supplement my findings in Chapter Two where I present my thematic analysis and draw connections to literature in the discussion. I conclude

with my suggestions on the implications of my research for the field of social work, discussion on the limitations and strengths of my study and concluding reflections.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The focus of my literature review was to examine the adventure wellness field, experiential learning theory and post-program adventure wellness program studies. In this chapter, I provide a summary of the current literature that I examined in these areas. This literature review led to the development of this study's research question, which I outline at the end of this chapter.

Adventure Wellness

Adventure wellness was coined by Itin and Mitten (2009) to describe a practice that uses “adventure” to promote “health or healing” (p. 9).

Although what constitutes adventure can be debated, for the purposes of this study, I define adventure as the use of activities that disrupts one's equilibrium

(Walsh & Golins, 1976), and provides opportunities to develop one's self-concept, behaviours and competencies. While the fundamentals of adventure may be misinterpreted by some, Ingman's (2017) eloquent passage about adventure alludes to its significance to those who have engaged in the practice: “...to Simon, adventure is the engagement in an authentic challenge removed from the constraints and responsibilities of society, often in partnership with a select few individuals, and these experiences are the very point and purpose of living in that they are memorable and meaningful” (p. 348).



Figure 1: Itin & Mitten's (2006) Table of Adventure Wellness.

In the adventure wellness paradigm, participants are removed from their natural environment and adventure is used to elicit an unfamiliar experience that challenges one physically, mentally, emotionally, and/or spiritually, with the prospect that it will lead to self-exploration and change (Itin & Mitten, 2009). For example, Hattie, Marsh, Neill and Richards' (1997) meta-analysis study suggested that adventure programs promoted independence, confidence, self-efficacy, self-understanding, assertiveness, internal locus of control, and decision making. They also claim that adventure programs have major and lasting impacts on participants (Hattie et al., 1997).

Practices under the adventure wellness umbrella include adventure therapy, wilderness therapy, bush trekking, ecopsychology, and community-based outdoor adventure programming (see Figure 1). Adding to Itin & Mitten's (2009) table of Adventure Wellness, there are other adventure programming models, such as adventure-based programming (Whittington & Mack, 2010), adventure-based education (Walsh & Golins, 1976), adventure-based counseling (Prouty, 1999) and adventure education (Prouty, Panicucci, & Collinson, 2007). Variations among the models include clinical based or non-clinical based, and therapeutic or developmental. Clinical-based adventure wellness models specifically target psychosocial, emotional, physical and spiritual "interventions", whereas developmental programs are skills-based or knowledge-based. Describing and comparing each adventure wellness subset transcends this paper, as there is a diverse range of definitions, philosophies, and models where definitive terms are among debate. What all adventure wellness programs have in common, however, is the use of generating an uncertainty and risk to challenge the participants with the purpose of improving wellbeing.

This research prefers to adopt the adventure wellness term as it moves away from a pathological model that is associated with the word "therapy" aligning more with Saleebey's

(2013) strengths-based perspective (Itin & Mitten, 2009). Additionally, utilizing an umbrella term within this field can be beneficial to amalgamate knowledge and resources among similar fields. The Peace Bus program fits well into the adventure wellness definition because it uses adventure travel to deliver peace education to its youth participants. Furthermore, labelling the Peace Bus program under one of the subsets could overlook some of the work that took place, since it delivers a collection of diverse activities, such as travel, hiking, team-building activities, educational simulations, community volunteering, and camping. For example, although outdoor adventure training and development explain the benefit of team-building activities within the Peace Bus program, it may disregard the benefit of engaging in the wilderness, or the natural world, which is often discussed within wilderness therapy. Likewise, since the focus of Peace Bus is broad, diverse and non-clinical, it can be criticized for inadequately fitting the criteria for some of the adventure wellness subcategories, such as adventure therapy. Thus, I used the term adventure wellness program to describe the Peace Bus program in this study. Since adventure wellness is rooted in experiential learning, I conducted a literature review of experiential learning theory to gain a better understanding of how it could inform my study that examines Peace Bus experiential processes.

Experiential Learning Theory

Experiential learning theory (ELT) is included in this literature review as it supports the notion that reflection is beneficial, and that experiential learning is a continual process. Several researchers have made similar connections, describing ELT as a mechanism that informs adventure wellness programs (Hopkins & Putnam, 1997; Itin & Mitten, 2009; Priest & Gass, 2005). ELT is a holistic and adaptive learning process that integrates experience, perception,

cognition and behaviour (McCarthy, 2016). It suggests that knowledge is not fixed but acquired through a learning process where ideas are formed and continually changed through experience (Kolb, 1984). Kolb (1984) weaved the theoretical perspectives of John Dewey, Kurt Lewin, and Jean Piaget to develop the experiential learning cycle, offering a model that conceptualizes the theory. In this cycle, four phases are identified: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation. Kolb emphasized the value of reflection following an experience, claiming that learners must conceptualize the experience and apply their new ideas in order to develop genuine knowledge from an experience (p. 20-38).

Deane and Harré (2014) conducted a meta-analysis of adventure program research to develop the Youth Adventure Programming (YAP) model (see Figure 2), which incorporates Walsh and Golins’ (1976) Outward Bound process model and Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning cycle. In their model, they illustrate the types of adventure program experiences, the

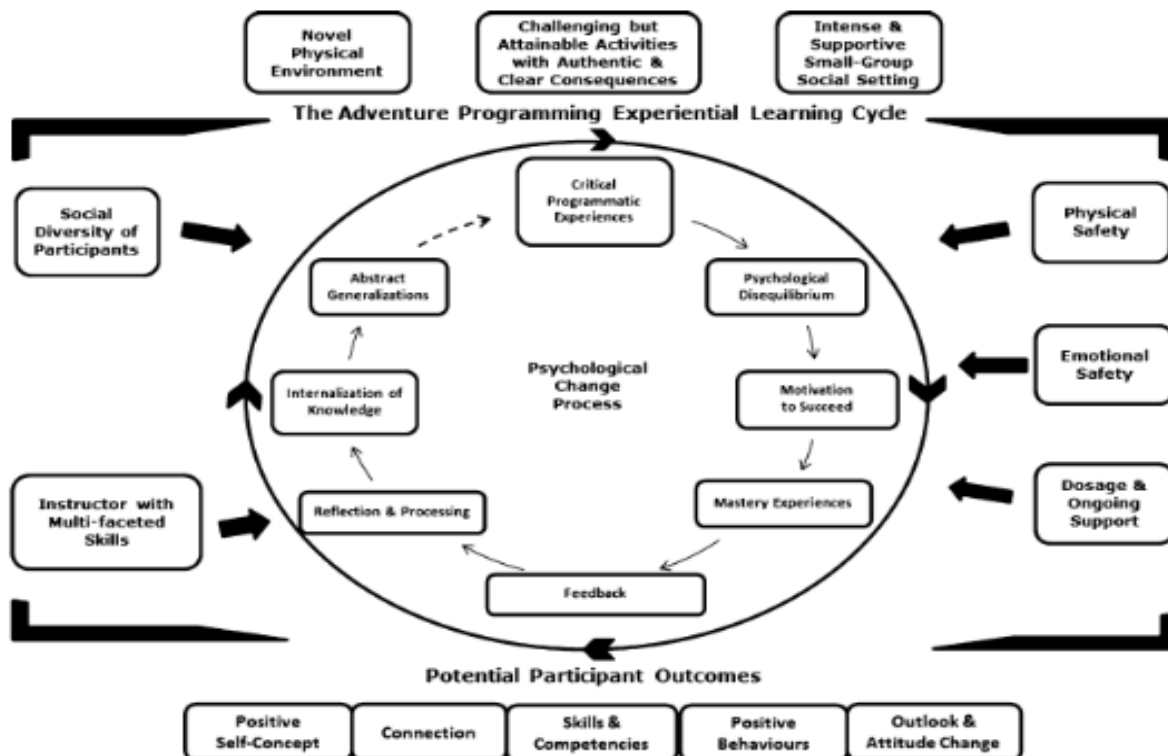


Figure 2: Deane and Harré’s (2014) Youth Adventure Programming (YAP) Model.

participants' psychological change process that develop because of the experiences, moderating factors that influence this experiential learning cycle, and the potential participant outcomes.

The three types of adventure programming experiences that influence a participant's learning are: a "novel physical environment", "challenging but attainable activities with authentic and clear consequences", and lastly, "intense and supportive small-group social setting" (p. 298-300).

These critical program experiences initiate the beginning of the adventure programming experiential learning cycle which is influenced by five moderating factors: "social diversity of participants", "instructor with multi-faceted skills", "physical safety", "emotional safety", and "dosage and ongoing support" (p. 300-303). The potential participant connected and mutually reinforcing outcomes that they list include: "positive self-concept", "connection", "skills and competencies", "positive behaviours", and "outlook and attitude changes" (p. 303-304).

Deane and Harré's (2014) experiential learning cycle adapt Kolb's (1984) model to integrate three additional experiences that are foundational to adventure programs, which include a sense of "psychological disequilibrium", the "motivation to succeed" and "mastery experiences" (p. 300). Within their cycle, they argued for the importance of "reflection and feedback" following an experience to produce an "internalization of knowledge" and the development of "abstract generalizations", which is the transference of knowledge obtained from the adventure experience to other situations within the participants' lives (p. 300). Feedback is a valuable addition to Kolb's (1984) cycle as Hattie and colleagues (1997) claimed that it "is the most powerful single moderator that improves affective *and* achievement outcomes" (p.75). Feedback better emphasizes how learning involves transactions between the individual and their environment. The adapted YAP experiential cycle, however, ignores Kolb's (1984) active

experimentation phase, which suggests the importance of testing the newly constructed ideas acquired from the abstract conceptualization phase in a new setting.

Experiential learning theory and the YAP model support my belief that reflection and conceptualizing one's adventure wellness program experience are integral to their learning process. While the YAP model outlines the psychological change process that occurs during an adventure program, it does not describe the experiential learning process that occur after the completion of the program. I sought to explore post-program experiential learning processes in this study by investigating how youth describe their Peace Bus program experiences and their reflective processes.

Inattention to Processes in Post-Program Studies

In this literature review, I found that most post-program studies were conducted for program evaluation purposes and were concerned about program outcomes and ignored post-program processes. Russell (2005), for example, evaluated the well-being of youth participants two years after their involvement in an outdoor behavioural healthcare (OBH) treatment as a measure of the effectiveness of the treatment program. Similarly, the other studies that I examined measured the long-term program impacts of participants in an adventure program (Whittington, 2011), an adventure education programme (Scarf, Moradi, McGaw, Hewitt, Hayhurst, Boyes, Ruffman, & Hunter, 2016), a civic engagement program (Smith, 2012), a youth diversity camp program (Stauss, Koh, Coustaut, & Ayers, 2016), and wilderness therapy programs (Bettmann, et. al, 2017; Davis-Berman & Berman, 2012; Harper, Russell, Cooley, & Cupples, 2007). Since these studies are conducted for program evaluation purposes, they do not adequately address how participants process their experiences, nor consider how learning can be

conceived as a process as identified in ELT. Hattie, Marsh, Neill, and Richards' (1997) meta-analysis also observed that most research in this field was summative driven and argued the need for more research that investigated the formative or process aspects of adventure programs.

Among the post-program studies found, Takano's (2010) study was unique as it examined the 20-year retrospective perspectives of participants in an outdoor education program to learn how their experiences were experienced and understood. Upon interviewing participants 20 years after their program, Takano argued the importance of considering social and cultural influences among hosting nations and participants. He suggested that reflection and sharing after the experiences help to increase the learning process. What Takano suggested aligns with Kolb's (1984) statement that "learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience" (p. 38). Takano concluded the study by acknowledging the need for further research that investigates the mechanisms that transform the experiences where it becomes educational in the long-term.

Building on Takano's (2010) study, Asfeldt and Hvenegaard's (2014) study of the long-term impacts of wilderness canoe expeditions considered the critical elements that promoted overall learning, and that resulted in new learning since the completion of the program. The critical elements that facilitated learning according to their 49 replies were: experiential approach (46.1%), group living (20.2%), and nature and place immersion (18.1%), instructor influence (7.9%) and peer facilitation (7.9%). The authors also evaluated the learning transfer that occurred within their personal and professional lives, which generated positive results including the transfer of life-experiences, appreciation for nature and place, confidence, skills, and self-development. The perceived learning that changed over time according to 37 replies were categorized as increase in self-awareness (37.7%), group living (20.0%), greater appreciation of

the experience (15.6%) and greater appreciation of nature and place (8.9%). From their respondents, they recorded that the changes in participants' learning and experiences occurred due to post-expedition reflection and the passage of time. They argued that learning for participants continued to deepen with reflection and time, aligning with experiential learning theory and supports the notion that adventure programs can produce meaningful and long-lasting learning. Asfeldt and Hvenegaard concluded their article by encouraging further investigation in post-program perceptions of critical elements, learning outcomes, the relationship between the two, and the efficacy of post-expedition reflection (p. 132-151).

Draper, Lund and Flisher's (2011) qualitative study is another post-program process study where they observed the process and perceived outcomes of a wilderness-based leadership development programme in Africa called Leadership Project (LP). From the findings, the researchers claimed that the post-activity group discussions that were conducted during the program was a critical component to the participant's reflective process where they gained an increased self-awareness which activated their learning. They argued that the participants perceived that they achieved positive intrapersonal and interpersonal outcomes from their program through the interaction between self and other people, and the self and the physical and geographical environment. They equated that the mechanisms of perceived outcomes were leaders, programme activities, and programme setting.

While there are few post-program studies that examine the processes that occur after the completion of an adventure wellness program, the three studies that I reviewed that examined post-program processes argued for the importance of reflection following an experience. Takano (2010) and Asfeldt and Hvenegaard (2014)'s studies suggest that there is a need for research that examines post-program mechanisms and the relationship between critical program elements and

learning outcomes. My study sought to investigate the post-program experiences of youths who participated in the Peace Bus program to understand its critical program elements, perceived learning outcomes and the mechanisms that lead to increased learning.

Literature Review Summary

In conducting a literature review on adventure wellness programs, I observed that few studies investigate the post-program reflection process, as retrospective studies are typically conducted for program evaluation purposes. My observations align with Astbury and Leeuw's (2010), who argued that outcome studies are concerned with effects and do not investigate how these effects are produced. As there is limited research that explores participant experiences after their program involvement, little is understood about how participants process their adventure wellness experience.

Research Question

There is a need for research that investigates post-program reflection processes and the mechanisms that transform adventure wellness experiences where it becomes educational in the long-term. I addressed this gap by interviewing adventure wellness program participants to gain an understanding of how youth are processing their experiences two and a half years after program completion. Since I am not conducting this research for evaluation purposes, I asked open-ended questions that give the participants more freedom to discuss the components of their experiences that they believe is valuable to their post-program reflection process. My main research question is:

How are youth processing their Peace Bus program experiences after two and a half years of completing the program?”

I chose to investigate post-program experiences two and a half years after the adventure wellness program concluded because evidence shows that this timeframe provided adequate time for the participants to process their experiences. My rationale was constructed by considering experiential learning theory and Kolb’s (1984) argument that processing one’s experiences requires learners to engage in active experimentation to test the conceptualizations they develop from an experience. Therefore, two and a half years provide adequate time for participants to affirm or discard conceptualizations they developed about their experiences, but close enough to the experience where there is not too much concern that the experiences will lose meaning due to memory loss. Within this time, the youths would likely have experienced new life events where they are able to test the knowledge.

To help explore this overarching question in a more focused way, I examined three sub-questions:

(1) “What program components do participants reflect on?”

(2) “How do participants conceptualize their program experiences?”

(3) “What factors contribute to participants’ reflection processes?”

I used an interview guide to help draw out more detailed answers with additional prompting questions (see Appendix C). In the next chapter, I discuss the methodology I used in this study to address my research questions.

Chapter Three: Methodology

In this chapter, I provide an overview of the methodological framework that I used in this study, where I outline my use of narrative inquiry with poetic representation, thematic and narrative analysis methods. I describe the strength of my insider-outsider researcher role in the authentic research process. Next, I report how I invited my participants to participate in the study where five youth were purposively chosen by availability. I then describe my data generation and analysis methods as a coupled process where I navigated back and forth between processes while using a triangulated methodological approach. I provide more details about my data generation and analysis methods by listing the steps I took when conducting the narrative interviews, and the poetic representation, thematic and narrative analyses. I conclude this chapter by describing the considerations I took to ensure that my research was ethical, trustworthy and credible.

Overview of the Methodological Framework

Guided by the narrative paradigm (Spector-Mersel, 2010) and a narrative inquiry approach, I used qualitative methodology to gain an understanding of how youth are processing their Peace Bus experiences. The narrative paradigm, aligning with interpretivism, conceives that reality is subjective and socially constructed by its actors where multiple perspectives can exist and may be changed (Hennink, Hutter and Bailey 2011), but more specifically, it centralizes narratives in the construction and interpretation of realities. Narratives are stories told orally, written or photographically about an event, theme, or life, and are used to understand experiences. Working from this epistemological lens suggests that social realities or social phenomena can be constructed and understood through stories (Spector-Mersel, 2010). My

ontology is that valuable knowledge can be socially constructed whereby it is constructed in relation to others. In this study, the participants generated knowledge about their Peace Bus experiences in relation to me as their interviewer and researcher. The value of narrative research is that it generates space for participants to share in-depth stories uncovering rich details about the study topic, where one or two participants is often an adequate number of participants for a study.

A narrative can provide rich descriptions of social constructs where meaning is constructed by what is or is not said, how it is said, and why it is said by the narrator. Consequently, narrative can also be understood as a way of thinking, influencing how one evaluates and understands the world (Bruner, 1997 as cited in Chase, 2010), and thus guiding the inquiry process. When narratives are produced, they do not impart a knowable reality but are influenced by the circumstances which surround it. Narratives are constructed in three spheres of contexts: produced in immediate intersubjective relationships; evolved in the collective social field; and grounded in meta-narratives or cultural conventions (Zilber, Tuval-Machiach & Lieblich, 2008). Therefore, narrative inquirers cannot ignore their influences on the narratives of participants produced within an interview and are considered co-participants, co-constructing the narratives through their interactions.

Narrative inquiry is a qualitative methodology that uses narratives to understand experience. This is the approach that I used to inform this study. Connelly & Clandinin (2006) suggested that when participants reflect and make sense of their memories, they recall these stories from a *narrative life space*; a three-dimensional space where experience can be analyzed into temporal, personal/social, and place dimensions. Experiences are temporal in that they are continually changing where there exists a past, present and future. The continuity of experience

was introduced by Dewey (1938) who suggested that every experience is influenced by events that precede it, and what is learned through experience will affect situations that follow it. The second dimension of a life space examines the personal and social conditions of experiences where individualistic qualities are acknowledged while also locating it in social, cultural, political, and historical contexts. Finally, the third dimension, place, suggests that experiences will be influenced by the physical locations of where the experiences and the inquiry occur. Within narrative inquiry, the researcher and participant explore these dimensions simultaneously, co-constructing the emerging knowledge. Aligning with narrative epistemology, the research data generated from this study is subjective and influenced by me, the researcher. I co-constructed and analyzed the participants' narrative that unfolded in the life space we created during the interview.

For analysis and interpretation, I used poetic representation, thematic and narrative analysis methods. Poetic representation is the process of analyzing and synthesizing interview transcripts to craft poems (Clarke, Febbraro, & Hatzipantelis, 2005; Glesne, 1997; Reilly, 2013). I was drawn to poetic representation for its ability to eloquently synthesize the narrator's story, to "be embodied experience", and to convey meaning in ways that are otherwise inexplicable (Faulkner, 2017, p.209). This method has many variations where it has been described as: research poetry (Langer & Furman, 2004), poetic transcription (Madison, 1994; Glesne, 1997), poetic epiphany (Adame et al, 2011), and found poems (Reilly, 2003), among other names. Poetry is an artistic method used to evocatively convey thoughts, feelings and meaningful messages. It "creates textual spaces that invite and create ways of knowing and becoming in the world...which becomes universal when the audience relates to, embodies, and/or experiences the work as if it were their own" (Faulkner, 2017, p. 209-210). Using poetry as a method of

representation enables researchers to elicit emotion in their findings (Sjollema & Yuen, 2017) which can sometimes be ineffectively portrayed or lost among other research methods.

I chose to use poetic representation methods in my study because its ability to connect with the reader in delivering a holistic experience through embodiment resonated with me as a powerful research tool. I also was inspired to use this method because I valued the idea that it would generate research products that I could present to the participants as a way to give back to research participants and thank them for their volunteered time and valuable contribution. One way that reciprocal giving (Gupta & Kelly, 2014) can be demonstrated is by reporting study findings in appealing and accessible formats to research participants. When I chose to use poetic representation, I hoped that the poetry would resonate with the youths as creative and artistic expression has a way of connecting with people.

Poetic representation fits well with the narrative paradigm. Through poetic representation, researchers enter a life space (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006) to gain understanding of the narrator's experiences. In this life space, the researcher seeks to eloquently preserve the narrator's speaking style and capture the essence of their stories using concise language (Carr, 2003; Faulkner, 2007; Madison, 1994). Thus, poetic representation aligns with narrative methodology and seeks to preserve the story, as opposed to using the story as a medium for delivering the data (Spector-Mersel, 2010). Furthermore, as stated by Prendergast (2009), "Poetic inquiry is, like narrative inquiry with which it shares many characteristics, interested in drawing on the literary arts in the attempt to more authentically express human experiences." (p.xxxvi). It was easy for me to integrate poetic representation methods in this narrative research as they have similar epistemological approaches in research.

Using the poetry crafted from the poetic representation methods, I then conducted a thematic analysis using Braun and Clarke's (2006) model. Thematic analysis is a foundational qualitative analysis method that is used to identify, analyze and report themes within research data. These themes are generated by researchers who search for patterns across an entire data set, which can include coded extracts of data or the data that is being produced by the researcher. It is a recursive process that is tedious and requires constant shuffling back and forth between the data. Braun and Clarke (2006) identified six phases within their model, which are: (1) Familiarizing yourself with your data; (2) Generating initial codes; (3) Searching for themes; (4) Reviewing themes; (5) Defining and naming themes; and (6) Producing the report. I conducted all six stages in this study.

Furthermore, I used positioning theory as described by Davies and Harré (1990) to understand the fluidity of identities and subjectivities, and the context within which the participants experience their experiences. Positioning theory fits with narrative inquiry as Davies and Harré (1990) suggested that "stories are located within a number of different discourses" (p.46), describing positioning as a discursive production of the self that is dynamic and most distinctly located in conversations. The concept of positioning does not just offer an alternative lens to the traditional more static and formal concept of role but is also a conversational phenomenon and an analytic tool. Positioning theory considers the fluid ways in which people acquire beliefs about themselves and others and how these beliefs influence how one engages in and produces meaning within a conversation. As such, it considers how a single narrative can produce multiple possible interpretations as people perceive narratives from the lens in which they position themselves and others. Within its fluid nature, subject positions can

be negotiated where positioning can be reflexive, in which one positions oneself. Alternatively, it can be interactive, in which one is positioned by another or by discursive practices (p. 43-62).

Within a narrative methodological approach, I used positioning theory to consider how I participated in the interviews and how I interpreted the data. In the Introduction and Methodology chapters, I described examples of how I positioned myself within the context of my research and how this impacted my work. I also used positioning theory to explore how participants position and reposition themselves and others through discursive practices. My findings are impacted by my understanding of how the participants negotiate their experiences within the context of the social structures within their environment.

As this research used positionality and embraced the subjectivity of the researcher's role, I used reflexive journaling to aid me throughout the entire research to ensure that I continually considered ethical implications of all my thoughts and decisions. Reflexive journaling allows researchers to pay attention to "intense personal struggles and philosophical tensions" that arises within their encounters with others in the pursuit of research (Kumsa, 2016, p.608). Journal writing also allows researchers to gain awareness of how their thoughts, feelings, and biases may be influencing their research, thus allowing them to consider their responsibilities to their research participants (Watt, 2007). It is important for researcher-poets (Faulkner, 2007) to practice researcher reflexivity in the poetic representation process, so they can work through the challenge of finding succinct and evocative ways to accurately represent people's narratives (Sjollema & Yuen, 2017). The researcher-poet can use practices such as journaling, research poems and discussion to engage in reflexivity. Researcher reflexivity is valuable to build research trustworthiness, as researchers can self-disclose assumptions, beliefs, and biases that may influence their inquiry so that readers can shape their interpretations accordingly.

Insider-Outsider Researcher Role

I chose to conduct this research with an adventure wellness program that I co-led in 2015 called CISV's Peace Bus. Thus, prior to this study, I was the research participants' Peace Bus leader and so I started this study with an insider-outsider role. It is important to note that although I was a member of this program, it is not possible to have a complete insider to any experience story because our identities and subjectivities are multifaceted, and everyone experiences life differently from different lenses. So, although I will be an insider in some aspects of the participants' experience, I will also be an outsider in other aspects.

This outsider-insider status that was transferred from my leadership role in the youths' Peace Bus program provided value to the study and the participants for several reasons. Firstly, my partial insider status can be viewed as an act to share power through "bidirectional education processes of empowerment and critical consciousness" to "collaboratively produce and disseminate knowledge for community benefit" (Muhammad, Wallerstein, Sussman, Avila, Belone & Duran, 2015, p.1049-1050). All the youths expressed some level of gratitude and joy in having the opportunity to share their stories, which was made possible by my initiative to conduct this study with this group and bring attention to the incredible work the youths have engaged in. The youths made concluding comments such as: "if you never did this research, we would have never had this conversation"; "Wow, I never thought my stories would've been that important"; and "I feel special that someone wanted to write about me." These comments reflect how the findings were representations of the conversations that were generated within the third space we created and how they brought value to the participants.

Secondly, since the study's focus was to reflect on the experiences of the Peace Bus program, having a partial insider researcher made the data gathering and analysis process

smoother. Since I was already familiar with the program components, the participants were able to share their narratives more fluidly without having to explain the context from which the experiences emerged. The youths did not have to explain mundane details which would have created breaks in the story and distorted the message that was being delivered. They did not have to provide detail on the program purpose, settings, activities, people involved, program content or other tedious information, unless they or I believed it was necessary to explore for the narrative. With four of the participants, we were able to address thirteen interview questions in one and a half hours to two and a half hours, where as one participant proved, it was possible to conduct a one-and-a-half-hour interview with asking just two questions. It is foreseeable that an outsider would have required more time to understand the contexts that surrounded the participants' stories.

Furthermore, as the participants had an established rapport with me, it created an environment for them to share their stories with ease, which was represented by their ability to share their experiences with little interruptions and no apparent hesitation. Peace Bus required a great amount of teamwork and initiative from the participants, and in this collaborative environment, trust was developed between the participants and I as their leader. This trust was indicative in their willingness to participate in the study and to be vulnerable with me throughout this research, on and off the record. The confidence that the youths had to willingly tell the stories they shared with me generated a unique opportunity for them to reflect and gain new learning experiences that may not have occurred if an outsider was conducting the interview and they could not be vulnerable. Thus, the knowledge that is gained from this study may be privileged knowledge generated from my position as an insider-outsider researcher. As I am a

part of the authentic research process, I made efforts to maintain the trustworthiness of my research through triangulating my methodological approach.

Furthermore, since I had an existing relationship with my five research participants before conducting this research, I had to be attentive to ethical considerations as it raises questions related to power dynamics. As there was a power difference between the participants and I, as their leader during their Peace Bus program, there existed concerns that these power relations would be transferred to our participant-researcher relationships. One factor that lessened this concern was that this participant-leader relationship concluded in 2015 when the participants successfully completed their program and we no longer had any obligations or responsibilities to fulfill towards one another. As I could not ensure that these power relations would not impact our participant-researcher relationship, I took several steps to mitigate the risk of ethical trespasses, which I outline in the Ethical Considerations section.

Participant Invitation

As I have addressed earlier, I purposively invited five youth participants from a specific Peace Bus program that I co-led two and a half years prior to conducting the interviews with the participants. I chose to conduct the study with this population because adventure wellness programs can be quite complex where being an insider can have immense benefit, which I have outlined above. All participants had completed the same program concurrently, where I was one of their two former program leaders. There were two females and three male participants aged 18 to 20 years old. Geographically, two youths lived in cities and three lived in rural areas from Vancouver Island to central Quebec. There was one francophone, three anglophones, and one individual who was fluent in English, French and Spanish. Regarding ethnicity, one individual

identified as Mexican, one identified as Korean-Canadian, one identified as French, one identified as Canadian with European descent and one identified as Canadian with an unspecified descent. There were also variations among their socioeconomic status.

Before contacting the participants, the program's organization was consulted to establish a working relationship. I contacted the CISV Peace Bus representative by phone and email to explain the research and asked for permission from the organization to conduct the study and to use the participants' contact information (see Appendix B for the Email/Telephone Script). The program was approved by the Peace Bus program coordinators, CISV Canada and CISV International. After speaking with the organization, I contacted all 13 Peace Bus participants to inform them about the research project and to invite them to participate in the study (see Appendix B for the Email/Telephone Script). I contacted the participants through email to provide details about the purpose of the study, which included the consent form (see Appendix A for the Consent Form). Participants that I could not reach by email were contacted by telephone or a messenger platform to explain the purpose of the study and the consent form was sent by regular mail with permission. I gave the prospective participants a limited time to respond to the request and complete the consent forms. Seven individuals expressed interest in the study, but only six of the thirteen youth provided their consent form by the cutoff date. Five of the six individuals who submitted their consent forms were purposively chosen by availability.

Data Generation and Analysis

Data generation and analysis is merged into one section because its process is fluid within narrative inquiry and the research methods I chose to use. The probing questions that I asked in the interview, for example, was processed through my analytical lens because I could not remove

my subjectivity from this process. Similarly, when I used poetic representation methods, I was simultaneously analyzing the raw interview transcripts while I generated the research poems which was used as data in my thematic analysis. Thus, instead of isolating these stages into distinctive sections, I acknowledge how data generation and analysis is a fluid process.

As explained above, I used journaling methods throughout the entire process from the interviews until the end of the study to help guide, process and record my thoughts, emotions and subjectivity. Through journaling, I attempted to practice humility by taking personal accountability for my location and subjectivity. I also engaged in writing to monitor my use of power in the researcher-participant relationships.

Narrative Interview Process

To initiate the interview process, I invited the participants to individually meet with me, the researcher, for an interview after I explained the details of the study and collected the consent forms. I conducted individual interviews with each participant through GoToMeeting, a web-hosted video conferencing application software, since all five participants lived across Canada and I was unable to meet them in person. Transportation costs were not feasible for this study.

Aligned with narrative inquiry, the participants were asked a series of open-end questions with prompts and probes in a semi-structured process (see Appendix C for the Interview Guide). The story-oriented questions that was asked included, “What do you reflect about when you think about Peace Bus?”, “Are there any themes or ideas that keep arising when you reflect or talk about your Peace Bus experiences?”, and “Is there anything that has helped you in your Peace Bus experiences reflection process?” Using a semi-structured approach in the interview, created a space for narratives to construct naturally in the interview while allowing me the

flexibility to fluidly ask questions to encourage the participants through the interview process. The narratives that unfolded from the responses provided rich data as appraisals of people or events can allude to hidden meanings (Lietz & Hodge, 2011), thus, providing deeper insight into post Peace Bus program experiences.

In this collaborative interview process, part of my role was to be actively engaged in the interview, bringing in my own experiences and perceptions and asking clarifying questions as needed in the semi-structured conversation. One way that I brought in my own experiences was by providing my own examples to question 10 (See Appendix C for the interview guide) where I asked, “Do you think that any aspects of your identity in how you understand yourself has influenced your perception of your experiences? If so how?” Here, I described aspects of my identity, such as how I identified as a Vietnamese-Canadian woman, did not strongly attach myself to any religion, or how I was an English-dominated speaker. I attempted to “negotiate relationships, smooth transitions, and provide ways to be useful to the participants” to add validity to the analysis and co-construct meaning to the narrative (Creswell et. al., 2007, p. 244; Creswell & Miller, 2000). Although I have a high comprehension of the various program components and required substantially less clarification prompts than a complete outsider, I did so when I felt it was important to the narrative.

I also used social positioning theory as a lens to investigate how participants positioned themselves within their narratives and the interview. From this lens, I posed questions to learn more about the categories and story lines in which they located themselves, and how these positionings influence how they perceive the world. I also reflected on possible socio-economic, political and cultural influences that may have impacted the youths’ experiences and how I engaged within these contexts. For example, I reflected about how I continued to perpetuate a

language environment that marginalized one of the research participants who was a French-dominating speaker. This reflexivity helped me to re-examine my researcher actions to try to address this language barrier in a way that would be more inviting for the youths, which I present in greater detail in the Limitation and Strengths section.

Data generation involved capturing field texts during the individual interviews where I wrote handwritten notes and used audio and video recording over GoToMeeting. I preferred to use video-calling over regular telephone calling because I was able to include facial expressions, gestures and silences in the data I constructed. I audio and video recorded the interviews with the participants' permission so that I could adequately capture and review the narratives at a later time. This data recording procedure was valuable because the interviews lasted between 1.5 and 2.5 hours where information would be lost or diluted if not recorded appropriately. The length of the interviews varied depending on how the narrative unfolded which was influenced by the participants, myself, the climate of the interview, among other considerations. Using the audio recordings, I transcribed the youths' interviews into text. The transcripts that I generated from these recordings were crucial, as I used it throughout the data analysis process. The audio recordings was also a useful tool for the poetic representation analysis, because I used it to carefully analyze the youths' speech patterns and silences, which generated valuable information that I used to craft the research poems.

Poetic Representation Methods

From the transcriptions of the five interviews I conducted with youth from the Peace Bus program, I used poetic representation methods to analyze the data, develop themes and uncover hidden messages within and across the narratives. I conducted the poetic representation methods

in three stages: content analysis, synthesizing data, and aesthetic crafting. Although these are distinct stages, it can be a fluid process where at times I moved back and forth among stages to achieve poems that are pleasantly scientific and artistic. This process is a balance between ethical and aesthetic practices where there arise two aspects of the self, the researcher and the poet, in which the unique role of the researcher-poet is born (Faulkner, 2007).

My role in using poetic representation methods to organize the data collected from the interviews and to transform the data into poetry is another example of how the data generated was co-constructed in the narrative life space. The poems belong to what Glesne (1997) called the “third voice”, which captured stories told by the youths within a particular place, time and conditions, and then changed by my influences, perceptions and creativity. Adame, Leitner and Knudson (2011) described the third voice as “a blending of the participant’s words and the researcher’s interpretation and choice of representation based on his or her witnessing of the participant’s story” (p. 370). Thus, the poems are neither the youths’ nor mine but co-created in the third voice through my interview intervention, dialogues with the youths, and on-going research analysis (Adame et al., 2011; Glesne, 1997). The stories in the poems are just one version of the youths’ stories whereby there exists an endless variation of similar stories that will continuously change and evolve with its narrator.

While in narrative life spaces, I gave attention to my use of intuition, embodied reaction, and emotion, as these are important aspects of researcher reflexivity that play a role in the poetic representation process (Glesne, 1997; Sjollema & Yuen, 2017). My use of researcher reflexivity in this analysis is illustrated in the diversely creative ways that the research poems were crafted. There is variety in the techniques, imagery and forms that I use, such as how I crafted a limerick, haiku, stanza and free-versed poems.

Poetic Representation Stage One: Content Analysis

In the first stage, content analysis, I reviewed the transcripts multiple times in three steps, reading it a minimum of three times each. Each time I read through the transcripts; I used a different analytical lens. In the first step, I attempted to just listen to each narrative to gain an understanding of the youths' experiences. Rather than locating and organizing themes across interviews, in this stage, I learned about how participants used narrative strategy in their stories. Chase (2005) described narrative strategy as the specific and complex way that people position themselves within their stories, navigating among the discourses and various subject positions that they occupy. Asserting this listening stance is essential to narrative methodology because the story, as a whole, is the data, as opposed to medium for delivering the data (Spector-Mersel, 2010). As I endeavored to understand the stories, I was attentive to both the form and content. While examining form, part of the analytical process involved examining how the participants tell their story, including their expressions and silences (Czarniawska, 2004).

Excerpt from Zach's Interview Transcript

Yeah, the **positivity** was actually **overwhelming** at sometimes for me, personally. But it was **amazing** for me to kind of just be in that environment and it kind of wore off on me, too. Like 6 or 8 months after I got back, I was a more **positive** person than I was before. That's, that's one thing I think about. Right after when I got back, I was in this mind state of adventure and **positivity**, and sort of... **hope**, I guess. I don't know. It just sounds **cliché and bullshit**, but, you know, I'm serious. When I got back, **I felt like a hundred times better** for, you know, a couple months.

Figure 3: Stage One Content Analysis Second Reading Example

For the second step, while I read the transcript for a second time, I wrote interpretive analysis notes alongside the transcript and I highlighted repeating, evocative or positional words and phrases within the transcript. In this analysis process, I attempted to write descriptive notes that limited inferences and assumptions. In my attempt to be non-interpretative, I assumed a curious role as I read through the narratives a second time. This task of highlighting words was a step that I created to help simplify my poetic representation analysis, as it was a coding process

that I used to generate themes. To demonstrate the content analysis process where I highlighted repetitive or affect words during the second time reading the transcript, I provided an example using an excerpt from Zach's transcript in Figure 3. I highlighted words that were repeating such as, "positivity", affect words such as, "overwhelming" and phrases that collectively illustrate a larger meaning such as, "I felt like a hundred times better". I also underlined words that gave context to his events such as, "when I got back", which explains the timeline in which the event unfolded. This is a subjective process. Another researcher may read this transcript and highlight "wore off on me" and can argue that it is an evocative phrase. How I analyzed the emotions and meaning in the data will inevitably influence my analysis, thus I tried to be mindful of all my decisions at every stage of the analysis.

For the third step, I re-read the transcript and began a more thorough coding process where I looked for patterns, themes and hidden meanings. This time reading the transcript, I also gave more considerations to socio-economic, political and cultural meanings within and across the transcripts. Padgett (2017) warned against the danger of not looking beyond the manifest as researchers may risk the omission of larger political and economic influences within any person's story. This strategy is consistent with narrative research, which aims to develop meaning about the study phenomenon by analyzing participants' detailed narratives and situating these stories in their personal, cultural, historical, and societal contexts. (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Creswell et al., 2007). Utilizing positioning theory and examining how participants position themselves helped to analyze these external factors. Subject positions, such as how one perceives themselves and others, were identified by analyzing the autobiographical aspects of a conversation as people may reveal the positions that they adopt within the contexts that they speak of (Davies & Harré, 1990). For example, earlier when I described how I led the Peace Bus

program, I positioned myself as an authoritative figure or leader of the group within the context of describing the program. A more in-depth analysis may implicitly or explicitly reveal the beliefs I hold with this positioning and how it informs my interactions. For example, I may allude to my rejection of an autocratic leadership style and endeavor to utilize a more democratic or team leadership style.

Furthermore, during this third review, I focused on participants' voices to enable the "exploration of feeling, emotion, and subjectivity [that can] help bring ideas or concepts into focus that might otherwise elude researchers" (Manning & Kunkel, 2014, p.436). Thus, incorporating creative arts into this narrative inquiry in the analysis process challenged me to uniquely engage with the data and "evoke different ways of knowing" (Simons & McCormack, 2007, p.295). Within this coding process, I reviewed the highlighted evocative and repeating words from my second review, which sometimes provided key indicators of themes. This is not always the case with stories, which is why it was important for me to try to gain a good understanding of the stories that the participants told so that I could use my intuitive process to navigate this analytical process.

I used Figure 1 again to provide an example of this coding process. When looking at Zack's transcript excerpt, one might develop the theme "positivity", since it is a word that is repeated several times. However, with taking thoughtful considerations of Zack's entire story, I looked beyond the word, "positivity" to derive a more hidden theme, which is "hope". To work through this tedious analytical process, I used journaling to record thoughts and feelings so that they would not be lost. At times, my journal entries helped to derive themes from the data in the content analysis stage as I was able to work through any conflicting thoughts and unanswered questions. I inductively generated numerous codes and recorded them alongside the transcript,

while also recording them in a codebook that I developed. This codebook helped to track themes within and across the five interviews.

Poetic Representation Stage Two: Synthesizing Data

In the second stage, synthesizing data, the goal is to compress the speech in the least amount of words as possible without jeopardizing the integrity of the research by distorting the participants' stories. Consistent with narrative inquiry, I focused more on the stories than the codes that I generated. Often people tell their stories in a non-linear fashion, and so I used my reflexive judgement to interpret the co-constructed narratives and organize their narrative in a chronological manner. I noticed what stories they told and how they would tell them, viewing each story as its own data unit. Once I identified key stories within the whole narrative, I reviewed the entire transcript to find possible fragments of the story scattered throughout their narratives or stories that have similar meaning and linked them together within its own data set. I was sensitive to keep extensive quotations from the participants' stories intact, respecting the story as a unit. This process of using the participants' exact language and thick descriptions enhances the trustworthiness of this research (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

After generating my data sets by organizing field texts into storylines and plots, I started to synthesize the data. I removed typical words or phrases that are said in everyday speech that are generally used to fill spaces and silences when processing speech and does not provide much content to the story. Some of these words include, "yeah", "actually", "I guess" and "you know?". I also removed words that were redundant. For example, if someone said, "Since forever, I always acted that way", it would be redundant to state the words "forever" and "always" as they essentially have the same meaning. I also removed redundancy by

amalgamating sentences that were repetitive and that I did not believe added to the storying process. Figure 2 demonstrates examples of words that I would be synthesized from the data set. It is only a consideration because removing words and phrases can alter the message delivered and thus requires ongoing reflection. Sometimes these words were strategically retained or added back into the data set to maintain the personalization of the speech as they often help to portray personality and speech patterns. The purpose of this stage is not to disrupt the narrative by fragmenting it, but rather it is to reorganize the data more succinctly, similarly to how one would edit a first draft to a narrative story.

Excerpt from Zach's Interview Transcript

Yeah, the positivity was actually overwhelming at sometimes for me, personally. But it was amazing for me to kind of just be in that environment and it kind of wore off on me, too. Like 6 or 8 months after I got back, I was a more positive person than I was before. That's, that's one thing I think about. Right after when I got back, I was in this mind state of adventure and positivity, and sort of... hope, I guess. I don't know. It just sounds cliché and bullshit, but, you know, I'm serious. When I got back, I felt like a hundred times better for, you know, a couple months.

Figure 4: Stage Two Synthesizing Example

To maintain the flow of the youths' stories, I removed my questioning and probing dialogue from the data set. Although I removed my presence from the data sets to accentuate the youth's voices and to draw the reader closer to the experiences embodied within the poems, my influence on the co-construction of the narratives should not be ignored or overlooked. This acknowledgement is in respect to each of the youths, as their narratives were influenced by me, where if they were interviewed by another individual, it is inevitable that their stories will differ in one aspect or another as the narrative life space would be different. The reader can get a sense of the material that I removed and my involvement in the research by reviewing my interview guide (See Appendix C). Another way to understand the presence I had in the study is to

consider the acknowledgements I made about my contributions to the study. Some ways that I addressed my involvement in the research was through my researcher positionality statement and my reflexive comments throughout the paper.

Poetic Representation Stage Three: Aesthetic Crafting

The third stage is aesthetic crafting. The tension between the researcher self and poet self is more prominent in this stage as it requires careful consideration of both ethical and crafting delicacy. To tune into my poet self, I studied poetry and participated in poetry activities to enhance my artistic abilities. After organizing the data sets into timelines and themes, I used poetic devices to carefully craft poetry to convey narrative messages, allowing the youths' speech patterns, and the rhythmic and esthetic patterns of the words and phrases guide me.

Some poetic devices I used include rhythm, repetition, pauses and lines. For example, sometimes I would strategically leave repeating words or phrases instead of synthesizing them as I believed that this repetition helped to deliver the message that I interpreted to be behind the story. I also used lines to give attention to the rhythmic patterns of words and to play with space on the page, such as how I crafted some poems as limerick or haiku poems or in the shape of an image. I used line breaks to replicate speech patterns heard within the interviews, accentuate words or phrases, produce imagery and evoke feelings. Line breaks are where sentences are broken into two or more lines instead of ending with conventional punctuations. I used line breaks to deliver surprises, affect or new meaning to the reader, as the fragmented sentences can draw its own unique meaning outside of the entire sentence.

Using poetic representation methods allowed me to generate research products that embodies the voices of participants through their words and experiences. The process in which I

Zack's Return from Peace Bus

The positivity was overwhelming
But it was amazing.
To be in that environment
Wore off on me.

When I got back
For a couple months
6 or 8
I felt a hundred times better.

After I got back,
I was a more positive person than
before.
Sounds cliché and bullshit
But I'm serious.

When I got back,
I was in this mind state of
adventure,
and positivity.
Hope.

Figure 5: Stage Three Aesthetic Crafting Example. "Zack's Return from Peace Bus" poem is a shorter version of the poem, "Bus Smell" (see Findings section). It was crafted for demonstration purposes.

utilized their words and experiences can be seen by comparing the transcripts (see Figure 1 for an extract of Zack's transcript) to the poems (see Figure 3 for sample poem). I tried to respect the youths' stories by using only their words and phrases as extracted from their transcript. I also listened to their interviews throughout this poetic representation stage in attempts to derive meaning from the narratives, capture the youths' speech patterns and to retain the authenticity of their stories.

Reviewing the before and after stages also helps to demonstrate my poet role in the process and my use of poetic mechanisms, intuition and artistic influence. I purposefully positioned words and phrases on the page and throughout the poem to evoke emotion and deliver meaning that was interpreted in the content analysis.

For example, how I chose to move the word "hope" to the end of the poem and isolating the word on its own

helped to accentuate the word and deliver a surprise to the reader. The positioning of words can help to intensify the emotions embodied within the poetic piece.

Across the five youth interviews, I generated 72 research poems, each conveying a unique blend of thoughts, emotions and meanings. I met with each of the youths for a second

meeting using the GoToMeeting conference call service to conduct member checking, increasing the trustworthiness of my research data. The participants and I chose to use this technology to review the data because it allowed us to communicate vocally with ease while drawing our attention to the same sections of the document. During each individual meeting, I explained the process in how the poems were generated. Then through the “share screen” feature in the application, I showed the youths their collection of poems, reading it aloud with them. After reading over each poem, the participants were given the opportunity to suggest revisions, title their poems, and provide consent for the on-going use of their stories and whether they would like to claim ownership of their stories or use a pseudonym. The share screen feature provided an opportunity to truly enhance the collaborative process between the participants and me, the researcher. It provided an easy opportunity for us to collaboratively view and discuss the poems in detail and make live revisions.

The youths negotiated text with and without my presence in several ways that developed further meaning to their stories. They provided contextual edits, such as making corrections to spelling errors of names of subjects that were unfamiliar to me or adding information to the poems by sharing additional parts of the story that was missed during the interview. Additionally, they made crafting edits by suggesting how words were positioned on the page. Within these contexts, they also assumed the role of researcher-poet as they negotiated the data to contribute to both truthful research and artistic expression.

How the youths participated in these collaborative decisions is exemplified by my meeting with Zack when he co-constructed the poem, “East Van”, through the GoToMeeting conference call service with me. When I presented my preliminary version of the poem that I crafted from this interview transcript, he requested that we edit the poem to illuminate the

meaning behind the story from his perspective, which was to highlight the beauty of the community. In this pursuit, he changed some of the words that he originally ascribed to the community making conscious decisions about how he represented the community. He also chose to conclude the poem by replacing the last line of the poem from, “I really enjoyed that experience” to the word, “respect”. He engaged in artistic craftsmanship by debating the use of the phrase, “my total respect” and choosing to isolate the word, “respect”, which artistically draws readers to its attention and elicits powerful meaning with a sharp ending to the poem. As we collaboratively edited the poem, he shared a sad story that occurred recently for him in Vancouver. He ends his story with these concluding thoughts: “there is a lot of ugly stuff in that place, but there is a lot of beauty there as well and this poem really captures that.” Comments like these provided validation that the poetry that we crafted were credible to the youths.

Reviewing the poems with the youths was an enriching experiencing which provided more depth to each story, such as how they chose to title their poems. I watched the youths’ emotions come alive in the video as they expressed a blend of strong emotions, such as joy, excitement, anxiousness, and vulnerability. With some poems, they were in awe at the poems ability to capture their thoughts and feelings, as they heard and saw their own words repeated back to them. With one youth, they expressed how one of the poems made them feel through their silence. They shared how they felt comfortable and wanted to share this story, but that they did not want to share their feelings as they were presented in the poem. I emphasized that they did not need to consent to the use of the poem at all and that they had the choice in what they wanted to or did not want to share. The youth decided to have time to review the poem on their own. When the youth met with me again, they illustrated the ways they wanted to change the poem by replacing some words and removing entire stanzas

Each youth worked with me live through the application to co-construct and name the poems to the pleasing of all parties. With request or permission from the participants, I emailed a copy of their tentative poems, to which they reviewed on their own time and provided more feedback. I met with three of the five participants for another follow up meeting to make edits on previous poems that required more time to process or to review poems that were developed afterwards as I started to refine my themes and data set. I received consent from the participants to use all the poems crafted after they were edited to their satisfaction, however, there were some requests for name changes.

Thematic Analysis

Conducting a thematic analysis helped me to organize my data and answer the research question, “How are youth processing their Peace Bus experiences?” In conducting my thematic analysis, I utilized the steps as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006) to identify, analyze and report themes. Braun and Clarke argued that the thematic analysis process “starts when the analyst begins to notice, and look for, patterns of meaning and issues of potential interest in the data – this may be during data collection” (p.86). Thus, my thematic analysis process began during my interviews when I began to see patterns across the youths’ stories and was documenting it in my journals. Following Braun and Clarke’s (2006) steps, I first became familiarized with the data generated from the interviews when I engaged in the transcription process where I filtered through the data and relived the experiences by tediously typing out each interview. Next, I reviewed all the transcript multiple times to code the data and develop my codebook, a process that served a dual purpose as this task was also necessary for my poetic representation analysis.

After completing my poetry crafting process, I continued to proceed with conducting my thematic analysis. I developed my themes through an inductive process upon analyzing my codebook and collection of poems which are the data sets. When I reviewed my codebook, I identified patterns amongst the codes, synthesizing them and removed ones that did not effectively help to answer my research question. Next, I read through each poem and coded them by attributing meaning within and among all the poems. Although I found many similarities in the codes that I developed from the codebook, I stayed open to the possibility that I may actively discover new themes through the process of creating more links among the data sets. After I analyzed each poem, I reviewed the themes and began a more thorough process of defining and naming the themes. I considered the prevalence of themes as they presented themselves in stories or data sets by each individual and among all five youth.

From my thematic analysis, I generated fifteen themes that help to answer the overall research question. Each theme contains several sub-themes. I then organized my themes by the sub-questions they help to answer, which I described and outlined in the following tables: Adventure Wellness Program Components (see Table 1), Conceptualizations of Adventure Wellness Program Experiences (see Table 2), and Reflection Mechanisms (see Table 3). Organizing my themes according to research questions is an additional step I took that is not outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). Alternatively, they argued against using the data collection question to identify themes, stating that it does not constitute as analytic work. On the contrary, for my work, I conducted rigorous analysis in organizing my poetic analysis and a thematic analysis of the whole corpus of data to develop my themes before categorizing them to how they address the research question. I argue the advantage of taking this additional step in

my thematic analysis approach because I was able to generate greater meaning from my themes where I derived meaning from the themes alone or from the collection of themes.

Narrative Analysis

In my final stage of data analysis, I weaved all my findings together. I reviewed all the poems I crafted from my poetic representation analysis and all the themes I generated from my thematic analysis and considered how they help to answer the research question from a narrative inquiry lens. I attempted to organize the poems to represent the themes that I developed but decided against this organizational approach because I felt undesirable methodological tensions during this process. I noticed how although meaning could be derived from each poem alone, it could also be generated from interpreting the collection of stories that the youths told throughout their interviews. The meanings generated by reviewing the stories together would be lost if I organized the poems by themes. I felt ethically uncomfortable unlinking the stories of the youths from one another, because I observed how together, the stories provided insight into the experiential phenomenon of how the youths were processing their Peace Bus experiences. I considered how the meaning differed when I represented their story as a whole unit, as opposed to organizing the poems into fragmented sections that were categorized by themes. I experienced concern of how generalizing ideas into themes can shift focus away from the stories presented by the narrators. Similarly, I worried about how ideas can be construed from poems without the contexts in which the contents of the poems were conveyed. Through reflexive practice, I worked through these tensions to find a solution to my methodological tensions.

Letting narrative inquiry guide my process helped to alleviate some of the concerns I felt with presenting my findings. Subsequently, to work through these tensions, I focused on the

youths' stories as narrative units, as opposed to grouping them into themes. Narrative analysis treats the story as a whole unit (Reissman, 2008) and considers how narratives are influenced by various social contexts (Spector-Mersel, 2010) in ways that may escape other forms of qualitative analysis. Thus, I chose to present my findings in narrative form and integrating my poetic representation findings. I also chose to present my thematic analysis findings in my Discussion and Reflections chapter rather than in the Research Findings chapter because I thought it would be too disruptive to include it in the narrative units and it was better utilized to prompt dialogue in the following Discussion and Reflections chapter.

In conducting my narrative analysis, I returned to the raw interview recordings and transcripts to immerse myself and connect with the data. I reviewed each youth's narrative individually considering the content they shared and the structure in how they presented their stories. I considered how they responded to the research question and the orientation of how their stories occurred by timeline. I reviewed the poems and used reflexivity to select the poems that I thought best helped to adequately answer the research question or sub-questions. Some poems or interview excerpts were not selected for poems because they provided details about the youths' belief systems and lives in ways that did not answer the research questions. I chose not to include many poems about individual people in the group as anonymity could not be guaranteed and I did not want to portray individuals in ways in which they did not provide consent. There were also poems that were not selected as they echoed repeating themes that were described in other poems. In each case that I did not include ideas and experiences through poetry, I took adequate and reflective care to describe them in my narrative summaries within the findings and discussion section. Thus, I believe that I took diligence to account for what the

youths and I thought were their key thoughts and experiences that were provided in their interviews throughout my research.

As organizing their narratives required making changes to the order of how I presented their stories, I thought it was important that the first poem presented was the first story they shared during the interview. I then continued to organize the content by storyline or narrative theme. This narrative analysis process prompted me to continue to engage in poetic representation analysis as I further embraced and better understood its ability to deliver message in succinct ways (Sjollem & Yuen, 2017). I amalgamated and synthesized poems as I began to see and develop more succinct narrative themes, which enhanced their evocativeness and contribution to the study.

One way that I was able to narrow the poems so much was by synthesizing multiple poems that I felt had purpose and meaning, but where the delivery of the poem was not well executed. This sometimes occurred because using poetic representation methods, I stayed close to the words and phrases that were presented by the youths. Therefore, my ability to retell their story lies in how much detail they shared with me. Amalgamating poems help to elicit this meaning within a greater context by tying it to other stories. An example of how I executed this amalgamation can be seen through Alexa's poem, "Experiential Learning". I presented Alexa with the idea of synthesizing multiple poems and shared this new poem I crafted using parts of several other poems. She affirmed that she appreciated this new poem and described that she felt that it better represented her learning. When reviewing the poem, she made several minor edits before approving it as a final draft.

After completing this last stage of synthesizing the poems and choosing which poems I would include in the youths' narrative summaries, I selected 26 poems. I presented the

narratives to the youths for review, so they could vet their quotations. As I was faced with the challenge of having to narrow the poems to more accurately answer the research questions, I also sought validation of the participants about the decision I made, such as with the poems that I chose to include. The youths were presented with all the poems that were crafted from their interviews from the 72 poems, as well as the narratives which included the refined set of poems where I selected 26 poems. They also reviewed the thematic analysis and other sections of the research that included their information. They were presented with the option to change any of the information, such as by removing or adding content or entire poems, as well as affirming ongoing consent to use their name.

The narratives were well received as the youths only made minimal changes and affirmed their satisfaction of the truth to the findings presented. One participant confirmed the credibility of my choices when she commented, “I really like that you chose those poems to include in your thesis. They feel the most relevant to me. I still think ‘Disconnect’ is my favourite of all of them, but it does not really apply to the learning, so I am very happy with the choices you made here.” She acknowledged how the choices I made were for the integrity of my research as answering the research question was a primary focus.

Ethical Considerations

To ensure that my research was ethically sound, I reviewed the Tri-Council Policy Statement 2 (2014) prior to developing this research, informing the research decisions to consider possible ethical concerns. As the researcher of the study, I strived to ensure that consent is voluntary, informed, and ongoing by the participants. Furthermore, this research sought approval by my thesis committee and the Wilfrid Laurier University’s Research Ethics

Board (REB) before being conducted to ensure that it agrees with TCPS2, that participants are not exposed to unnecessary or avoidable risks, and that its research benefits outweigh the risks.

While this research does not intend to cause any harm to its participants or others, I took precautions to protect the participants' or other Peace Bus program's confidentiality and retain their privacy. As the research topic is about post-program experiences in an educational adventure wellness program, it is predicted that even if the participants or other Peace Bus members were identified, the magnitude of harm would be minimal. One concern I had was that the participants of the program could be identified through the study because of their connection to Peace Bus, which is a publicized program, whether they participated in the study or not. An example of how one may be identified is if a research participant commented about their program leader, one could assume that they were talking about myself or the other program leader at the time. As there are only thirteen participants altogether, it is likely that their peers will identify them by their stories. To address this, I attempted to contact all Peace Bus members prior to conducting this study to explain the purpose of the research so that they would be aware of how they may be impacted by it and could raise any concerns that they may have had (see Appendix B for the Email/Telephone Script). When I contacted the youths, I provided them with an outline of the limitations of the study's ability to maintain confidentiality and the risks of being identified in the informed consent form (see Appendix A). No concerns were raised by any members during this initial contact or throughout the study. Also, as discussed above, I took precaution to protect people's privacy by not including some stories that were based on particular people to avoid the possibility of them being identified.

To protect the anonymity of the participants, I started the study without the use of names and identifying markers. When I met with the youths for the second time to review my first set

of preliminary findings, I provided them with a choice to maintain anonymity with the ongoing use of a pseudonym or to include their name and identifying markers. At this time, all the youths consented to the use of their name. There were some information that the youths consented to the use of; however, they requested that I removed identifying markers.

Moreover, to protect the confidentiality of the youths who participated in the study, I consulted with them to attain their consent throughout the research. As Culhane (2011) suggested that “an ethical engagement demands constant renegotiation over time”, I took initiative to ask for ongoing consent. I hoped that this attempt to continually request consent, helped the participants to recognize their authority over their information. Each time we met, I asked for consent to record our meetings in advance. All the participants consented to the use of audio and video recording, which were stored in a secured location that is password protected. One youth requested that I turned off the video recording for a portion of their interview because they wanted to share confidential information. I respected their request by turning off the audio recording during this part of their interview and did not include what they shared in my research.

Furthermore, each time I reviewed my findings with the youths, I asked for ongoing consent to use the information we co-constructed, such as with the poems that were crafted from their interview transcripts, the narratives I wrote, and the descriptors of the themes I generated. I suggested that they could choose to use a pseudonym, change any of the information to represent the data to their pleasing, or remove any information they did not want to include, such as entire poems. Although they had all consented to the use of their names previously, this continual reminder provided an opportunity for the youths to make changes. One participant later requested to use a pseudonym in our last meeting, while the other four participants continued to provide consent in being identified by their real names with the exclusion of some content.

Some youth requested the use of pseudonyms for some poems and since I presented the findings in narrative form, these poems were not included in this study in the narrative section. As the youths consented to the use of the poems without the use of their name, I took diligence to include the information in my thematic analysis and presented the data with the exclusion of their names and identifying markers. The youths were presented the opportunity to review how I included this content in the thematic analysis section as well. I also requested consent for the use of all quotations and aggregate research results for the purposes of the researcher's Master of Social Work (MSW) thesis at Wilfrid Laurier University, print publications, conferences, community presentations, verbal reports, workshops and/or discussions.

There was an ethical concern regarding the relationship between me, the researcher, and the study participants due to our relationship history. Since the participants and I had a previous working relationship, where I was their Peace Bus program practitioner and they were the participants, there was a power difference at the time. As this participant-leader relationship ended in 2015, it is important to note that the youths and I no longer have any obligations or responsibilities to fulfill towards one another. Despite this acknowledgement about our relationship, there is potential in this study for similar dynamics to arise, which may cause discomfort for the participants. To mitigate the risk of ethical trespasses, I have taken several steps as outlined below.

The first precaution I took involves purposefully identifying in the informed consent letter that the power difference exists, acknowledging that the participants will not be penalized in any way for sharing their true thoughts and opinions. Additionally, the consent form also informed the participants that they could choose to withdraw from the study at any time without any repercussions to them. The informed consent form also stated that if the participant felt that

they have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or that their rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, they may contact Wilfrid Laurier University's University Research Ethics Board Chair. I provided them with the Chair's contact information.

Secondly, I provided opportunities throughout the study to engage the youths to collaboratively construct the data generated. All the youths engaged in co-constructing their content, suggesting changes in the findings that would be presented in the research. Sometimes the youths reviewed the preliminary work on their own time before approving the findings or suggesting changes, where in one case, a youth edited a poem by removing or changing entire stanzas to their pleasing. The youths' willingness to share information with me off the record and to edit and remove data demonstrates how these youth had a level of personal agency to make requests to protect themselves and to be represented as they saw fit. These examples may be reflective to how the youths may have little reason to suppress their personal agency to make decisions about their participation in the study as our participant-leaders relationship ended in 2015, almost four years from the conclusion of this study.

Thirdly, I engaged in critical reflexive practice throughout my research. Interpreting and representing other people's stories is a challenging pursuit and I strived to practice humility and respect with each decision I made. Through the use of reflexive journaling, I questioned how I engaged in my research and my relationship with the participants. I explored my interview and transcription processes, acknowledging my subjectivity and incorporating the learning into my work. In reviewing my entries, I notice how intense thoughts, emotions and tensions were captured that would have otherwise escaped me with the passage of time. In my reflection, I discussed my struggles with the role of the researcher and my attempt to navigate the participant-

researcher relationship. I acknowledged how my previous role as his program leader has influenced my subjectivity and how my biases in the topic influenced my responses. I was distracted by my efforts to retain my internal temptation to defend and protect my own personal beliefs, at the expense of learning more about the participant's story. My struggle with deciding how I would present my findings was prompted by my reflexivity as I considered how I was practicing my authoritative researcher power. Ultimately, in these internal struggles, I chose to present the findings in a way that I thought would be best received by the youths, such as how I represented the youths' beliefs that contradicted my own.

While the concern for the participant-leader relationship that existed and ended in 2015 may have continued to present a power indifference within the participant-researcher relationship, I suggest that this relationship also presents as an asset to this study. Conducting the study as a partial insider was valuable for several reasons. As I explained above, I was able to share my power and resources and generate a platform for the youths to share their stories and contribute to knowledge development within the adventure wellness field. The youths were also able to share their stories with ease as I was already familiar with the program and the contexts in which their stories took place, therefore I required substantially less clarification than an outsider would require to understand the experiences. Finally, another benefit was how this relationship fostered a safe environment where the youths could willingly be vulnerable with me throughout this research, on and off the record.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) gave attention to the relationship of the knower and known, describing their inseparable influence on one another and suggesting that the knowledge generated from this relationship are constructed realities linked to the inquiry. The knowledge produced from this research is linked to my insider-outsider influence in the study is privileged

information that would not have been available had an outsider conducted this researcher, as their influence would diverge different constructed realities. Therefore, the benefits that were acquired from having me as a partial insider conducting the study would not have occurred without taking the potential risks associated with this researcher positionality. Through this acknowledgement, I made several steps in attempt to mitigate the risks of ethical trespasses, such as: informing the participants about this potential ethical conflict at the start of the study; continually assessing for risks through reflexive practice to make efforts to decrease power imbalances; and asking for continual consent throughout the study.

Trustworthiness and Credibility

The question of how one constitutes quality qualitative research has been highly debated as the validity criterion that concerns the extent to which the study investigates the social phenomena observed has become controversial in social sciences (Angen, 2000; Kvale, 1995; Lather, 1993). Lather (1993) addressed issues of validity from a poststructuralist perspective while considering antifoundational discourse theory, bringing into question the construction of power and knowledge with the challenges of representation. My understanding of validity aligns with Lather's (1993) description of ironic validity, which suggests the impossibility of representation and acknowledges the problematization of language and truth. There are problems in constructing representation of how youth are processing their Peace Bus experiences because this process is experiential, continuous and fluid, and therefore cannot be captured in its entirety. When I met with the youths to review my research findings that I generated from their interviews, they shared with me new thoughts they developed since we last met about their Peace Bus experience. This new information about their experiences demonstrates how they were

continually processing their experiences and how it was changed or enhanced since our first meeting. This aligns with Lather's (1993) statement about validity when she claimed that "in terms of legitimation issues, antifoundationalists argue that the thing itself, in its absence, cannot be witness to a representative validity" (p. 675). Therefore, my study does not claim to evaluate an all-knowing representation of how youth are processing their Peace Bus experiences as this notion of representation is impossible to capture. Rather, it claims to exemplify a co-constructed and artistically represented version of the youths' stories that was generated with me in 2018 through our audio and video interview interventions.

In my qualitative research, I reject the adoption of positivistic measures of validity, thus creating space for the ongoing exploration and creative production of new knowledge (Kvale, 1995) and alternatively seeking to evaluate trustworthiness through the process of validation (Angen, 2000). Trustworthiness seeks to address why a study is worthy of attention (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and evaluates the truth in interpretation established through dialogue and negotiated within a community (Kvale, 1995). Thus, to engage in what Angen (2000) called, a "process of intersubjective agreement", I outlined a descriptive record of my research methods and my contributions to the co-construction of my research data so the reader can interpret the trustworthiness of the findings that I present.

Throughout my research, I was attentive to the trustworthiness of my work using several strategies. While considering the credibility of my work, I acknowledge that I have only observed how the youths were processing their Peace Bus experiences with me within the context of my interview intervention. Thus, I cannot speak to how they are attributing meaning to their experiences within different contexts. While observing the youths' post-program Peace Bus experiences, I used a triangulation approach and used several methods to establish

convergent meanings. I triangulated my research design to answer the research question using my combined use of narrative, poetic representation and thematic analysis methods. When using these methods, I conducted rigorous analysis as I continually reviewed the raw audio recordings and transcripts as well as the secondary data generated at each stage of my analysis. Thus, the findings that I generated is derived from the raw data that was co-constructed with the research participants. Moreover, I used thick, rich descriptions in the poetic representation findings, as opposed to thin, undetailed descriptions, to provide detailed statements that help external readers to make their own interpretations and connections.

Furthermore, I used member checking (Creswell & Miller, 2000) to attend to credibility by negotiating meaning with the participants and providing them opportunities to vet and negotiate their quotations. I conducted member checking at different stages of my research as the participants check the reliability of the data I collected and my interpretations when they reviewed the poems I crafted from their interviews and my retelling of their narratives. They participated in the presentation of the findings as they added new information to fill any gaps that were missing from the interview and changed or removed details to make sense of the meanings that were represented. Each participant confirmed that my findings were truthful representations of their experiences as they expressed contentment in the results, with remarks such as, “I loved it. Couldn’t find anything I would change”. These affirmations support my belief that we were able to generate findings that satisfy the youths with their representations.

Lastly, to help readers understand the choices that I made, I engaged in reflexivity throughout my study to claim my contributions to the construction of data and knowledge. I identified and considered my contributions by taking detailed field notes and memos to keep track of the development of my themes and subthemes and by practicing researcher reflexivity to

acknowledge my positionality and subjectivity. Researcher reflexivity is the process where I self-disclosed my assumptions, beliefs, and biases that may shape my inquiry so that readers can shape their interpretation accordingly. I used reflexive journaling to take personal accountability for my location and subjectivity and to monitor my participation in the power dynamics as I kept track of my interpretive process and the influence of my power and privilege.

Reflexive journaling was particularly useful as I also had to navigate my previous role as their program practitioner and work through tensions of conflicting views of the participants with my own. I acknowledged how my previous role as the youths' program leader has influenced my subjectivity and how my biases in the topic influenced my responses. I also understood how at times, I was distracted by my efforts to retain my internal temptation to defend and protect my own personal beliefs, at the expense of learning more about the participant's story. This reflexive practice helped me to notice my subjectivity where I acknowledged my internal conflicts and biases that naturally develops in human experiences and to address it by incorporating the learning into my work. Some ways that I integrated my learning into my work was how I identified my positionality and expressed how I could not speak to the perspectives of a male, a person from a rural community, or a francophone. Reflexivity was also useful when I had to make choices within my research. When I observed what I thought was conflicting information from the youths, rather than describing the contradictions I saw, I decided to present the data as thick detailed descriptions so that the reader can make their own interpretations of the information provided. Reflexivity helped me to work through my researcher-poet tensions, adequately engage in ethical crafting practices, and inform the methods I took to develop my research findings.

SECTION 2: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Chapter Four: Research Findings

In my pursuit to gain an understanding of how youth are processing their Peace Bus experiences after two and a half years, I learned that with reflection and the passage of time, this process is fluid and unique to everyone and can lead to ongoing learning and development. I acknowledge how people are processing their Peace Bus experience will vary and change within different contexts, such as with different people, periods of time and places. Thus, as I represent my understanding of how five youth are constructing meaning from their Peace Bus experiences, I recognize that these stories are told within a specific context in which they were influenced and changed by my perceptions and creativity. They are narratives that were generated within the third space created by my interview intervention where I then crafted into poetry with the collaborative efforts of the youths. I then wove the poems together using my additional representation of their dialogue.

The different ways in which the youths are making sense of their experiences at the time of the interviews were captured within each poem individually or through looking at the patterns or narratives seen across the collection of poems. Although there are many similarities in the details of what the youths reflect about and how they conceptualize their experiences, each story is distinctive as it portrays social, cultural and historical contexts and histories of the people who storied them. The stories in the poems are just one variation of the youths' stories, as these stories may continuously change and evolve along with the storytellers.

Zach's Narrative

Zach identifies as a white Canadian male born and raised on Vancouver Island. When he was first introduced to Peace Bus, he was quite suspicious of it and opposed to the CISV traditions that involved singing and hand-holding. Despite his reluctance to these traditions, he explained how he eventually tolerated and it and described many aspects of the program that he enjoyed. The spirit of the bus is wittingly described by Zack as a scent in this next poem, capturing metaphorically how memories can be deeply ingrained whereby it triggers one's physiological senses.

Bus Smell

I remember my Peace Bus experiences
very positively. It was exciting being there.
Doing something different every day.
Seeing Canada in so many different ways.

The group aspect
Was what made it enjoyable.
When I look back on it, it's weird
Having the people there with you.

'Cause you're with people Twenty-
Four seven who are pretty much
strangers to you. By the end
you know them very, very well.

I remember it positively.
Sometimes, a little bit of a blur
to be honest. You're in a city
for one day, a town in the next.

Sometimes I remember an area
we visited. I can't really remember where.
But I remember the experience.
The actual events that took place.

What was there.
What I learned.

What I saw.
and heard.

I remember it fondly.
When I think about it, I think
what made it so special
is the optimism surrounding it.

There's the initial excitement
People have towards traveling
Especially young people.
Young people get excited easily.

Having a bunch of young people together
In close quarters, it feeds upon itself.
People feeds upon each other's
Optimism, excitement, whatever else too.

That perfect mix of optimism,
A little bit of adrenalin and sleep
Deprivation, all together in this
Weird concoction of activity in life.

To say it like this, I sound like I am sixty
But there is something about young people.
They get excited and positive about things where
it's not realistic at all. But what it is, is fun.

It's the dreams
and the ideas, the theories
that aren't really. Everything is
bouncing around real fast and it's
all positive, right? It's accepting and
fast changing. It's very dynamic.
Very, very dynamic and
collaborative.

The environment was that of adventure.
And being in a different environment
From your natural routine
Optimism was deepening from that.

The positivity was overwhelming at times
But it was amazing

For me to just be in that environment
It rubbed off on me.

When I got back
For a couple of months
Six or eight
I felt a hundred times better.

After I got back.
I was a more positive person than I was before.
Sounds cliché and Bullshit
but I'm serious.

When I got back,
I was in this mind state of adventure
and positivity.
Hope.

The group setting aspect of the program had a significant impact on Zack. He explained how the group dynamics made Peace Bus unique using his experiences from his Tourism and Leadership Exploration (TALE) program to compare. He described how his TALE experiences was nowhere close to being as inclusive as Peace Bus. Being with people all day every day allowed a unique collectivistic environment where the members developed a level of intimacy where they become like family in the program. This supportive and dynamic environment had lasting effects on Zack. Other program components influenced Zack's learning and growth as well. In the next poem, he described his experience engaging in a programming activity.

East Van

I remember

East Hastings and the Insite needle exchange there.
I go to Vancouver semi-often. Maybe once every two months.
For whatever reason, I find myself there.
I am reminded when I see it. It is kind of fresh in my mind for that.
The guide. I guess guide. I guess I'll call him guide.
He gave us a little tour of the facility and the community, which he loved.
We get in and it looks like, it looks like, looks like a

ghetto. People literally OD'ing on the street. All sorts of nasty stuff.

But you know

You see the people.

You see the people that live there.

Their community there.

It's beautiful how it can emerge

in that

C

H

A

O

S

around it.

That was one of my most
not fun but reflective moments.

Learning experience.

I enjoyed hearing his wisdom.

His way of looking at the world, I respected.

Because a lot of people you see on the Peace Bus are
very traditional. Traditional community minded people.

They volunteer and do great work, but they're just kind of
volunteering and organizing stuff in their community.

But this guide that we met

He was a person recovering from a drug addiction.

A street life dude in a really rough area. And

he sees a way to solve a problem just so

ugly that no one would approach

with a Ten-foot pole.

He

Will

Get

Right

In

There

And

Deal

With

It.

Respect.

In addition to learning about the community he saw in East Vancouver, Zack recalled several

other stories of his experience learning about different cultures in his journey across

Canada. While reflecting about these experiences, he locates himself as a resident of Vancouver

Island providing context to his meaning of the words, "ethnic" and "foreign". He ties these short

stories together by explaining some of the lessons he learned during his travel adventures with his Peace Bus group, which is represented in the next poem that is left untitled by request from Zach.

Untitled

I remember when we were at PEI at that DiverseCity festival.
We volunteered there for an hour setting up a tent.
There were all sorts of ethnic food. All these booths.
A Japanese booth - that was amazing with the kimonos and paintings.
The band started playing Cuban jazz. People were dancing. It was kick ass!
We played Beach volleyball.
That was an awesome day.

I remember Quebec City and Montreal - something very foreign for me.
I live in Vancouver Island so there are a few people in the community that speak French. But when you hear it, you're like, "Jeez! Woah!
Where did that come from?"
It's weird to think that three thousand kilometres away, Canadians do things in that language. It's cool to be immersed in there.
so much history. The city is ancient. Just Wicked.

I remember a bunch of other events too that are amazing.
They all taught lessons. Not life changing epiphany lessons.
Small things That are valuable to think back on.
What kind of lessons? Knowing Canada, a little.
A lot of Canadians talk about Saskatchewan like, "*It's long. It's flat and it's boring.*"
Yeah, true, but there is a lot more depth to it.
Actually being there, experiencing things and realizing that
a lot of People aren't too different.
It's not like I expected aliens, but
a lot of people live similarly in all sorts of different places.

The biggest lesson though is the group environment that you are in.
We lose course so often - all the time, really. And
knowing how that dynamic works, what people need to do or
should do to make it Run smoother, right?
Everyone has to make little sacrifices for the person next to them and vice
Versa So they can all be tolerable all at once, right?
You learn a lot about how *you* act in that group environment as well, right?
It sounds kind of weird, but I think it solidified my Idea of who I thought I am, right?
I put a lot of value into working hard. I tried to be nice and understanding.

Being in that kind of environment, me acting the way I did
reinforced beliefs I had upon myself, right?
Like, I like exercise - that's one thing I like.
I really enjoy things in nature - another thing, right?
Being in a different environment - in all sorts of
different environments too, within that, I know generally how I am as a person.
I'm not saying that I am some sort of monk that knows all this emotion.
I'm saying that I know myself okay, but after that I was sure
I Knew Myself Very Well.

Zack beautifully articulated some of the conceptualizations he formed from this Peace Bus experiences. He explained how he developed these understanding from his conversations with others as people's curiosity about his experience generated opportunities for him to answer questions like the interview questions that I asked him, but not to the same depth. He described how following his discussions with others, his mind would wander into deep thought. One of his ideas that transpire from this process is captured below.

The Challenge of the Journey

The Peace Bus gave me confidence
Dealing with that experience.
I value a lot
"Wow, I did that!" thought.
Confidence in independence.

How Zack is processing his Peace Bus program experiences can be understood through the poems above, but also through the context of how his life has been since the program. Zach articulated what he learned and gained from participating in the program but explained how life has been different since Peace Bus, his experiences now feel segregated from his everyday life. He expressed how his experiences and what he has learned is there in his mind where he could not recount any major transformations. He talked about how he felt hopeful after the program and began to consider the possibilities of life, but that his optimism dwindled as he experienced many setbacks in his educational and employment pursuits. He expressed hope that

he can find ways to regain optimism in his life. With Zack's Peace Bus experiences feeling secluded from his current life, sometimes when he reflects about it, it leads him to wonderment as he questions what he wants in life.

Lessons I Learned There

To live in that way.
Experience still with me.
I dream about it.

Miguel's Narrative

Miguel identifies as a Hispanic male born and raised in Mexico aside from a year he spent in Montréal at a young age. He moved to Canada two years before he participated in the Peace Bus program. What he remembered most about his Peace Bus experiences was how he found his experience to be quite challenging, which he believes helped to shape who he is now.

Exposure

The Peace Bus is a story about exposure.
Throughout the Peace Bus everyone was exposed to
a certain way. We didn't have the commodities at home. We didn't
have the privilege of not liking it and then going back home. We were
I don't want to use the word stuck
Everyone was there by choice. But we *were* somehow.
You can say we had a contract with Peace Bus to finish what we started.
Being exposed to some risks. We were exposed to wildlife.
When my credit card got declined, I was so sad.
Exposure to risk.
Maybe you didn't have good chemistry with a group.
Risk of rejection.
Exposure to entire emotions.
You had to be very careful about what you said.
Like a plastic bag it could
EXPLODE
in any second.
We exposed ourselves out there to risk.
We were strangers exposing ourselves out there
to other strangers.
Going on a bus with them
for 41 days.
This exposure that we had amongst ourselves led us to progress.
We learned how to cope with problems and emotions.
Finding out more about not only ourselves
but other individuals.

Miguel discussed how adventure or exposure to risk played a crucial role to this self-development. He described how being in a group setting amongst strangers for 41 straight days posed as an emotional and a psychosocial risk. Yet to his surprise, he described that the group

had positive relational chemistry. He attributed the positive group chemistry to the warm first impressions within the group, everyone's ability to take leadership when required and the strong collaborative leadership between his Peace Bus leaders, Elizabeth and me.

Equilibrium

One Key Factor on the Peace Bus

That allowed
you have such good
chemistry or such a positive
outcome was you and Elizabeth.
You guys had good chemistry. You
are the positive, optimistic person and
Elizabeth was the stricter one. Your
personalities were important for the
Peace Bus. I'm not saying one was
better than the other one. You
balanced each other out.
You and Elizabeth.

Both of you
complement each other. Your
strengths and Elizabeth's strengths
accounted for each other's weaknesses and
vice versa. Made you two strong leaders. You two
provided strength in unity to the Peace Bus. You two
from my perspective, provided a balance to our Peace Bus.
Each of you had your own roles - those roles helped. You two
helped each one another. Made the Peace Bus work that well.
In some scenarios you two had to say no in a harsh way, had to
set the limits without breaking the fun. You two did that well.
You two worked as a team. Our group had chemistry. When
I say the group, I mean everyone, including you two. Every-
one had their strengths and their weaknesses. We were
able to work together as a team. We needed authority
and you two were the authority in this team of ours.
Even though we had leaders within our group
you two were also the leaders on the
Peace Bus. You two were

The Ones Responsible and The Authority.

Miguel described how being close with fourteen other people for 41 days allowed the opportunity to develop more intimate and genuine relationships where everyone became synchronized by learning to regulate their emotions and to cope with their differences in the group.

Disagree to Agree

The following year after Peace Bus I was taking “Theory of Knowledge”. My final essay was about how Discussion with different viewpoints can provide you different knowledge on the matter.

Then I remember this: arguing with Stewart. We started off as close friends on the Peace Bus. We were taking the same program at IB, so we had similar knowledge on certain fields of study.

We were sharing the bed in Saskatoon. Up until three in the morning just arguing about the most random stuff. Anything from philosophy to physics and science.

He said to me, “You know, Miguel I never met anyone that I disagree with as much as you. With everything, if you say A, I’ll say B. White and black. We are complete opposites.

How two individuals having such different Perspectives and views on the world could enjoy so much discussing and arguing amongst one another, I find interesting.

We did have some issues, not going to lie. After the argument, we would be a bit mad. There would be some tension afterwards. Eventually, we liked arguing in a friendlier manner.

Being close to people 24/7. Being intimate you learn to cope with problems and conflicts. We realized; it doesn't matter if your perspectives or beliefs are different.

Having a different argument or stance on things
is actually better than having the same view.
You gain deeper knowledge on the matter.
That's how we made it work.

Argument provides deeper knowledge of the subject.
Something that I now tell myself during conflict.
I used my experiences with Peace Bus
to write that paper. I did well on that essay.

In addition to his experiences of navigating group dynamics, Miguel's stories of struggle also included aspects of other program components, such as programming and environment. Peace Bus programming included camping, which Miguel did not have much experience with. He described his experience coping with the challenges of one particular camping night, which created a productive power where he endured the challenges before him. Since his Peace Bus program ended, he has engaged in a lot of camping activities and has utilized the lessons he learned from the program.

Tobermory

That night near Tobermory shaped me.
We went to this campsite full of mosquitoes.
We were all hungry. We didn't have much food left.
Everyone was tired. Nobody wanted to set up the tents.
Tents were broken. We were cooking food, but mosquitoes
kept coming. Nobody wanted to unpack things from the trailer.
It had been a long drive. Somebody was sick. Elizabeth was exhausted.
Everyone wanted to just eat and go to bed. Everyone was arguing including
me. I've always considered myself as a leader. At that point, I was too tired.
When you're tired and hungry, you have less patience. That night, the team was
not breaking down, but there was too much tension. That night on the Peace Bus
shaped me a lot. I started unpacking all our things. Tried to help as much as I could.
I told myself, "I have to do it for the sake of the team." Something that stuck with me.
Peace Bus taught me important lessons about being patient, trying hard and not giving up.
It helped me in an academic and professional level. Last summer, I was doing construction work.
Sometimes I wouldn't find strength to keep working. I would remember that moment and know
no matter how tired you are, it's all in the mindset, there's always
Inner strength.

His experiences help him to construct or reinforce attitudes and beliefs about himself. Miguel explained how the Peace Bus program shaped him to become a better and more resilient person as he developed his endurance, patience, and coping skills. In addition to attitudes about his abilities, he also transformed his national identity. During the Peace Bus, he was immersed in different Canadian environments. As he travelled and met Canadians across Canada, he adopted an understanding of Canadian culture, which he didn't have before. Before Peace Bus he considered himself a world citizen and after the program he began to develop a sense of home in Canada and shape his blended Mexican-Canadian identity.

My Cultural Library

I'm used to standing out.
Most of my friends in high school were Canadian.
If not, they were Korean foreigners or raised here when they were two years old or so.
Within my group of friends, I've always stood out.
Peace Bus too.
The way I pronounce certain stuff. My culture as a whole.
We talked about nationality.
I was the only foreigner on the Peace Bus.
Back then I had only lived in Canada for 2 years
Excluding Montreal, when I was younger.
On the Peace Bus
Some people thought I was Canadian. "You're Canadian!"
Some were a bit offended
"No, I've been living here for just 2 years. I'm Mexican."
The fact that I didn't consider myself Canadian back then.
Part of my identity was me being a Mexican. I'm always going to be Mexican.
I'm Mexican. I was born there. I was raised there.
We shape ourselves depending on what's around us when we were younger.
So, I'm always going to have that Mexican identity.
Looking back, through the Peace Bus, I exchanged some perspectives to my nationality.
It's ironic how I have friends who are fourth generation Canadian
they don't know Canada as I do.
I don't consider Vancouver as Canadian as Ontario and Quebec, for example.
I think the Peace Bus provided me with perspective on what being Canadian is.
What Canada is as a whole.
It got me a step closer to this culture.
Interacting with everyone on the bus, I gained cultural traditions

To my cultural library.
I added some aspects of the Canadian culture to my own culture.
I learned how to be more open-minded.
I learned more about the history of Canada.
Throughout the Peace Bus we went to a bunch of museums.
The Peace Bus allowed me to adopt Canadian customs.
And now although part of me is defined by my nationality of being Mexican
After the Peace Bus, travelling through all of Canada
I felt closer to being Canadian.
I've never considered myself being from a specific nationality.
I've always said I'm a world citizen.
Because I've interacted with so many cultures throughout my life.
I've gone to different places in the world. Lived for a few months in different countries.
I've gone to exchanges. Norway when I was 14, then to Italy when I was 15
The year following Peace Bus, I went to Sweden for a Youth Meeting
Even in the years I didn't go to CISV, I would visit friends in Europe or different countries.
Thus, I don't really have that sense of home.
The Peace Bus affected my thinking about that.
The Peace Bus provided me with a Canadian identity.
Provided me a sense of home.

As Miguel shared his experiences, he emphasized his belief that memories and experiences bidirectionally shape one another. As he shared how he was shaped by his Peace Bus experiences, he also noticed how he was actively rewriting his Peace Bus experiences. Miguel explained that how he processes his experiences is continually changing as he acquires new information and perspective. Through the interview process, for example, he gained awareness of the magnitude that his Peace Bus experiences was a catalyst to his passion for physics.

Journey of Discovery

Peace Bus was a tipping point that marked my life the most.
Peace Bus was where my passion towards physics began.
I remember when we were in Thunder Bay
Nathalie bought this book called, The Willpower.
She took me to the library,
told me there were nice books I should check out.
This one book stood out to me.
Neutrino Hunters, it's called, The Thrilling Chase for a Ghostly Particle.

I bought that physics book. Read it throughout the Peace Bus.
I remember I would explain to some of you what I was reading.
That just ignited my passion towards physics.
Sharing what I learned with the people on the bus
Somehow motivated me more to further my interest towards physics.
All my life I've been into computer science and I discovered
I was passionate about physics on the Peace Bus.
I told Andy's dad about it.
He told me to go to Engineering Physics at UBC.
That had a really big impact in my life.
'Cause I got into Waterloo, UofT, Prince, a bunch of universities.
I picked UBC.
I picked UBC Engineering specifically because it was suggested by Andy's dad.
The Peace Bus convinced me to follow physics.
This competition I'm part of, an undergrad engineering competition to build a satellite.
and winning first place for UBC's Physics Olympics
is related to the first book I started reading about physics
the physics book on the Peace Bus.
Now all the books, here and here, they are all about physics.
I've read a bunch of more. My room is infested by physics books.
I got an Einstein poster here. I have my physics T-shirts.
Everything around here is related to physics.
It's all because the Peace Bus.
The Peace Bus had quite a bit impact on me.
Every time someone asked me about physics
Reading my book in Thunder Bay ignites.
I get a flashback of being on the Peace Bus
reading that book for the first time.

Along with igniting his passion for his field of study, he found that his experiences help to empower him professionally, academically, and socially, where simply talking about his experiences make him relatable and seen as benevolent, personable, social and acquiring leadership attributes. He gave examples of how his Peace Bus experiences helped him gain his acceptance to university, his summer internship as a software engineer developer and new friendships. Furthermore, Miguel uses his Peace Bus experiences as a resource to interpret the present, solve problems and find inner strength. Therefore, Miguel's understanding of his Peace

Bus experiences is that it not only helped to mould who he is today, but that it continually shapes him as he uses his past to help define and empower him in the present and his anticipated future.

Nathalie's Narrative

Nathalie identifies as a half Korean and half Canadian female born as a twin in Windsor, Ontario. Others described her as a positive person who was always happy and making awkward comments to relieve the tension within the group. What Nathalie remembered most about Peace Bus was the sense of community that was fostered through the group setting. She described her group to be diverse in terms of gender, age, family income, family of origin, religious beliefs, and race. The diversity in their social locations contributed to her learning.

Mobile Community

Something special about Peace Bus is the
Sense of community we had.

Our sense of sharing everything, sharing time
Supporting each other through experiences and life
That's the main thing I remember about Peace Bus.

Bonding through a common lifestyle
Even though that lifestyle was a
Mobile community for 40 days.

I liked how you don't choose the people
You go on Peace Bus with. It could just be
Anybody.

How friendships form on the bus is different.
You don't get to know the people before.

Whether or not you would be
Friends with them at school, you're
Forced to have relationships with all of them.
Forced to accept them.

Peace Bus forces you to connect with people.
Forces you to be friends.

But it doesn't do it in a way that is forceful.
It's a way that's compelling. Smooth. Unique.

We moved together.
We travelled together.
We lived together.
We were like a family.

Forced may not be the right thing to say.

We all chose to be on the trip.
That was a decision that we all made.
We chose to be on this trip.
But by spending so much time with one another
You have to make real connections to
Survive forty days
With people in such close proximity.

By choosing to be on this trip
Traveling across Canada in such a
Short period of time
Makes us have to become close.
Spending 24 hours, a day with people
Every single day for 40 days.
Spending so much time with one another
You get to know them in a unique way.

In doing that, you realize
We're all people. We all want the same things.
We can get along with pretty well anyone.
Very different people, different backgrounds.
Open-minded, courageous teenagers.
See them as a human, grow to love them.
We just bond. Create a community.
Become close friends in a short amount of time.

You're incredibly lucky if you have
Three friends that you can count on.
Having a real connection where you vibe is
Super, super rare.
Many people don't even have one.
So, when you find that in multiple people
Within a small setting
It's special.

These friendships form when
being around them is fun.
It's easy to talk, easy to vibe, easy to hang out.
If you spend enough time around anyone
You pick up vibrational waves like guitar strings.
You get to know them well.
You are bound to connect.
Get certain friendship feelings.

Nobody can go on Peace Bus
And come back saying, "I didn't make
meaningful connections with people"
You just have to.
If you didn't make meaningful
connections on Peace Bus
you missed the entire point.
It doesn't matter who you are.

Peace Bus forces you to connect with people.
Forces you to be friends.
But it doesn't do it in a way that is forceful.
It's a way that's compelling. Smooth. Unique.
We moved together.
We travelled together.
We lived together.
We were like a family.

On Peace Bus, you're with people
all the time. And for a temporary time
Your sense of self isn't solely you.
It's all these people around you as well.
Maybe that's what a community is
It's not just identifying yourself as an individual
But also, your sense of self through
Really close friends.

Nathalie's stories about her Peace Bus experiences were rich with descriptions of connection and friendship. Upon completing the program, Nathalie felt sadness in knowing that she would not see her program friends in a long time because the program structure was created where it ended after 41 days and all the participants returned to their homes. She also realized how she gained independence as she learned that she can do things on her own and that she would be okay on her own. Nathalie's discussion about relationships continued as she told stories about her experiences after the program as she described the challenges that she experienced returning home which lead to several changes in her relationships with her support systems.

Coming of Age

I remember
When my mom
was dropping me
off at the airport.
She was really sad.

“Going on this trip
Everything is going to be different. You are not going to be the same person”
That was the last thing she said before I boarded the plane.
And I thought,
“That’s just because life changes you in everything you do
You’re never the same person. You evolve with life.”

It turned out that
we were both right.
Our relationship
changed after that.
Especially after
me going on
the Peace Bus.

That was one of
The last moments
With my mom
Where our relationship was good.
Before it went sour.
I remember walking away from my mom
Getting on the plane, with tears in my eyes.

Peace Bus marks the time when her relationship with her mother began to decline. Before the program, she thought that her mother was loving and supportive, but upon the completion of the program, she grew an awareness of how her mother was struggling with her mental health and not as supportive as she once thought. She gave the example of how her mother did not encourage her to attend school when she struggled to adjust back to an educational system that failed to adapt to her learning needs throughout her life. In turn, she moved out of her mother’s home and in with her father where she was supported by her father

and his future wife, Kathleen. She explained how her father pushed her to attend school giving her the structure she needed to apply herself. She also shared how Kathleen believed in her and consequently, she began to believe in herself. With a new role model emulating how she wanted to live, Nathalie began to reevaluate herself. She expressed how her understanding of her arranged relationships within the Peace Bus changed as she evolved since the program. Thus, how Nathalie is processing her Peace Bus experiences changed as she grew to understand herself in the present and the past.

Arranged Marriages

How I process my Peace Bus experiences
is a lot different now than
just after Peace Bus.

How I process my Peace Bus trip changed
as I grew to know how I work
how I relate to people.

Just knowing yourself
Knowing your background
how you relate to people
you better understand
why you do things that
at first don't really make sense.

The thing about Peace Bus is
since you're all strangers
You could be anyone you want.
No one is going to know the difference.
You know strangers for 40 days
and then you move on.

You can just play a character.
Try different personalities.
Experiment being a different person.
You don't need to be honest about yourself.
Don't have to be authentic.
You can be whoever you want.

How I process my Peace Bus experiences

is a lot different now than
just after Peace Bus.
How I process my Peace Bus trip changed
as I grew to know how I work
how I relate to people.

I look back on it now and realize
I wasn't really being truthful
about who I was
'cause I was uncomfortable
with what I was going through.
Uncomfortable with myself.

When you feel like
no one will love you
you put on a face
to isolate yourself.
It's counterproductive
in building connections.

How I process my Peace Bus experiences
is a lot different now than
just after Peace Bus.
How I process my Peace Bus trip changed
as I grew to know how I work
how I relate to people.

Having people who say that I have potential
Say that I can do great things.
'Cause when people see potential in you and
you don't see potential in yourself
it only makes you question
if you can do better.

When you're not really being honest with yourself
Being truthful is
accepting the things that are
ugly about you 'cause
not everyone is perfect.
You have ugly parts
You have bad relationships.
You have nasty thoughts about yourself.
You've been unkind.
It's accepting all these things

and knowing that you only did it out of
your own pain.

It is hard to take responsibility
for your part
in the bad things in your life.
In realizing why
I acted that way in the program
I can forgive myself and move on.

I can forgive myself now because
I know that I was a kid and
I didn't know better.
I know that throughout my life
I've only ever done the best that
I could with what I know.

So, I forgive.
I forgive that, even though
it wasn't helping me.
It wasn't something true to me.
I forgive myself now for putting on a face.
Being someone who I wasn't.

I live a lot more authentically now.
Live life in a meaningful way.
I am a lot more honest with myself
honest with the people around me
In turn, I attract people who like me
for who I am.

Just knowing yourself
knowing your background
how you relate to people
you can better understand
how living your truth is the only way
you can live life in a meaningful way.

How I process my Peace Bus experiences
is a lot different now than
just after Peace Bus.
How I process my Peace Bus trip changed
as I grew to know how I work
how I relate to people.

How I process my Peace Bus experiences changed
as I grew to know
myself.

As Nathalie described her journey of growth and healing and how some of her experiences changed over time, she also shared some moments that she wished would remain the same. Along with the community that was fostered within her program, another memorable aspect of Nathalie's Peace Bus experience was her immersion with nature. She described several stories of times she saw natural phenomenon such when she stargazed with a bunch of the other members on top of the van or one of her favourite nights when we stayed at a woman's cottage and she made us pancakes on a night when there was a meteor shower. Nathalie described how embracing nature with friends spiritually impacted her.

Nights that Last Forever

One of my most memorable stories that I tell people all the time
The night where we all found out we had lice.
We were at Amber Wood's house.
I was looking through Alexa's hair, sitting by a window.
She looks out and says, "Oh wow, you can see the Northern Lights"
It was 3 A.M. I stopped checking her hair for lice.
We were just sitting, looking at the Northern lights together.
There was something profound about that.
It was one of those moments where you feel like
You just wish it would last forever.
You wish it would never end.
I could have stay up beside Alexa.
Just looking at the Northern Lights for days.
I feel like we could have been happy like that.
It is finding that in the simple things in life.

Alexa's Narrative

Alexa identifies as female with ancestry from various European countries whose lived in Canada for generations. When she recounts Peace Bus, she remembers it being a lot of fun.

Spontaneity

I remember my Peace Bus experiences
being a lot of fun. Having really
close contact with really cool people.
Dealing with small conflicts in different ways
Meeting new people on the way
when volunteering or going to homestays.
Looking back now, I remember mostly
fun times, the cool things we did.
Things that happened that were not planned
stick out in my mind more than things that were.

One memory that sticks out was in Hartland
with the covered bridge in New Brunswick.
Randomly talking to this woman
we started volunteering in their community garden.
It helped them a lot when we did.
A good learning experience.
What stuck out was it was all very
S p o n t a n e o u s
Completely unplanned. Not intentional, but
we had so much fun.
Something about the spontaneousness.
Maybe adventure makes it special.
The idea that you don't have to plan
something to help someone.
Because it wasn't expected, it was more fun.

One of my favorite nights, a story that I love telling
the night that started in complete chaos.
We were supposed to go camping in Ontario.
So many things happened to make it a terrible night.
There were sooooooooooooooooooooo many insects.
We were all just getting eaten alive.
It was complete C H A O S.
Then, I met a friend from CISV there.
Her mother coming over to introduce herself.

Inviting us all to their cottage. Quickly
packing up. Trying to prevent being
eaten alive while watching the meteor shower.
Being welcomed to this woman's cottage.
Most of us stayed up over half the night or pulled all-nighters.
One of the first times I almost pulled an all-nighter.
A pretty good night. Very comfortable, fun and amazing.
Just having a comfortable place to sleep. Being in the hot tub.
'Cause we weren't very close to any sort of big city
it was first time I saw a clear meteor shower
with that many shooting stars.
Just being invited into this woman's home.
She's a lovely woman, lovely woman.
Making us pancakes at four o'clock in the morning.
Accepted like we were family.
Being able to have this experience
in the first place is what made it so extraordinary.
How the whole experience was completely unplanned.
Being one of my favorite parts of Peace Bus.
It was just that moment of
What just happened?
This is
A
M A Z
I N G !
Since the program ended
The sentiment remained the same
in a lot of ways.

As Alexa recalled her experiences, she explained how she mainly remembers having fun with the group. She attributed the positive group dynamics to the ease of getting to know the members, which continued to build throughout the program. She recalled how at the start of the program, everyone bonded quickly.

Bonding

All thirteen of us.
Within 24 hours.
Hot tub together.

Alexa reflected about how getting along with different people in such close quarters helped her to become who she is today with how she thinks, how she communicates with others and what she is capable of doing. How she sees herself changed as she grew to identify herself with her geographic location from her Peace Bus experiences. She learned how her perception of the world is constructed within the context of how she was raised in a rural town in Southwest Saskatchewan.

The Shape of Identities

On the Peace Bus, we were constantly laughing
about how the size of my town was smaller
than the size of their school in some cases.
A continuous joke between all of us.
Me being from middle of nowhere tiny town Saskatchewan
my experiences affected how I saw the size of schools.
Living in small towns, I perceived Regina to be a big city
which is half the size, a quarter of the size of some of the cities that
the others have lived in.
Learning that there were centers that were so much bigger
that experience affected me, my identity.
Made me part of who I am. Why I think of things this way.
It influenced how I'm from a small town, not just a town
but a small town as seen by people from other provinces.

Being from a small town
not having a lot of experiences with culture and travel
there was a difference in how I interacted with people
like Anthony, who spoke French mainly.
How I interacted with him was influenced by my lack of knowledge.
When I first met Anthony, I knew -
still know, very little French.
He would always have to speak to me in English.
Whereas others may have had a basis in French and
got to know him more in his own language.
That influenced my identity, as I recognized that I don't speak French
but I can still learn about him and who he is as a person.
That broaden my worldview as well in the way.
Learning how languages affect us, play a part in who we are.

The Peace Bus has helped me develop.
Learning about the provinces, the similarities and differences
that we have throughout the nation.
helped me understand better
what it means to be Canadian.
What it took to get us here to this point.
Building my own identity within the context of who I am as a Canadian.

I learned a lot from my new friends about the world.
Realizing who I am as a person.
How my interactions were different throughout the program.
How my knowledge has expanded with doing new things on the Peace Bus.
How I was influenced to think a certain way with being from a small town.
How knowing that might have affected me.
Now that I'm recognizing these things.
I can take that into my identity.
Knowing that there's more out there to learn
The way I view things has changed.
There is a huge connection between identity and experiences
because of the knowledge that you gain.
The knowledge that people gain in the way that they see things
can be brought back into how you want to be seen
The person that you want to be.

Positioning herself with her small-town upbringing, Alexa identified that her experiences with culture and travel were limited. She described how travelling through Canada and meeting people from diverse backgrounds impacted her.

Diversity Awareness

When you are trying to talk about a taboo topic or
a topic that you don't have enough information to contribute
it can be an uncomfortable situation.

We'll talk about First Nations and how their situation came to be.
How that allowed us to establish our communities and our society as it is now.
For a lot of people that might be an uncomfortable situation.

Peace Bus is a lot about getting to know people from different backgrounds.
Our own Peace Bus was highly diverse, and we also met diverse
community members as we travelled and volunteered coast-to-coast.

Like East Vancouver, the Diversity Day in PEI,
Africville, helping at the Friendship Inn up in Saskatoon.
Realizing and seeing the different situations that people are in
in different times, different ages, different situations, different cities.
Having a grasp in understanding that these diverse situations occur.
Such as how people can have a drug problem, housing trouble
or struggles with racism. Or how people are faced
with their own difficulties at home.

We get to see it on Peace Bus.
We got to see a lot more of the world in general
how people band together to help each other out.

It starts with the recognition.
When you have that awareness, you are more conscious of it and
what your actions are doing for or not for these people.

When you come across one of these uncomfortable situations
you now have seen that there's a problem and
now be a little less awkward about it.

Have more knowledge to navigate that conversation.
Have more empathy for people in diverse populations and
Have a new perspective and compassionate response.

Alexa continues to learn and draw from her experiences while navigating through life. As she accesses her memory bank, sometimes she realized how her perception of her experiences changed over time. When she reflected about her experiences in the interview, she explained how she did not recall there being much conflict because any conflict that occurred in the program was no longer an issue as emotions settled and she gained more positive perspectives of the events. Furthermore, she believed that actively processing her Peace Bus experiences in our interview after the passage of time helped her solidify what she has learned throughout the program. How Alexa is processing her Peace Bus experiences is on-going and changes over time with reflection.

Experiential Learning

I talk about Peace Bus a lot.
Bits and pieces of what we did throughout the program
come up in random conversation.
The things we did
so diverse, they will connect to
what I'm doing or trying to explain.
Museums, volunteer experiences
weeding invasive broom species.
Learning in New Brunswick at that solar farm
Falls Brook Centre where they had composting toilets.
We painted the walls and cleared out the barn.
The people that we met.
Relationships within the group.
First impressions becoming immediate best friends.
Close contact.
Cooking and chores.
Take examples, draw from Peace Bus.
Sit down and talk it out.
Removed from moments of frustration.
Moments that could have gone badly
But ended up being good.
I often pull on historical things about Canada or
how Eastern Canada had their milk in bags
Differences that are part of Canada
make Canada what it is.
Africville, one experience I've drawn on
The black community that had troubles with
people forcing them out.
History classes and my Indigenous course, Outdoor Ed.
Education. Pedagogies and personal beliefs.
Learning by doing.
Being outdoors, being active.
Textile to text. Debriefs.
Bringing up those experiences
things that I've learned on the Peace Bus
Numerous.
Constantly talking about it,
connecting real life situations
helped me contribute to conversations
apply to situations
helped me reflect.
In conversation someone will ask,

What is that? What did you do? What is its purpose?
Questions help me reflect
reflect on the experiences that I've had.
how they have helped me
Recognize what I have learned
make connections to something new
noticing how the program has influenced me.
Leadership, taking initiative, speaking in public.
What I am able to do today
How I think and relate to things.
The Peace Bus program has helped me be who I am today.

Anthony's Narrative

How Was Your Summer?

When you ask me where I was
in the summer of twenty-fifteen.
I just remember a feeling.

I remember having fun with everyone.
Everyone was kind.
I remember struggling in English.
Almost the whole time you helped me.
I remember we did a lot of activities.
Every day was different.

I remember the summer went
fast. It was really fun.
I remember a bond
like friendship.
I remember a feeling
of twenty-fifteen.

Like when you remember something
remember something in your past
you get the feeling that goes with it.
I just have a good feeling
of that summer.
I don't know how to say it.

More than specific events
I can remember the
whole spirit of it.

Anthony identifies as a white male from a rural small town in Quebec. He was born in Strasbourg, France and moved to Quebec when he was young. Anthony's Peace Bus experiences were highly influenced by the demographics of the group as he was the only Francophone in his Peace Bus delegation. This was particularly challenging for him because he started the program as a beginner English language speaker and had difficulty participating in discussions. His

French identity was brought to the forefront as he could not hide from the language barrier that was non-existent when he was at home in his Quebec province.

That Damn English

As the only French-Canadian with
14 predominantly English speakers
I was forced to speak a language
I didn't understand well.
The whole trip, a lot of
times you guys were
philosophical.
(uses translator)
Yeah,
philosophical.
Except
for
expressing simple ideas
I couldn't participate with
my thoughts.
In French, with friends and family,
I love philosophical talks.
During the Peace Bus, I couldn't be part of it
because of my English.
English made it hard to express my ideas.
The whole trip was like that.

The difficulty that Anthony had in expressing his ideas due to a language barrier is embodied in the next poem in multiple ways. First, the French words he shared in *Wait What* transpired in a moment where he could not describe his thoughts in English. Furthermore, the poem was crafted to evoke similar feelings that would arise when one is struggling with a language barrier, such as bewilderment followed by clarity.

Wait What?

Bon
j'imagine que si ma personnalité n'avait pas été la même
l'expérience du groupe n'aurait pas été la même non plus
mais en même temps
les autres ont changé ma personnalité.

the others have changed my personality.
but, at the same time
the group's experience also would have not been the same
I imagine that if my personality was not the same
Well

He explained how his use of the word, “personality”, is a substitute for his understanding of the word, “identity”. While the language barrier Anthony experienced was unique to him within the group, he also experienced the similar challenges as the other youth. Being away from family and amongst strangers in an unusual environment is an aspect of the adventure wellness program structure that all the youths experienced.

Adventure Camping

The whole
camping part of
Peace Bus was memorable.
I was not used to
camping that often. I used to
camp a lot when I was a kid, but
never more than
four or three days in a row
always with my family, not with people
I just met.
Each day we camped
was like
sharing a room with your roommates
though, I have never done that. There were two
tents. I remember
sleeping in the big tent with everyone else
five girls, two leaders and maybe two other boys.
They are not your family.
We used to have the boys sleep in the smaller one
girls in the big one
leaders in the third one, but
we broke one.
One came after we met the other Peace Bus.
Something like that.
The point is, there was a lot of
sharing space in a small area. I was shy.

Because I was with some
people else than
my family.

The uncomfortable environment that Anthony described is essential to adventure wellness programming because it helps to elicit change. For example, although he struggled to effectively communicate with others, Anthony expressed how he gained a lot of practice speaking English for 40 days with English speakers. His proficiency in English improved substantially where he now uses English in his work as a ski instructor and find that his ability to speak English has developed many opportunities for him to connect and build relationships with English speakers from across the world. Despite the initial struggles, Anthony ultimately developed fond memories of the program.

How Anthony is processing his Peace Bus experiences changed as he engaged in the interview. He discussed how the interview brought back a lot of memories and made him think about himself and how Peace Bus changed his life. One example he provided was how travelling and meeting people throughout Canada changed his view of his national identity. As being the only Francophone on the bus impacted his experiences, Anthony wondered how having another Francophone in his group would have changed it. He suggested that if there was another Quebecoise person in his program, it would have changed the group dynamics and his thoughts may not have been as enmeshed with his Quebec identity.

The Québec Question

Peace Bus
changed my identity.
Before that
by taking history classes and all
I thought of myself as being Canadian.
I wasn't for Quebec and Canada independence.
But while I did Peace Bus
I met so many people outside of Quebec, still in Canada.

It really changed me
hard. I thought after the trip and now when I think about it
I think Quebec should not be part of Canada.
People here in Quebec, they are not the same as people in Canada.
I don't want to generalize. I know I have not met everyone in Canada, but
they don't think the same way.
they don't speak the same language.
they don't have the same cultures.
Yeah, it changed my views. After the trip I was more here
more Quebecoise.
I read a book about someone famous in Quebec.
A person in her youth. She did a tour of Canada.
She said, "After visiting Canada,
You cannot be for independence; you cannot be for Quebec leaving Canada."
But she is wrong. I am not saying she shouldn't think it.
I am saying I don't agree with her
Because I visited Canada and I am for independence.
I think that Canada should let Quebec separate.
Especially in valeurs.
Values.

Along with his grown appreciation for his Quebecoise identity, Anthony described another way that his Peace Bus experiences impacted his self-concept. He explained how despite having challenges communicating in English, he felt comfortable to be dynamic and expressive during his Peace Bus program because when he tried to communicate, he was not silenced. Although he described the psychological changes he experienced as innate adaptations of the self, he makes connections to how his environment influenced these changes. Without the constraints of people obstructing his speech, ultimately, he felt liberated and began to experience life differently where he feels more joy. Since the program, he has found other environments where he feels safe to have fun with others.

Twin Personality

The trip made me change.
Because I used to talk a lot.
It changed my personality.
After the trip, I was really *listening* to other people

what they were feeling
what they were thinking
what they wanted to do.
It made me more mature.

Honestly, before Peace Bus
I feared talking to people who were not close to me.
The trip changed my personality.
I know when I meet someone new
my whole presence is partly because of Peace Bus.
Being able to have fun
being expressive and dynamic with strangers and friends
you guys made it possible by not telling me to shut up.

Now, when I give ski classes in English or in French
every student I have loves me. They say I am so nice.
Mostly when I give classes I feel like I am doing the Peace Bus again.
I have fun with them. I make pranks.
And only a day of skiing with students
often a bond is occurring.
I don't know if it is made possible by the Peace Bus
but I think it is.

I don't want to say it's my second personality,
but it is something like that.
Like when I am with my friends or in my school or in anything
I am more... more...
I am not the same.
I don't know. My boundaries are kind of...
My inhibitions are...
They are not the same.

The personality I am explaining isn't just with the ski class
sometimes it happens with friends too.
When I am tired with friends, it occurs again.
It's the way I am
the way I speak
the way my feelings are
the way my thoughts are.
It really is more of my personality.

I don't want to say I have two personalities
but it might be.
Because sometimes when I ski

I am back on the peace bus
being expressive having fun.
I get a feeling.
I feel freer maybe.
Like I am happy.

These stories that evolved in our discussion illustrate how Anthony continues to apply what he learned from these experiences in his life and how understanding his Peace Bus experiences has been an ongoing process.

Findings Summary

These poems evocatively exemplifies the various ways and moments that youth are processing their Peace Bus experiences. The stories take their own life in the third space where my interview questions force the youths to draw connections from the past to the present, recalling details from their adventure wellness experiences and formulating ideas and concepts. As the youths reflected on these experiences, they not only described how participating in the program impacted them, but they also explained how engaging in the inquisitive discussion with me affected them. They were processing their experiences in real time with me and formulating new ideas about their experiences and themselves. This suggests that how youth are processing their Peace Bus experiences is fluid and on-going where reflection practices and the passage of time can enhance the learning and self-growth cultivated from these experiences. Additionally, the uniqueness of the narratives also suggest how personal qualities, such as social location and social positionings shape one's experiences and reflections. Thus, how youths are processing their adventure wellness experience are unique to everyone and forever changing.

Chapter Five: Discussion and Reflections

This chapter provides an overview of my study's findings where I sought to answer the overarching research question, "How are youth processing their Peace Bus experiences two-and-a-half-years after program completion?" I supplement my findings with a more detailed response to the research questions integrating my findings from my thematic analysis and drawing connections with literature. This is where I answer my three sub-questions: (1) "What program components do the participants reflect on?"; (2) "How do participants conceptualize their experiences?"; and (3) "What factors contribute to their reflection processes?" I expand on my findings in the discussion section and then I conclude with implications for social work and reflections.

Overview of Findings

In this study, I addressed the gaps in literature where little is understood about post-program reflection processes and the mechanisms that transform adventure wellness experiences where it becomes educational retrospectively. I identified through my findings that Peace Bus program participants are continually reliving and processing their experiences through their social positionings and reflection practices in every day occurrences. Subsequently, by making links from their past adventure wellness experiences to the present and other periods of time, they formulate new perceptions, feelings and concepts about their experiences. These new perspectives about their experiences simultaneously enhances or transforms their self-concept, competencies and psychosocial integration.

The different ways that youth are processing their Peace Bus experiences are represented by the powerful stories of five youth who completed a Peace Bus program two and a half years

before I interviewed them for this study. As they were prompted to reflect on their experiences from my interview intervention, they shared stories that were filled with emotion and meaning. I tried to capture these experiences through poetic representation as poetry can elicit emotion (Sjollema & Yuen, 2017) and convey meaning in ways that are otherwise inexplicable (Faulkner, 2017, p.209). The meaning that I derive from their experiences are my own interpretations, but additional or alternative meanings may be derived by others. It is important to note that the youths' narratives and poetry have already undergone layers of my interpretation as the interview, poetic representation and analytical processes are influenced by me. Ultimately, I believe that these stories suggest that processing one's adventure wellness experiences is a personal endeavour that is impacted by one's fluid social positionings and can lead to ongoing learning accessed through reflection and the passage of time.

Response to Research Questions

My responses to my research question are supplemented with my findings from my thematic analysis. I conducted a thematic analysis to enhance my understanding of the ways that the youths are processing their Peace Bus experiences, as examining patterns can help to lead to further evaluation and theory development. The themes were generated using the participant's answers to the thirteen questions I asked using the interview guide (see Appendix C for the Interview Guide). Since one of the four youths only answered questions one and eleven of the interview guide in her one-hour interview, she did not provide answers to some of the questions. She was not asked the other questions because her interview took its own course and was rich with content. Narrative inquiry is about storytelling and creating space for people to share their

experiences, thus, I embraced this participant's free-flowing style and did not feel it was necessary to enforce the interview questions.

As I sought to understand how youth are processing their Peace Bus program experiences two-and-a-half years after program completion, I answered each sub-question by identifying essential program components, conceptualization of program experiences and reflection mechanisms. I present a different collection of themes and a brief overview of each theme for each sub-question. More information about the themes are outlined in the following tables: Adventure Wellness Program Components (see Table 1), Conceptualizations of Adventure Wellness Program Experiences (see Table 2), and Reflection Mechanisms (see Table 3). The poetic stories illustrate how the themes are interconnected and create multifarious meanings from a single moment of time. Collectively, my responses to the sub-questions help to answer my overall research question. In response to my inquiry, I suggest that the process in which youth understand their adventure wellness experiences is fluid and unique where opportunities for ongoing learning and self-growth is created through one's social positionings, reflection and the passage of time.

What program components do the participants reflect on?

Program components are fundamental features that comprise an adventure wellness program. Essential program components were established by what the youths remembered about their program and what they described were the most significant aspects. Five key themes were established as essential program components: adventure wellness program structure, educational and wellness curricula, group setting, program practitioners and facilitators, and environment.

Adventure Wellness Program Structure

Adventure wellness program structure refers to a program design that introduces participants to unfamiliar experiences to elicit changes in the self. Program structure is important because the design and rules of the program influences how the people participating within the program operate. Like other adventure wellness programs (Hopkins & Putnam, 1997; Itin & Mitten, 2009; Priest & Gass, 2005), Peace Bus operates from an experiential learning structure, where participants learn through practical experiences. The youths in my study described how they acquired knowledge, skill development and personal growth from their Peace Bus experiences, which replicates how Asfeldt and Hvenegaard's (2014) participants found significance in their program's experiential approach. The findings from my study expand on the significance of the experiential approach and identified how the adventure wellness program structure creates a productive power that encouraged their learning process.

All the youths described how there was a structural force that compelled them to conduct themselves in different ways than they were used to. This force can be considered as a productive power, whereby Foucault (1982) explained, "The exercise of power consists in guiding the possibility of conduct and putting in order the possible outcome" (p. 789). The youths described how the program structure evoked a sense of adventure for them, whereby they were exposed to new experiences and perceived risks that cognitively, ethically, emotionally, socially and physically challenged them. Adventure is key within this program structure because it produces productive power whereby the youths felt compelled by a systemic force to overcome the challenges before them.

The youths spoke about adventure all throughout their timelines. They described many examples of how the program structure caused feelings of uneasiness and vulnerability due to the

Essential Program Components		
Themes	Description	Sub-themes
Adventure Wellness Program Structure	A program design that introduces participants to unfamiliar experiences to elicit productive power and encourage changes in the self.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Program structure (Being away from home, group living, travelling) ● Experiential learning approach (hands-on, engaging different learning styles, carrying out activities along with discussion) ● New experiences (Exposed to perceived risks, conflict, discovery) ● Productive Power (feeling stuck, challenged, or a compelling force)
Environment	The external conditions of the program, such as places, nature, geographical location, and social systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nature (admiring the sky, learning about invasive species in the wild) ● Places (specific locations) ● Geographical location (landmarks)
Group Setting/ Living	The relational environment created amongst people and is influenced by the people, the diversity within the group and the structure that binds them together.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demographics and diversity of the group (social locations, number of people, group of strangers, differences in social positionings) ● Social structures (cultural, political and economic systems/institutions. ● Group dynamics (tensions, friendship) ● A safe and supportive relational environment (peer and leader support) ● Being in close proximity to others (sharing personal space)
<i>Program Practitioners</i>	The adventure wellness practitioners who provide psychological and emotional support, impart their unique skills and knowledge, establish the program rules and structure, and facilitate the program curricula	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement program rules and structure to establish a safe and constructive environment ● Provide psychological and emotional support and educational mentoring ● Diversity in leadership style ● Impart skill and knowledge to participants ● Deliver educational and wellness curricula ● Influences group dynamics

Educational and Wellness Curricula	The adventure wellness program programming and interventions oriented towards developing cognitive, ethical, emotional, social and physical competencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Educational and wellness activities (camping, volunteering initiatives, educational simulations, museums, exploring, peer facilitation, communities, and homestay visits) ● Reflection activities (debriefing activities, group discussions, gaining the perspectives of others)
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Table 1: Essential Program Components

design of having to live closely amongst strangers and being exposed to new risks. This disruption to the participants’ equilibrium is a therapeutic strategy that Walsh and Golins (1976) called “disequilibrium” and Deane and Harré’s (2014) identified in their experiential learning cycle as “psychological disequilibrium”. Itin and Mitten (2009) posed that although there is not an agreement in how elements of disequilibrium are defined, they acknowledge that there is a purpose to this adventure component. In the youths’ narratives, they described how these moments of discomfort presented them with opportunities to grow, as these feelings of discomfort were eventually replaced with feelings of exuberance in moments of exploration and discovery. Deane and Harré (2013) presented the importance of the practitioners need to be attuned to each participant’s physical and emotional limits so they can find a balance between challenge that enhances adaptation skills and safety.

Group Setting and Living

Group setting refers to the relational environment created amongst people and is influenced by the people, the diversity within the group and the structure that brings them together. I expand on Asfeldt and Hvenegaard (2014)’s work as I identified how group living is a critical program component due to the diversity that the participants bring to the group, the

close space they share with other members, and having to work through relational tensions. The demographics and diversity of the group is essential to the group setting because people reinforce social structures. Social structures include cultural, political and economic systems, and exist in adventure wellness program through the social positionings of the participants. One example was how the demographics of the participants created a predominantly anglophone environment.

Another importance of group setting is regarding all the youths expressing how being in close proximity to fifteen strangers for a full forty days impacted them. They were affected by this setting as it generated a relational dynamic that was at first uncomfortable but developed into an intense level of intimacy. Constrained within the adventure wellness program structure, they described how they were compelled to work through relational tensions, such as uncomfortable first impressions, communication barriers, and differences in personal values. As they worked through these tensions, the youths ultimately identified how peer and leader support was an integral component to their growth and development. All the youths described how the group setting contributed to an increased understanding of themselves and others, and an improved psychosocial integration.

Program Practitioners

Program practitioners refers to the adventure wellness program facilitators who provide psychological and emotional support, impart their unique skills and knowledge, establish the program rules and structure, and facilitate the program curricula. Practitioners may also be called a leader or facilitator as they are the individuals who conduct the program by leading the group and facilitating educational and wellness curricula. Many social workers and other mental health practitioners work in this role because adventure wellness provides a holistic framework

for them to assist individuals in developing their skills and ability and promoting their wellness. Additionally, they are often able to work with individuals in a natural setting, possibly removing them or minimizing them from social pressures and social structures that are oppressive at home.

Alex discussed the significance that the program practitioners' roles had on the group. He acknowledged how his program leaders, Elizabeth and I, had individualist differences in abilities and leadership styles, each positively contributing to his program experience in different ways. He explained how we contributed to the positive group dynamics as we were able to model a supportive and cohesive relationship. Furthermore, he explained how as leaders, we held an integral level of responsibility and authority within the group where our role was to implement program rules and structure to establish a safe and constructive environment. More prevalently, the participants identified how my role as a program practitioner was key to their experience and development where they explained how I provided psychological and emotional support and imparted my skills and knowledge to them.

Educational and Wellness Curricula

Educational and wellness curricula refers to the adventure wellness program programming and interventions oriented towards developing cognitive, ethical, emotional, social, physical and spiritual competencies. The youths recounted stories about volunteering, camping, museum visits, exploring communities, debriefs and an educational simulation. Along with all these activities that we facilitated and participated in, we would make time to engage in reflection practices, where we would discuss what we did and our thoughts, feelings and unanswered questions. Activity debriefs provided a great opportunity to stop and think about the activities, offering opportunities to enhance our learning. In a group of fifteen individuals,

debriefing discussions was incredibly enriching as we were able to hear each other's perceptions, which helped to expand our own learning and connect with other participants. Program activities provided the youths with new experiences, perspectives and opportunities to develop their competencies.

Environment

Environment describes the setting or external conditions of the program, such as places, geographical location and nature. Additionally, nature refers to the natural conditions within one's environment, such as landscapes, bodies of water, vegetation and phenomena that occur in the atmosphere. Environment plays a role in program components because adventure wellness programs introduce its participants to new settings and conditions providing an opportunity for them to understand themselves from different perspectives. All the youths discussed how they grew a greater understanding of themselves as they were able to locate themselves within different and larger contexts. Furthermore, the youths reflected about times they admired their natural environment and the positive and calming emotions it brought upon them. Russell and Farnum (2004) described the natural world as a therapeutic factor that can produce restorative and psychological benefits on its own by providing an essence of fascination while removing the participants from their everyday stressors, such as interpersonal struggles. Additionally, Reese and Myers (2012) coined the term EcoWellness to describe how the immersion into nature can increase human-nature connection and improve holistic wellness, arguing the need for nature within counselling processes.

Summary of Essential Program Components

To understand the youths' program experiences, one must be familiar with the operations of the program. These five themes are the key program features that comprised the Peace Bus program. Together, these program components become the matrix of adventure wellness experiences, where adventure is at its core. All the youths' stories about their program experiences include one or a combination of these program components where they overlap to create unique adventure wellness experiences.

How do participants conceptualize their experiences?

How the youths conceptualize their experiences was determined by their interpretations of their program experiences and the concepts they formulize from them. I categorized their adventure wellness program experience conceptualizations into five themes: self-concept, competencies, psychosocial integration, emotional and spiritual fulfillment, and transference of learning. As experiential learning theory suggests, people test their conceptualizations to reaffirm and disprove them. Thus, although the youths may have described how their program experiences may be the catalysts for shaping these conceptualizations, other experiences in their lives has also contributed to these beliefs.

Self-Concept

Self-concept refers to the constructed beliefs that a person holds about oneself. The youths described how the program helped them to develop and strengthen their identity and how they understood themselves in different social and political contexts. In some cases, they spoke of themselves as a transformed self, perceiving changes in themselves from who they were

before and after they participated in the program. Anthony exhibited this when he described how being in a social environment where people did not discourage him from speaking in the

Conceptualizations		
Themes	Description	Sub-themes
Emotional and Spiritual Fulfillment	The experience of feeling strong positive emotions and sensations that uplifts, empowers and provides purpose to an individual.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Positive emotions (joy, fun, excitement) ● Spirit (inner body sensation, hope, optimism) ● Achievement and empowerment ● Enhanced goals and positioning in life
Self-Concept	The constructed beliefs that a person holds about oneself	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identity (culture, geographical upbringing, interests) ● Attitudes about the self (personal autonomy, inner strength, confidence)
Psychosocial integration	The process in which a person achieves a desirable level of incorporation within one's social structure that satisfies one's individual needs for safety, belongingness and autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Relationship development from strangers to family ● Impression of others ● Social cohesion (bonding, relationship described as family) ● Sense of belonging ● Community ● Mutual learning
Competencies	The knowledge and skills that can be developed and applied to effectively engage and perform in a situation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Skills (resilience, leadership, coping, listening, patience communication, and language) ● Knowledge (life lessons, household work, diversity awareness and understanding group dynamics)
Transference of Learning	Applying self and competencies gain from the program in their everyday lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Use of new self ● Use of new knowledge ● Use of new skills

Table 2: Conceptualizations of Adventure Wellness Program Experiences

program (aside from the language barrier) led him to discover a different aspect of himself, one that was dynamic and playful. Others also learned more about themselves within the context of the group setting, learning about their behavioural patterns, interests, vulnerabilities and social location. Additionally, three of the youths explained how their nationalism was transformed as

they travelled through the nation and learned about Canadian culture. Furthermore, the youths expressed how their experiences impacted their attitudes about themselves where they felt more confident, hopeful, autonomous and empowered. These findings are like other reports about how their adventure wellness program helped to enhance participants self-concept (Deane & Harré's, 2014; Draper et al., 2011; Hattie et al., 1997). Draper, Lund & Flisher (2011) also proposed that self-awareness is a key characteristic of the development of leadership.

Competencies

Competencies refers to the skills, knowledge and attitude that can be developed and applied to effectively engage and perform in a situation. Other research has drawn attention to skills and competencies as a program outcome, describing how their participants developed an increase in leadership and interpersonal skills (Hattie et al., 1997), as well as confidence to express opinions and conflict resolution (Whittington & Mack, 2010). The youths recounted a vast variety of competencies they learned from this study, some that were targeted through programming and interventions, and others that appear to be the product of adventure wellness program components. I will speak more to the latter for generalizability.

From the group setting, the youths described how they learned about group dynamics and developed skills, such as leadership, communication, empathy for others, resiliency, emotional regulation, coping with differences, teamwork and active listening. They also gained diversity awareness as they learned about people within their group, engaged in programming and interventions, and immersed in new environments. The youths also learned new concepts naturally, such as through their interactions with other participants. Alex described how he learned about teamwork from the program leaders, endurance and routine from another

participant's workout regime, patience from exemplars within the group and the value of opposing views from debates with a colleague. Zach expressed how he learned many life lessons where it was impossible to describe them all because of how knowledge can become ingrained into one's subconsciousness. He explained that this knowledge becomes known when it is awakened into consciousness by an external stimulus.

Psychosocial Integration

Psychosocial integration is the process in which a person achieves a desirable level of incorporation within one's social structure that satisfies one's individual needs for safety, belongingness and autonomy. Alexander (2008) defined psychosocial integration as the "interdependence between individual and society" that "reconciles people's vital needs for social belonging with their equally vital needs for individual autonomy and achievement" (Alexander, 2008, p. 58).

All the participants expressed how their experience being within the group setting was a distinctive experience because they were a group of diverse strangers who were living and working together for a long period of time. The youths described the different stages of group dynamics they experienced through the program from first impressions to social tension to growing a sense of understanding of one another and intimate bonding. Nathalie described how the main thing she remembered about her program experience was the sense of community that was developed amongst the group and established that community was developed by sharing one's sense of self with the group. She along with the other youth described how the relationships they developed in the program were more intimate than relationships in their everyday life, describing the connection to be like a cohesive bond between family. After

spending a significant time in close proximity of one another, ultimately, the youths developed an understanding of the group's collective purpose learning how to maintain order, while establishing a secure sense of self and belonging through social cohesion.

Emotional and Spiritual Fulfillment

Emotional and spiritual fulfillment refers to the experience of feeling strong positive emotions and sensations that uplifts, empowers and provides purpose to an individual. When the youths shared their stories, they recounted the emotions they felt intertwined with the experiences. The initial comments about the program included descriptions of strong positive feelings, friendship, a sense of community that was developed in the program, and the challenges of the program. Throughout their interviews, they described how the program cultivated an empowering and uplifting spirit that continued to live within them after the program. All the youths discussed their experiences generated opportunities for them to connect with others as they shared their program stories and what they learned. Emotional and spiritual fulfillment was also reiterated when the youths repeatedly described how their experiences were unique and brought significance and purpose to their lives.

When I listened to the youths' stories and immersed myself in the data, emotional and spiritual fulfillment was a theme that emotionally and spiritually resonated with me. This emotional and spiritual conceptualization to adventure wellness experiences illustrates how this practice can contribute to increasing participants' wellness even in developmental programs that mainly target skills and knowledge growth. Ingman (2017) quoted an individual named Simon who claimed how adventure experiences are memorable and meaningful, contributing to the purpose of life, and emotional and spiritual fulfillment speaks to this idea

Transference of Learning

Transference of learning occurs when a participant uses the knowledge, skills and attitudes that they gained from the program and apply it to their everyday lives. All the youths told stories about how they transferred their learning from the program to navigate different situations in their lives. They also perceived how they were presented with new opportunities and abilities through this transference. Alexa described ways that she applied the knowledge she gained from her program experience, such as how she used her increased understanding about group dynamics to navigate relationships and shared responsibilities with her roommate. Similarly, the other youths explained how they have applied skills they learned in the program like language, leadership, listening, camping, travelling, coping and problem solving. Furthermore, the youths applied their transformed self-concept, such as their new interests, confidence, autonomy and behaviours. Their stories about their transference of learning illustrated how their experiences were sources of on-going empowerment or enlightenment.

Summary of Conceptualizations

When the youths shared their stories, these five conceptualizations of their experiences were blended together to shape their understanding of their program experiences. Leaving the comfort of their natural world at home, the youths were challenged by the program to integrate into a new environment and group setting, and to participate in activities that tested their cognitive, ethical, emotional, social and physical competencies. This environment generated a unique force that compelled them to integrate by applying themselves and their knowledge and abilities. Enduring this adventurous challenge is rewarding and creates emotional and spiritual

fulfillment because the tasks are outside of one's norm. These new experiences add elements of risk, excitement and discovery, building one's ability to overcome adversity within different contexts and amplifying one's achievements. Consequently, the participants are able to gain and develop an understanding of themselves within different situations and environments. They also continued to apply what they learned in the program in their everyday lives. Reflecting about their experiences two and a half years later in a focused interview setting, helped to solidify their learning and generate new profound awareness about their experiences and themselves.

What factors contribute to their reflection processes?

With the last sub-question, I sought to gain understanding of the factors that contributed to the youths' reflection processes with their Peace Bus experience. I was curious to learn about reflection processes because experiential learning theory suggests that reflection following an experience is critical to one's learning as it generates opportunities for learners to conceptualize their experience (Kolb, 1984). I gathered my data by identifying the factors and mechanisms that preceded or informed the youths' reflections, ideas or thoughts. I identified five factors that contributed to their reflection processes and categorized it as reflection mechanisms: triggers, individual characteristics, reflection practices, experiences and time.

Triggers

Triggers refers to a stimulus that activates a memory. The youths recalled several triggers including, physical objects, places, sounds, experiences and sensations. They explained how these triggers activated flashbacks filled with sensation, imagery and relived experiences.

Some acknowledged that they would continue into deep self-thought after being triggered with a memory.

Social Positioning

Social positioning is another factor that contributed to reflection processes, as attitudes, epistemologies and the way one positions oneself and others within conversations inform the ideas and concepts produced from experiences. This is an important factor that can generate new understandings about people's experiences from a more critical social lens. As I acknowledged in my researcher positionality statement, I could only attest to my own experiences that were generated from the social positionings that I am assigned to by society and the social stratifications that I identify with. Therefore, I could express my experience as a racialized female, for example, but could not speak to the experiences of a white identified male. This section brings attention to how five people with various intersecting identities have experienced their Peace Bus experiential processes.

How the youths positioned themselves were sometimes self-identified. Other times, I became aware of social positionings by how the youths dynamically positioned themselves and others when delivering their narratives and messages. This was most prevalent when the youths described their positionalities from the perspective of a minority within social structures in their environment. For example, Alexa's perspective of her geographical social positioning changed when she positioned herself within the context of the other youths' geographical location. She began to strongly identify herself with her rural location as she compared her town to the large cities that we visited. Contrastingly, when the youths did not discuss their positionality from a social minority perspective, they described how they learned about others acknowledging the

diversity within the group and their environment. Social positioning is demonstrated by how each of the youths' narrative is unique and reflects personal attributes of their positionalities.

Reflection Practices

Reflection practices include any activities that help one process their experiences. My study upholds the belief that reflection practices contribute to the increased learning experienced by program participants (Draper, et. al., 2011). Alexa attributed her detailed memories of her experiences to her journaling practice. She explained how writing about her experiences in the moment helped her to process them and capture her memories. She also acknowledged how Peace Bus's experiential learning practices increased her thought process. She explained how experiential learning engages multiple senses which exponentially increased her memory of her events compared to other learning experiences, such as lectures or other CISV programs she has participated in.

Another reflection practice that all the youths described is the use of discussion where they shared their experiences with others. Three of the youths mentioned how during the program, I helped to increase their learning in the moment when I explained concepts to them and when I conducted activity debriefs where they gained the perspectives of others through our group discussions. Zack recalled how it was helpful when I conducted closing activities because it gave him an opportunity to reflect about his program journey at the end of the program. The youths described how conversations acted as mechanisms triggering memories of their Peace Bus experiences which helped them make connections to the present and the topic being discussed. Miguel explained how academic and employment interviews forced him to cypher through his memories to find answers to questions, providing him the opportunity to apply his

Peace Bus experiences. Similarly, the youths expressed how our in-depth interviews helped to solidify their beliefs and learning, while gaining new knowledge and understanding. As such, my interviews became a form of intervention by providing an opportunity to reflect and induce thoughts through a focused discussion leading to increased learning.

Experiences

Experiences is the fourth factor that influenced the youths' understanding of their experiences. This theme aligns the belief that knowledge acquisition is an adaptive learning process that integrates experience (Kolb, 1984; McCarthy, 2016). My findings reflect how negative experiences sometimes hinder thought. To respect anonymity as requested by two youths who consented to sharing the information with the removal of identifying markers, these experiences were not reflected in the youths' narratives. One example provided was how one of the youths described how they purposely did not want to think about their Peace Bus experiences because it made them think of a dissolved relationship causing them discomfort. Another youth explained how they were frequently told to not talk about their Peace Bus experiences because they talked about it so often. As the youth explained how discussion helps to provoke thought, the inability to carry out the conversation may have hindered their thought process. Furthermore, as time passes, the participants will also continue to gain new experiences where they can reflect to their past adventure wellness experiences to integrate new knowledge and synthesize their understanding. Miguel explained how after the program, he talked to another youth frequently and learned her perspectives of the program. Incorporating her perspectives into his reflections provided him with a different understanding of his experiences.

Reflection Mechanisms		
Themes	Description	Sub-themes
Triggers	A stimulus that triggers a memory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Physical objects (photos, souvenirs, food) ● Sounds (Music, nickname) ● Experiences (activities, conversations) ● Sensations (feelings) ● Places
Social Positioning	The attitudes and beliefs that one holds and the way that one positions oneself and others within conversations inform the ideas and concepts produced from experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Positioning self and others in conversation ● Beliefs systems ● Values
Reflection Practices	Activities that help one process their experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discussions (activity debriefs, interviews, sharing experience) ● Experiential learning activities ● Writing and journaling
Experiences	An encounter or observation of an event or several events occurring over time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Negative experiences may hinder thought ● New experiences inform past experiences
Time	The passage of time evokes changes in the self as one makes connections between one's past, present and anticipated experiences.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Experiencing new experiences over time ● Changes in perception of self over time ● Changes in perception of experiences over time

Table 3: Reflection Mechanisms

Time

Time is the final factor as the passage of time can generate changes in the self as one makes connections between one's past, present and anticipated experiences. My findings support Dewey's (1938) belief about the continuity of experience where learning is influenced by the events that precedes it and what is learned will affect events that follow. Alexa explained how she interpreted experiences differently after time pass because strong feelings eventually settled. She acknowledged how issues that seemed big to her at the time, no longer seemed important, and instead with time, she viewed the experiences from a different perspective and

perceived them as beneficial occurrences. Moreover, with time, people grow and change, impacting how they understand the past. An example of this concept is how Nathalie described how her perception of her experiences changed as she grew to know herself with time. She also acknowledged how stories are continuous and are more than isolated events, explaining how experiences are also about what they bring to the moment, such as who they are before the event and their relationships with others. In their discussions, the youths positioned their adventure wellness experiences within their own personal timelines, making links with their program experiences to their lives before and after the program.

All the youths suggested that the passage of time allowed them to process their experiences outside of the program which helped to enhance their learning. My findings aligns with the findings from Asfeldt and Hvenegaard's (2014) study and provides a greater and more detailed understanding of these learning experiences. They suggested that the perceived learning that changed over time were an increase in self-awareness, group living, greater appreciation of the experience, and greater appreciation of nature and place (8.9%). Whereas, I discovered that the youths perceived learning in the areas of self-concept, competencies, psychosocial integration, emotional and spiritual fulfillment, and transference of learning. I also outlined subthemes and poetic stories to illustrate the meaning behind these concepts.

Summary of Reflection Mechanisms

My findings affirm that experiential learning theory, the concept of learning through experience and reflection (Kolb, 1984) is an essential component to adventure wellness experiences (Hopkins & Putnam, 1997; Itin & Mitten, 2009; Priest & Gass, 2005). Four of the youths identified their belief that memories are not fixed but are shaped by the individual,

aligning with experiential learning theory. Through this belief they acknowledged that multiple interpretations of a single event exist, and experiential change is possible. Furthermore, the youths discussed how reflection practices and mechanisms contributed to their reflection processes as it helped to enhance their learning during the program as well as long after the moment had passed when they recalled the experience. As time passed, the youths experienced new experiences and changes in themselves, where they reflected on their adventure wellness experiences, gaining new insight and appreciation for their past experiences. I add to the experiential learning theory and suggest that social positionings is a critical component to reflection processes. The youths' conceptualizations suggest that experiences are unique because individual social positionings affect how one experiences a moment and how they reflect on that moment later in time. In summary, the reflection process factors suggest that experiences are unique and continually changing, where active reflective practices can enhance one's experience.

Summary of Response to Research Questions

My research responds to the need for more adventure wellness program research that investigates theoretical processes (Hattie, et al., 1997) and the longitudinal perspectives and processes of how participants' experiences are experienced and understood (Takano, 2010). It addresses these research gaps by providing insight to how five youth are experiencing and processing their post-program Peace Bus experiences. My results align with literature that suggests reflection and storytelling are essential in the experiential learning process (Asfeldt & Hvenegaard, 2014; Draper, et. al, 2011; Kolb, 1984; Takano, 2010). Furthermore, it supports Asfeldt and Hvenegaard's (2014) study, which suggested that adventure program experiences can produce meaningful and continuous learning that is deepened with reflection and time.

There is a matrix of adventure wellness program components that contributed to the youths' program experiences. These memories were affected by reflection mechanisms which included triggers, social positioning, reflection practices, experiences and time. As they recounted their experiences, they drew connections from their past to the present and from their social positionings. Their conceptualizations of their experiences were rich with emotional and spiritual fulfillment and about their self-concept, psychosocial integration, competencies, and transference of learning. In some cases, their experiences were transformed where they developed a new understanding of their experiences. In summary, how youth are processing their adventure wellness experiences is a unique and fluid process, which can lead to on-going growth and development. The continuous learning and development that the youths experienced from their Peace Bus experiences were demonstrated by their powerful thought processes that transpired from my interview intervention with them. These strong reflective moments are captured in the poems that I presented in my findings.

Implications to the Adventure Wellness Field and Social Work Practice

My study provides several implications to the adventure wellness program field. The term, adventure wellness program, was developed by Itin and Mitten (2009) to link similar practice fields that uses adventure to elicit change in the program participants. The findings from my study suggest that there are more factors that contributed to participant changes than adventure alone, such as the environment, group setting, program practitioners, and educational and wellness curricula. I also identified essential conceptualizations regarding the type of changes the youths' experienced. As such, utilizing my findings, I suggest a more comprehensive definition of the adventure wellness practice below.

New Adventure Wellness Definition

Adventure wellness is a practice that uses a group setting, educational and wellness curricula, and the immersion in new environments to elicit unfamiliar experiences where one is challenged cognitively, ethically, emotionally, socially, culturally, physically and spiritually. Being away from home and in close proximity to others generates a unique ecosystem that promotes discovery about one self and others. These experiences are processed through individual social positionings and one's relationship to the environment and social structures, making a single event unique to everyone. Processing these experiences through reflection practices and time involves making links between new and old experiences which can lead to ongoing learning and development. These positive changes are observed through increased self-concept, competency and emotional and spiritual fulfillment, and a higher level of psychosocial integration. These changes in the self can then be applied to one's everyday interactions through the transference of learning. This definition of adventure wellness is comparable to definitions found within subsets, such as wilderness therapy (Bandoroff, 1989 in Russell & Farnum, 2004, p. 39-40). My understanding of adventure wellness can help in further develop current adventure wellness knowledge and practice models.

Enhancements to the Youth Adventure Programming (YAP) Model

While there are many overlaps with my findings and Deane and Harré's (2014) Youth Adventure Programming (YAP) Model (see Chapter 2 for a brief overview and Figure 2 for the YAP model), I address several new considerations. My program components are a variation of their three critical experiences and five moderating factors. The key revelations from my findings are with the psychosocial integration and emotional and spiritual fulfillment

contextualization. These concepts are comparative to Deane and Harré's (2014) potential participant outcome.

First, I identify psychosocial integration as an adventure wellness experience conceptualization, which expands on Deane and Harré's (2014) notion of "connection", which they described as a potential participant outcome. My understanding of psychosocial integration aligns closely with Fernee, Gabrielsen, Andersen and Mesel's (2017) conceptualization of the psychosocial self as a therapeutic factor. Fernee and colleagues adapted Russell and Farnum's (2004) wilderness therapy treatment milieu, developing the wilderness therapy clinical model, which they argue as a viable stand-alone group intervention for adolescents. They conceptualize three therapeutic factors, revising the social self to the psychosocial self. They suggest that the psychosocial self therapeutic factor better captures psychological components while integrating it with sociological paradigms, highlighting the relationship between an individual's internal cognitive structures and external sociocultural contexts. This adaptation to the original wilderness therapy treatment milieu aligns more with social work ideologies that consider how individuals are affected by social, cultural and political contexts and moves away from perceptions that individualizes broader social issues and that pathologizes the individual. My work reaffirms this shift towards from social devices within adventure wellness models towards psychosocial devices, as I argue for the need to consider how external socio structures may govern and influence the youths' social positionings.

Promoting psychosocial integration is also a valuable contribution of adventure wellness work within the social work field. Alexander (2008) described psychosocial integration as a necessity, calling the lack of psychosocial integration 'dislocation' and claiming how it can be emotionally and socially destructive. He explained that "severe, prolonged dislocation

eventually leads to unbearable despair, shame, emotional anguish, boredom and bewilderment...[and] regularly precipitates suicide and less direct forms of self-destruction” (p.59). This connection between dislocation and mental health is alarming as one in three Canadians are affected by a mental illness during their lifetime with 38% of Canadians experiencing symptoms of a mental illness or substance use disorder before the age of 15 (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2015). Alexander (2008) explained that issues of dislocation is exacerbated by modern globalized free-market society and argued for the need to promote psychosocial integration.

Social workers can use adventure wellness work as an intervention for dislocation issues as it generates opportunities for individuals to connect with others and develop a sense of belonging. Scarf, Moradi, McGaw, Hewitt, Hayhurst, Boyes, Ruffman and Hunter (2016) observed how an adventure education programme created a sense of group belonging in its participants which increased and maintained participants’ resilience for 9 months following the program. While there are variations between programs, several theoretical frameworks have been developed to inform how these programs can serve as viable interventions within the mental health care field (Deane & Harré, 2014; Fernee, et. al, 2017; Russell & Farnum, 2004; Walsh & Golins, 1976), including areas of addiction (Bettmann, Russell, & Parry, 2013). Such programming would be valuable in communities, such as Ontario, where mental health care visits rose 25%, and emergency department visits for mental health and addictions increased by 56% for children and youth between 2006 and 2014 (Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences, 2017).

Emotional and spiritual fulfillment is another area that my research offers considerations to current social work and adventure wellness literature. Although this theme was prevalent in

my research, the spiritual component to adventure wellness programs is often unaddressed in literature and is not identified in Deane and Harré's (2014) Youth Adventure Programming (YAP) Model (see Chapter 2 for a brief overview and Figure 2 for the YAP model). It may be comparative to Deane and Harré's (2014) "outlook and attitude changes", but their component does not critically examine the essential need or benefit of emotional and spiritual fulfillment whereby it provides one with a sense of purpose and fulfillment. Other academics have been more attentive to spiritual elements in adventure wellness research (Greffrath, Meyer, Strydom & Ellis, 2011; Stringer, & McAvoy, 1992). I argue that emotional and spiritual fulfillment needs to be considered in all adventure wellness work because it is a critical element that contributes to the holistic nature of the work and make it a viable social work practice.

Enhancing Adventure Wellness Experiences

Adventure wellness practitioners can utilize the understanding that program experiences can continue to add value to participant's lives years after the program ended. My interview served as an intervention as the youths were probed to reflect on their experiences to answer questions that may not have been asked in casual conversations with friends and families. Consequently, this generated an opportunity for them to solidify their learning and generate new conceptualizations. My research can suggest that practitioners may benefit from conducting interventions following a program to enhance learning and program impact. Future studies could conduct similar interventions to evaluate if they achieve similar results.

I hope that my work inspires other social workers to engage in post-program interventions and overcome challenges such as participant invitations and difficulty in connecting with participants from a distance. I provided a detail outline of my research process

and how I used technology to easily connect with participants who lived a great distance and in different time zones than me. Through my methods, I achieved incredible results reflected by the high number of responses from participant invites (six of 11 invitations) and the powerful responses from the participants.

Furthermore, considering the reflection mechanisms that I outlined within my study, I suggest the following practices to maximize learning and long-lasting impacts of adventure wellness experiences: stimulating reflection during the program by facilitating reflection practices, such as debriefing activities and journaling; encouraging the production of positive triggers by creating opportunities for their participants to produce and take home memoirs that are symbolic to their experience or growth and accomplishments, such as program apparel or memory book with photos and messages from group members; developing opportunities for the participants to reflect about their social positionings and how they impact their reflections; promoting post-program reflection by facilitating interviews or group reunions.

Finally, as my research provides some insight into the reflections that people have with their adventure wellness experiences, I hope that social work practitioners and educators have a renewed understanding of the considerable effects that can occur with this work. Social work is a profession that seeks to help individuals and communities develop their capacity to overcome adversity and live enriched lives. Adventure wellness is a paradigm that social workers can use in their practice to promote self-efficacy and mental wellness. The youths provided numerous powerful examples of how their program experiences helped them develop their self-concept, competencies, and psychosocial integration, and increase their emotional and spiritual fulfillment. Their stories greatly supplement current research in the field that suggest how adventure wellness offers a holistic approach to promoting wellness (Reese & Myers, 2012).

Limitations and Strengths

A possible limitation of this study is that the time frame between the participants' Peace Bus program completion and the interviews conducted for it, as it will be an approximate thirty-month gap. Although it allows time for the youths to process their program experiences, critics may question how the time length influences the participants responses. My argument to support this time length is that the youths discussed how the passage of time provided them with a new understanding of their experiences as they were able to integrate new experiences, information and contexts. I also noticed that when I reflected about my own adventure wellness experiences, my transformation of experiences occurred periodically over time, where I still find myself reflecting and conceptualizing my experiences after eight years. The notion that adventure wellness program can promote long-lasting impacts is supported by research (Hattie et al., 1997; Takano, 2010) as it is suggested to provide "a foundation for enhancing and deepening learning for many years after the expedition as a result of post-expedition reflection and the passage of time" (Asfeldt & Hvenegaard, 2014, p. 149).

Another possible limitation involves the research participant invitation process and the individuals who actively chose to accept the invitation or ignore it. It is possible that the responses may be influenced by their relationship to the organization, their relationship with me, or their program experiences. Some individuals may still have an affiliation with the program or its governing organization, CISV, whereby they may have additional factors that influence their decisions to participate in the study. Secondly, when deciding to participate, the respondents may also factor in their relationship with me, where previous participant-leader power dynamics existed. Lastly, the responses to the study invitation may be influenced differently by those who had an overall positive experience than by those who had negative experiences. With these

considerations, it is possible that the study included those who do not have concerns with the organization, who have a good rapport with me, and who have had positive experiences.

Similarly, the study may exclude individuals who have concerns about the organization, who have a negative rapport with me, and who had negative experiences.

There are limitations in my data generation. From my interviews, four of the youths answered all the questions in my interview guide and one youth only answered questions one and eleven. I purposely chose not to conduct a second interview with the youth who was not asked all thirteen questions in the interview guide as the youth's interview length was reflective of the others and I did not think it was necessary to engage in further probing. I did not think that conducting a second interview for this youth was necessary for several reasons. First, the overarching research question seeks to address how youth are processing their Peace Bus experiences, which the respondent directly spoke to. How one processed experience can be examined through various contexts so answering fewer probing questions would not take away from what was presented. The interview guide was developed to help generate conversation, but this youth did not need many prompts to talk about her experience. Secondly, I recognized that by embracing the youth's free-flowing communication style, we engaged in an unstructured interviewing style which "can provide a greater breadth of data than the other types, given its qualitative nature" (Fontana & Frey, p.652). Therefore, although this youth did not directly speak to some of the research questions that the others were asked, she was able to present valuable alternative representation. This representation was made available by not choosing to position my interview style more rigidly. Thirdly, as I analyzed each narrative as separate units, the findings presented in the other four narratives were likely not or minimally affected. Thus, I reasoned that trustworthiness was considered when I decided that a second interview was not

required to proceed with the research. Not having all research participants answer all the research questions outlined in the interview guide is a limitation of this study that can be addressed in future research.

In another interview, there was a language barrier between a participant and I, as the participant was a French dominant and intermediate English speaker and I am an English dominant, beginner-intermediate French speaker. This language barrier impacted this youth's answers as there were times when he required some clarification for some interview questions and tried his best to answer each accordingly. Future research can better address this language barrier to make the interview more accessible to people who speak a different language than the researcher by having an interpreter involved in the interview who could provide translations more accurately and smoothly. An interpreter can help to make the interview process more inclusive without having to change the interviewer, which would change the partial insider positionality of the researcher. Alternatively, the researcher could find a French speaker to conduct the interview and address this potential outsider researcher positionality.

Rather than making attempts to mask or shy from this barrier between us, we embraced this difference by leaning in and learning from it. When we started the interview, I attempted to converse in French with the encouragement of the youth. Not too long into the interview, we switched to converse in English for most of the interview as his English was much more advanced comparatively to my limited French skill-set. We used an online translating service that translates to assist in our conversation between English and French when we did not have the words in either language to communicate our thoughts to one another. When the youth spoke in English, I also encouraged him to use French, especially in moments that his English would not sufficiently translate his thoughts which presented diversity in the data that was generated in

our interview. Following the interview, when I met with him to present my research findings, I sought his help in translating his French dialogue which I then utilized to craft a poem. I used poetic representation to craft poems that acknowledged our use of translating devices and that reflected the language barrier we experienced as I integrated his French data. To some degree, we were able to turn this limitation into a unique strength in my research.

Despite these limitations, there are several shining strengths in this research. The first is how this study provided the participants with the opportunity to process and share their experiences and opinions which is an important component to the experiential learning process (Asfeldt & Hvenegaard, 2014; Kolb, 1984; Takano, 2010). My interview intervention provided a unique opportunity to have a focused and constructive conversation about their experiences where they could reflect and make connections with their experiences. My status as a partial insider presented as an effective power sharing factor that mitigated the distancing effects that occurs with outsiders (Muhammad, Wallerstein, Sussman, Avila, Belone & Duran, 2015). The youths described how being asked these questions prompted them to be reflective where they generated new meaning to their experiences, often to their surprise as they expressed excitement on the discovery of new acquired knowledge about themselves. Another shining strength of this study is its methodological innovation. Narrative inquiry, reflexive inquiry and thematic analysis could have been used separately. However, combining them creatively expanded on each of them and highlighted their strengths while minimizing their shortcomings. I believe this is my contribution to research. Yet, another strength is the enhancement of trustworthiness, first by triangulation and then by ongoing collaboration and consultation with participants.

Concluding Reflections

As an individual who has completed four adventure wellness experiences within ten years, I observed how the learning and growth I gained from my experiences has been predominantly internalized. I often share my Peace Bus experiences with others, but noticed how others around me, even my closest friends and family, have little understanding of the impacted these program experiences had on me. I found it incredibly challenging to capture the significance of my experience and realize now that it is because experiences are continuously changing and impacted by one's environment and one's understanding of oneself, others and the world that one exists within. This research, however, provides a glimpse of the essence of some adventure wellness experiences through the co-constructed words and stories of how five youth participants are processing their adventure wellness experiences. I feel empowered by their stories as I believe that they will finally provide me with a more comprehensive means to share and describe these enriching experiences with others.

Conducting this research with my participants has been an enriching and warming process. I truly embraced the research process and was guided by my mentors and my instincts which took me along an emotional journey full of surprises. I was amazed by the stories that transpired from my interviews with the youths and the strong emotions that overcame me as I listened to their experiences. I was also surprised by how poetic representation methods provided me with the ability to capture the youths' experiences in captivating poems. I enjoyed being able to use my creativity within an academic paper and am encouraged to continue to utilize creative methodology.

Following this research, I am inspired to apply the knowledge that I gained and the research products to further progress my practice as a social worker and to inspire others to think

more critically about their practice. Learning about the youths' experiences has been the most heartening experience. I could not have imagined how unique everyone's experience would be. I was amazed at how vividly the youths' social, cultural and historical positionings were present within their narratives. It made me realize how I could be more attentive to the different needs and experiences of every participant so that I can better support them. I did not realize the extent that I know now, the different ways that youths experienced discomfort from the environment generated within the Peace Bus experiences.

With my grown understanding of how experiences are greatly influenced by one's social positionings, I am encouraged to generate opportunities for participants to reflect about how they are impacted by their environment during the program. Having these discussions can help us to co-facilitate a more supportive and productive atmosphere for different identities within the group. This would be a valuable task because every group setting is different as they are influenced by the members and the diversity they add to the group. I believe that enhanced understanding about social positioning will be transferrable to my other work in the field and increases my compassion and confidence to support others as a social worker.

Furthermore, with permission and co-authorship of the youths, I plan to publish a book with as a method to give back to the participants. Creating a book with the collection of stories and research poems that were generated from this study will make the research findings more accessible to wider audiences. Research findings are often published in prestigious journals in areas where participants may have no access or in mediums that rests in library shelves. I hope that by publishing this action piece with the participants will help to acknowledge that their voices matter and can make a difference and provide them access to their stories where they can easily share it with others.

My hope is that these stories will continue to inspire others as they have with me. I believe that people will be able to relate to the youths' experiences captured in the poems and learn from their experiences as poetry has a way to connect with people where the audience can feel the narrator's thoughts and experiences (Faulkner, 2017). I hope to continue to share the poems with anyone who is interested in the adventure wellness field, such as social work academics, practitioners and adventure wellness participants.

Adventure wellness practitioners can utilize these stories in their work to inform their work or as an educational tool. Adventure wellness work has been described as a "black box" (Fernee et al., 2017) because how the work is conducted is various, the effects are multifaceted leaving outsiders confused, skeptical and curious. These poetic stories alleviate some of the mystery as they offer a unique opportunity to vicariously experience key moments that were presented by the youths as the stories take the reader on a journey of deep thought intertwined with raw emotion. They provide insight into the work as how they were processing their experiences were captured using artistic methods that generated findings that are unique to other adventure wellness literature. To my knowledge, no other research in the adventure wellness field has used poetic representation methods to highlight the experiences and conceptualizations of participants. My research also provides greater insight into the conceptualizations of experiences. Numerous research studies have argued how their adventure wellness program helped to increase their participants' skills and self-concept, such as in the areas of mental health functioning (Bettmann, et. al, 2017), self-efficacy (Paxton & McAvoy, 2000), relational development (Bettman, Olsen-Morrison, & Jaspersen, 2011), and social skills (Paquette & Vitaro, 2014). My research supplement these studies well as it provides examples of how these

effects are generated by exemplifying the process, linking program components to perceived outcomes and conceptualizations.

Lastly, it was wonderful to be able to reconnect with the youths and to hear about how much they have grown since the program. I loved hearing about what they have learned and how they have been impacted from the program. This experience has provided me with an increased conviction in how adventure wellness can produce positive changes in its participants as I learned how the Peace Bus program helped to develop the youths' competencies, psychosocial integration and self-concept. As a result, I feel more confident that adventure wellness can be used as a social work intervention and am interested in continuing to pursue this field as a social work career.

APPENDIX A: CONSENT FORM

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

INFORMED CONSENT STATEMENT

Processing Youth Adventure Wellness Experiences

Principal Investigator: Ty Thi Hong Nguyen

Advisor: Dr. Martha Kuwee Kumsa

Thesis Committee: Dr. Martha Kuwee Kumsa and Dr. Nancy Riedel Bowers

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of this study is to explore how youth are processing their adventure wellness experiences after two years by gaining an understanding of (1) what program components the participants reflect about, (2) how they make sense of their experiences, and (3) what factors contribute to their reflection processes. The principal investigator is a graduate student in the Master of Social Work (MSW) Program at WLU and is conducting this research as part of her MSW thesis requirement.

INFORMATION

1. Acquiring consent: The prospective participants will be identified by the researcher, who has chosen to select participants according to their participation with a specific Peace Bus program, which includes 13 participants. This form is to explain the purpose of the research and to invite you to participate. To participate in this study, you are required to complete the consent form by

PROPOSE DATE.

2. Participant selection: Five participants will be selected to be interviewed for this research. Participants will be purposively chosen to maximize the diversity of the respondents.

3. Interview process with the researcher: You will meet with the researcher, one-on-one, in person, through video-calling or through telephone, according to the most feasible option. While

planning the interview, the location and length will be strategically planned to avoid minimal distractions so that you can freely share your story. With your consent, the researcher will use video-recording or audio-recording and take hand-written notes to aid with data analysis. You may refuse the use of video-recording and note-taking without any repercussions to you. During this interview, you will be asked a series of open-end questions in a loosely structured process. You can answer as many or as little questions as you like, and you can end the interview process at any time with no repercussions. You will only be asked to participate in one interview, and it is estimated that the interview will be one and a half hours in length, although there is no set limitation.

4. Disseminating the research findings: As a thesis student, the findings of the research will be a public document accessible through Wilfrid Laurier University. By participating in this study, you will be consenting to have your story available through this thesis paper, as well as, print publications, conferences, community presentations, verbal reports, workshops and/or discussions.

RISKS

While this research does not intend to cause any harm to its participants or others, there are some concerns to consider. Although the researcher will be diligent to use precautionary strategies to contain the confidentiality and anonymity of all participants and people mentioned in the narratives, there is the risk that individuals may be identified from this study. If participants are identified by this study, there is a possibility that there may be a loss of privacy. Since the research topic is about post-program experiences in an educational adventure wellness program,

it is predicted that even if the participants or other Peace Bus members were identified, the magnitude of harm will be minimal.

There is also an ethical concern regarding the relationship history between the researcher, Ty Nguyen, and you as a study participant. Since you and the researcher had a previous working relationship, where the researcher was your Peace Bus program leader and you were the participant, there was a power difference at the time. Although this participant-leader relationship ended in 2015, there is potential in this study for similar dynamics to arise, which may cause discomfort for you as the research respondent. To manage this risk, the researcher has chosen to identify here that the power difference exists and to acknowledge that you will not be penalized in any way for sharing your thoughts and opinions. If you have any concerns regarding this, you may choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time without any repercussions to you. The researcher has also considered why she believes that conducting the study herself, as an insider, is valuable. Firstly, as you already know and have established a rapport with the researcher, it may be easier to share your stories. Secondly, the study's focus is to reflect on the experiences of the Peace Bus program where having an insider researcher will make the process smoother as mundane details will not have to be described, as these breaks in the story can take away from the message being delivered. For these reasons, it is examined that in this study's case, the benefits here outweigh the risks to have Ty Nguyen as the interviewer.

BENEFITS

This project will provide you the opportunity to process and share your experiences and opinions. Your valuable experiences and insights will help to inform future practices in how

programs and practitioners can help their participants reflect and process their adventure wellness program experiences while integrating back home.

CONFIDENTIALITY

To protect participants' confidentiality and anonymity, the researcher will never use the names of the participants without their consent in any print or discussions related to this research without their verbal or written permission. The researcher will use alternative names, as chosen by the participants, in place of their legal names if requested. You will be given the opportunity to vet your quotations before it is used publicly. Since there are a limited number of Peace Bus programs ran and only two by the researcher, the researcher cannot guarantee that the study participants will not be identified from this study. By signing the consent form and agreeing to participate in this research study, you agree to the understanding that you may be identified even if you request that your name is changed.

To protect anonymity of persons discussed in the narratives, names and identifying markers will be changed when included in the aggregate research results, unless the researcher is given consent by the individual to use it. It is understood that there may be limitations to protect the anonymity of individuals even after taking extra precautions to change names and identifying markers.

All data collected will be kept in a secure electronic file on a password protected computer at the Faculty of Social Work, accessible only to the researcher and her advisory committee. Video files will be transcribed by the researcher. The video files, transcriptions, and observed data from this study will not be labeled with names that are asked to be kept confidential. Following the transcription of the information, the data files are then numbered with a master list of

participants, which will be kept apart from the raw data. With permission from the participants, the de-identified data will be stored indefinitely, and may be reanalyzed in the future as part of a separate project (i.e. secondary data analysis).

Your confidentiality will be respected unless required by law, such as in the event where the researcher has concerns that you are in danger to yourself or others, where she suspects cases of child abuse or neglect, where research documents are subpoenaed by a court of law, and where the researcher is obliged to report to appropriate authorities.

CONTACT

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact the researcher, Ty Nguyen, by mailing to the address, 695 Proudfoot Lane, Apt. 511, London, ON, N6H 4Y7, or calling the telephone number, (226) 236-3652. This project has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Board (which receives funding from the Research Support Fund). If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Robert Basso, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-0710 x4994 or rbasso@wlu.ca

PARTICIPATION

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study,

every attempt will be made to remove your data from the study, and have it destroyed. You have the right to omit any question(s)/procedure(s) you choose.

FEEDBACK AND PUBLICATION

Information from the interviews, identifying quotations and aggregate research results will be included in the researcher's thesis, print publications, conferences, community presentations, verbal reports, workshops and/or discussions. The data may also be used in future research or knowledge dissemination avenues, unless or until you withdraw this permission.

Upon completion of this study, approximately September 2019, you will be provided with an executive summary of key findings. The results will be distributed upon request by email or by regular mail. If you would like to receive a copy of the findings from this project, please provide your contact information with how you would like to be reached below:

Telephone number: _____ E-mail address: _____

Mailing address: _____

CONSENT

I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study.

Participant's name: _____

Participant's signature: _____ Date: _____

Investigator's signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B: EMAIL/TELEPHONE SCRIPT

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

TELEPHONE SCRIPT

Processing Youth Adventure Wellness Experiences

Principal Investigator: Ty Thi Hong Nguyen

Advisor: Dr. Martha Kuwee Kumsa

Thesis Committee: Dr. Martha Kuwee Kumsa and Dr. Nancy Riedel Bowers

EMAIL

Hello (INSERT NAME),

I, Ty Nguyen, am contacting you as a graduate student in the Master of Social Work (MSW) Program at the Wilfrid Laurier University and the principal investigator of a research study called, Processing Youth Adventure Wellness Experiences, conducted as a requirement of my MSW thesis requirement. I am inviting you to be a voluntary research participant which involves a 1.5-hour interview. The study explores how youth are processing their adventure wellness experiences after two years and will be interviewing participants from the Peace Bus program, which is why you have been invited to participate. The purpose of the study is to gain an understanding of (1) what program components the participants reflect about, (2) how they make sense of their experiences, and (3) what factors contribute to their reflection processes. Since you are a former Peace Bus participant and this study will be interviewing its former participants, you may be affected by this study whether or not you choose to participate. As such, I encourage that you learn and ask questions about the study to gain a good understanding of how I will use precautions to contain confidentiality and anonymity. You may contact me by email (nguy0253@mylaurier.ca) or by phone (226-236-3652).

I have attached a copy of the consent form to this email that provides details about the research, such as the steps involved, the risks and benefits of participating, and how confidentiality will be protected.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Ty Nguyen

Principal Investigator

Faculty of Social Work

Wilfrid Laurier University

120 Duke Street West

Kitchener, ON N2H 3W8

Email: Nguy0253@mylaurier.ca

Telephone: (226) 236-3652

TELEPHONE

Hello (INSERT NAME),

I, Ty Nguyen, am contacting you as a graduate student in the Master of Social Work (MSW) Program at the Wilfrid Laurier University and the principal investigator of a research study called, Processing Youth Adventure Wellness Experiences, conducted as a requirement of my MSW thesis requirement. I am inviting you to be a voluntary research participant which involves a 1.5-hour interview. The study explores how youth are processing their adventure wellness experiences after two years and will be interviewing participants from the Peace Bus program, which is why you have been invited to participate. The purpose of the study is to gain

an understanding of (1) what program components the participants reflect about, (2) how they make sense of their experiences, and (3) what factors contribute to their reflection processes. Since you are a former Peace Bus participant and this study will be interviewing its former participants, you may be affected by this study whether or not you choose to participate. As such, I encourage that you learn and ask questions about the study to gain a good understanding of how I will use precautions to contain confidentiality and anonymity.

May I can send you a copy of the consent form that provides details about the research, such as the steps involved, the risks and benefits of participating, and how confidentiality will be protected?

- 1) If yes: How would you like me to send you the consent forms?
- 2) If no: Please feel free to contact me at any time to inquire further about the study.

Do you have any questions or concerns at this moment? You may contact me at any time by email (nguy0253@mylaurier.ca) or by phone (226-236-3652).

Thank you for your time.

CONTACTING ORGANIZATION FOR CONTACT INFORMATION VIA EMAIL

Hello (INSERT NAME),

I, Ty Nguyen, am contacting you as a graduate student in the Master of Social Work (MSW) program at the Wilfrid Laurier university and the principal investigator of a research study called, processing youth adventure wellness experiences, conducted as a requirement of my MSW thesis requirement. I am inquiring if I can have your permission to contact your peace bus 2015 westbound participants to invite them to be a voluntary research participant which involves

a 1.5-hour interview. The study explores how youth are processing their adventure wellness experiences after two years and will be interviewing participants from the peace bus program, which is why you have been invited to participate. The purpose of the study is to gain an understanding of (1) what program components the participants reflect about, (2) how they make sense of their experiences, and (3) what factors contribute to their reflection processes. Since you are a former peace bus participant and this study will be interviewing its former participants, you may be affected by this study whether or not you choose to participate. As such, I encourage that you learn and ask questions about the study to gain a good understanding of how I will use precautions to contain confidentiality and anonymity. You may contact me by email (nguy0253@mylaurier.ca) or by phone (226-236-3652).

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Ty Nguyen

Principal Investigator

Faculty of Social Work

Wilfrid Laurier University

120 Duke Street West

Kitchener, on n2h 3w8

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Telephone: (226) 236-3652

**CONTACTING ORGANIZATION FOR CONTACT INFORMATION VIA
TELEPHONE**

Hello (INSERT NAME),

I, Ty Nguyen, am contacting you as a graduate student in the Master of Social Work (MSW) program at the Wilfrid Laurier university and the principal investigator of a research study called, processing youth adventure wellness experiences, conducted as a requirement of my MSW thesis requirement. I am inquiring if I can have your permission to contact your peace bus 2015 westbound participants to invite them to be a voluntary research participant which involves a 1.5-hour interview. The study explores how youth are processing their adventure wellness experiences after two years and will be interviewing participants from the peace bus program, which is why you have been invited to participate. The purpose of the study is to gain an understanding of (1) what program components the participants reflect about, (2) how they make sense of their experiences, and (3) what factors contribute to their reflection processes. Since you are a former peace bus participant and this study will be interviewing its former participants, you may be affected by this study whether or not you choose to participate. As such, i encourage that you learn and ask questions about the study to gain a good understanding of how i will use precautions to contain confidentiality and anonymity.

May I can send you a copy of the consent form that provides details about the research, such as the steps involved, the risks and benefits of participating, and how confidentiality will be protected?

- 1) If yes: how would you like me to send you the consent forms?
- 2) If no: please feel free to contact me at any time to inquire further about the study.

Do you have any questions or concerns at this moment? You may contact me at any time by email (nguy0253@mylaurier.ca) or by phone (226-236-3652).

Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW GUIDE

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Processing Youth Adventure Wellness Experiences

Principal Investigator: Ty Thi Hong Nguyen

Advisor: Dr. Martha Kuwee Kumsa

Thesis Committee: Dr. Martha Kuwee Kumsa and Dr. Nancy Riedel Bowers

Introduction

Thank you for meeting with me today to be a volunteer participant for the Processing Youth Adventure Wellness Experiences. Before we begin, I will review some terms and how the Peace Bus fits into the study. I will then review the consent forms and the interview process to make room for any questions that you may still have at this point.

Terms

- Processing: making sense of
- Adventure wellness: coined by Itin and Mitten (2006) to describe a practice that uses “adventure” to promote “health or healing”.
- Adventure: is the use of activities that remove participants from their natural environment, disrupting one’s routine lifestyle.
- Wellness: is the aim of the programing, it could involve therapeutic or healing component or it could involve a developmental component.
- Peace Bus fits into this adventure wellness program because we travelled coast-to-coast, doing new and exciting activities, meeting new people with the goal of developing our

knowledge and skills with regards to human rights, sustainable development, conflict and resolution and diversity.

Consent forms

- Voluntary – no remuneration
- Consent is negotiable at any time (i.e. can pause or end the interview at anytime with no repercussions to the participant)
- Do you consent to audio recording? The audio recording will be kept confidential and will not be distributed to others.
- Do you consent to using your name? If not, what name would you prefer that I refer you to in the study? Confidentiality and anonymity will be respected throughout the entire study and when discussing the findings.
- You will have a chance to vet all quotes before it is used publicly.

Interview process

- It is estimated that the interview will last 1-1.5 hours. Is there anything you suspect that you need before we begin that will help to minimize any distractions?
- This will be a semi-structured interview, so there are a series of questions that I have prepared, but it the interview is meant to have flexibility for you to share as you would if you were freely speaking to a friend.
- You may choose to answer as many or little questions as you like.
- There is no right or wrong answer. It is important to not say what you think I want to hear, but what you are truly thinking and feeling.

- I may jot some notes down while we talk, so don't be alarmed if my eyes occasionally shift down.
- Do you have any questions before we begin?

WILFRID LAURIER UNIVERSITY
Processing Youth Adventure Wellness Experiences Interview Guide

Overarching research question: “How are youth processing their adventure wellness program experiences after two years?”

Research Questions	Key Concepts	Interview Questions	Probes
What program components do the participants reflect on?	Anything about the program in past tense (activities, people, places, conversations)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How do you remember your Peace Bus experiences? 2. What do you reflect about when you think about your Peace Bus experiences? 3. What are the most notable experiences you had during Peace Bus? 	<p>“What else can you tell me about...?”</p> <p>“Could you tell me more?”</p>
How do participants conceptualize their experiences?	<p>Any interpretations of an experience</p> <p>Any transformations (psychosocial, cognitive, behaviours)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. What do you talk about when talking about your PB experiences? 5. Have you experienced any changes in your memories or perceptions of your PB experiences since the program ended? 6. Are there any themes or ideas that keep arising when you reflect or talk about your Peace Bus experiences? 	<p>“Can you provide an example...?”</p> <p>“So what does that mean?”</p> <p>“Are you saying...?”</p>
What factors contribute to their reflection processes?	Any factors or mechanisms that proceed a reflection, idea or thought	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Is there anything that has helped you with your reflection process? 8. Is there anything that has inhibited your reflection process? 9. Have you shared your experiences with other people, if so who? Has sharing your experiences to others been influential in anyway? 10. Do you think that any aspects of your identity in how you understand yourself has influenced your perception of your experiences? If so how? 	<p>“Would I be right to interpret that as...?”</p> <p>“Earlier you said...How does that relate to...?”</p> <p>“What would someone else say about...?”</p>

		<p>11. Have you had any big life events that have occurred since PB ended? How have these experiences influenced your PB reflections if at all?</p> <p>12. Did you learn anything from the interview?</p>	
How are youth processing their adventure wellness program experiences after two years?	Any connection from past to present	13. Returning to the overarching question, is there anything you would add that you think is important in answering this question that you haven't shared?	

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