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A Program Evaluation of Immersive Devised Story Drama: Process and Impacts at a Summer Creativity Camp

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**A PROGRAM EVALUATION OF
IMMERSIVE DEvised STORY
DRAMA: PROCESS AND IMPACTS AT
A SUMMER CREATIVITY CAMP**

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Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements of
Doctor of Education
in the Foster G. McGaw Graduate School

National College of Education

National Louis University

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DISSERTATION

A PROGRAM EVALUATION OF

IMMERSIVE DEvised STORY

DRAMA: PROCESS AND IMPACTS AT

A SUMMER CREATIVITY CAMP

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Educational Leadership Doctoral Program

Submitted for Approval

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This document was created for the dissertation requirement of the National Louis University (NLU) Educational Leadership (EDL) Doctoral Program. The National Louis Educational Leadership EdD is a professional practice degree program (Shulman et al., 2006).

For the dissertation requirement, doctoral candidates are required to plan, research, and implement a major project within their school or district that relates to professional practice. The three foci of the project are:

- Program Evaluation
- Change Leadership
- Policy Advocacy

For the **Program Evaluation** focus, candidates are required to identify and evaluate a program or practice within their school or district. The “program” can be a current initiative; a grant project; a common practice; or a movement. Focused on utilization, the evaluation can be formative, summative, or developmental (Patton, 2008). The candidate must demonstrate how the evaluation directly relates to student learning.

In the **Change Leadership** focus, candidates develop a plan that considers organizational possibilities for renewal. The plan for organizational change may be at the building or district level. It must be related to an area in need of improvement, and have a clear target in mind. The candidate must be able to identify noticeable and feasible differences that should exist as a result of the change plan (Wagner et al., 2006).

In the **Policy Advocacy** focus, candidates develop and advocate for a policy at the local, state or national level using reflective practice and research as a means for supporting and promoting reforms in education. Policy advocacy dissertations use critical theory to address moral and ethical issues of policy formation and administrative decision making (i.e., what ought to be). The purpose is to develop reflective, humane and social critics, moral leaders, and competent professionals, guided by a critical practical rational model (Browder, 1995).

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ABSTRACT

This utilization-focused evaluation examined the relationship of a devised drama program at a summer youth camp to the campers' social-emotional learning (SEL), creativity growth, and character development. Methods used in the study included surveys of parents, interviews of teachers, and focus groups of campers. Results indicated that the devised drama provides durable, effective enrichment in SEL, creativity growth, and character development. Data also suggested that engagement in the drama contributed to an enhanced ability to manage anxiety. Concluding recommendations propose the overt use of the vocabulary of SEL competencies and grade-level appropriate SEL curricula. Professional development in Applied Improvisation for teachers, adult SEL for counselors, and pursuing a national program accreditation were also recommended.

PREFACE

Few people have the kind of joy and satisfaction in their work as I, having found the intersection of what the world needs and what I love to do: teach people to empathize through the art form of theatre. I have served as both an educator and as a theatre artist for over 25 years. As an educator, I have had the joy of teaching drama to students of many ages and in many contexts, from PreK children in both wealthy suburbs and inner city projects, to elementary school students, middle and high school students, and in universities. Likewise, as a theatre artist my experience is broad and deep. In so many ways, I have put the “general” into the term “theatre generalist.” I have been an actor, director, designer, costumer, producer, technician, musician, playwright, house manager, and stage manager. And now, I get to teach teachers how to use drama in the classroom, a position that challenges me to use absolutely everything I have learned about education and theatre over the years. I love it.

One truth that I have found is that even a long career of teaching and theatre artistry shows the passage of time and work as a great deal of “doing.” Years of teaching and production work are summed up with a just a line or two on a résumé and nothing tangible to hold or point to. After all this teaching and creation, growth and development, I realized that I needed to get serious about digging deep into my work to write about it and move into a new role of mentorship.

It was easy to select a project to research and write about because the culmination of my years of teaching and theatre have taken the form of a unique out-of-school educational program that began as a lark and grew phenomenally over 17 years. It is a project that gave me the opportunity to experiment with and develop a kind of long-form

process drama for learning that is practiced very little in the U.S. Though more prevalent in other countries, extended process drama is not practiced in as immersive or as all-encompassing programs as we can do here, where summer camps are a much more common phenomenon. A private summer camp program in which I play a leadership role gave me the opportunity to research the aspects of drama education that I find most applicable and enriching, including social and emotional learning, creativity development, and character growth. I was excited to do so and found tremendous support from the camp constituents.

Leadership lessons that I have gained through this experience have contributed greatly to my career trajectory in teacher education and theatre education. I have learned that open communication and a level of transparency are essential in an adaptive organization and that trust can be built by sharing responsibility. I found that true leadership develops capacity in others. I have come to understand the importance of reflecting regularly and often – both individually and as an organization. I have also learned that effective leadership requires passion.

These leadership lessons will serve me well as I seek to expand and replicate the program that I studied and evaluated, moving into a mentorship role beyond that of program administration. I enjoy a great deal of trust as a figurehead at the drama camp and was viewed as a transformational leader even before I acknowledged to myself that I have the qualities necessary for transformational leadership. I take this responsibility seriously, as the program is central to my purposes as an educator and as a human being.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank Drs. Carrier, Burg, and Machon for their guidance, wisdom, and encouragement; my wonderful cohort members without whom I would never have made this journey. My learning journey was both temporal and magical, and I credit all the Hexagon Wizards for helping me keep my core purposes of Creativity, Courage and Compassion at the forefront. Special thanks to Reva Shareva, Omnipita, Opus, Faux, Deltor, Helga, Lala, Drumble, Fauna, Nighthawk, Mikamus, Droppins, as well as the Morningstars, the Dragonwings, the Selkie Clan, and the Terra Tribe. Very special thanks to Underbottom and Bobrid, who live the world that we built together every single day. To my Mom, Madame Whoopensocker, the brilliant executive producer, who loved Hexagon and its adventures. To my Dad, Elmer: philosopher and organic storyteller. Finally, I am grateful for the love and support of my amazing and creative siblings: Karen, Monica, Linda, Gladys, Randy, Tom, Becky, Bob, and Mollie; my brilliant offspring: Zoe and Max; and my loving husband Marc who has always encouraged me to follow my dreams.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my children and grandchildren, and to the child inside each one of us – the soul of wonder, of creativity, and possibility. May we know in our bones that life is a story that we make up as we go along; and may we each remember to make it the very best story that we can!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
LIST OF TABLES	x
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Purpose of the Program Evaluation	2
Rationale	7
Goals of the Program Evaluation	8
Exploratory Questions	8
Conclusion	9
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	10
Introduction.....	10
Drama for Learning	11
Creative Drama as Method	11
Definition of Terms.....	12
Drama as Subject	16
Content and Meaning	17
Benefits of Drama on Learning.....	19
Benefits of Camp Programs	20
Conclusion	21
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	22
Research Design Overview	22
Problem Context.....	22
Exploratory Questions	24
Purpose of the Study.....	25
Research Contribution to Camp Program	25
Research Contribution to Field of Education	26

Participants.....	27
Surveys	28
Individual Interviews.....	29
Focus Groups of Campers	29
Field Notes	30
Ethical Considerations	30
Surveys	30
Interviews	31
Focus Groups.....	31
Data Gathering Logistics	32
Surveys	32
Interviews	32
Focus Group Discussions	33
Data Analysis Techniques.....	34
Surveys	34
Individual Interviews.....	34
Conclusion	34
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS	36
Findings.....	36
Surveys.....	36
Parent/Guardian Surveys – Quantitative Section.	36
Teacher Interviews	76
Camper Focus Groups	95
Observations, etc.	106
The Four Cs.....	112
Context	112
Culture	113
Conditions	116
Competencies	117
Interpretation.....	121
Judgments	123

Recommendations.....	124
CHAPTER FIVE: TO-BE FRAMEWORK.....	127
Introduction.....	127
Review of Literature Related to Change.....	128
Social-Emotional Learning.....	128
Youth Action Participatory Research (YAPR)	129
Applied Improvisation.....	131
Envisioning the Success TO-BE.....	134
Context	135
Culture	135
Conditions	136
Competencies	137
Conclusion	137
CHAPTER SIX: STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS.....	138
Introduction.....	138
Strategies and Actions.....	138
SEL Strategy for the 3 rd -5 th Grade Campers	138
SEL Strategy for 6-8 th Grade Campers.....	139
SEL Strategy for High School Campers.....	140
Empowerment Training for Prefects	141
Applied Improvisation Professional Development for Faculty.....	142
Decentralizing Administrative Tasks	144
Conclusion	144
CHAPTER SEVEN: IMPLICATIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS	146
Introduction.....	146
Policy Statement	146
Analysis of Needs	147
Educational Analysis.....	148
Economic Analysis.....	148
Social Analysis.....	149
Political Analysis.....	150

Legal Analysis	152
Moral and Ethical Analysis	153
Implications for Staff and Community Relationships	153
Conclusion	154
CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION	155
Introduction.....	155
Discussion.....	155
Conclusion	159
REFERENCES	161
APPENDICES	175
Appendix A: INVITATION TO TAKE PARENT/GUARDIAN SURVEY	175
Appendix B: PARENT/GUARDIAN SURVEY	176
Appendix C: INFORMED CONSENT FOR TEACHER INTERVIEWS	181
Appendix D: TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	182
Appendix E: INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION	183
Appendix F: INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION	185
Appendix G: CAMPER FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS	186
Appendix H: “AS-IS” DIAGNOSTIC CHART	187
Appendix J: STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS CHART.....	189

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Camper Age	38
Table 2: Camper Attendance by Year.....	39
Table 3: Camper Gender Identity	40
Table 4: Camper School Reaction	41
Table 5: Camper Bullying Victim Experience.....	43
Table 6: Camper Academic Giftedness	45
Table 7: Camper School Struggle Experience	46
Table 8: Camper Reading Enjoyment.....	47
Table 9: Camper School Social Struggles	48
Table 10: Camper Leadership Skills.....	51
Table 11: Camper Followership Skills	53
Table 12: Camper Extracurricular Sports Participation.....	55
Table 13: Camper Extracurricular Arts Participation	56
Table 14: Camper School Arts Access	57
Table 15: Camper Compassion.....	58
Table 16: Camp Experience Rating	60
Table 17: Camper Creativity Development	61
Table 18: Camper Social-Emotional Development	62
Table 19: Camper Moral Character Development.....	63
Table 20: Camp Value	64
Table 21: Parent Reasons for Sending Campers.....	66
Table 22: Perceived Values Taught	66
Table 23: Working Well	67
Table 24: Campers' Favorite Activity	68
Table 25: Program Weaknesses	70
Table 26: Unique Outcomes	70
Table 27: Special Qualities	71
Table 28: Successful for Child.....	72
Table 29: Areas for Improvement.....	73
Table 30: Greatest Challenges	73
Table 31: Camper Reporting about Story Drama	74
Table 32: Camper Change	75
Table 33: Other Feedback.....	76

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The Creative Educational Theatre Company (pseudonym) was founded in 2002 to “promote learning and engage the creative spirit in people of all ages by presenting relevant, thought-and-emotion-provoking experiences in the theatre and creative arts” (citation omitted to preserve anonymity). The vision of the Creative Educational Theatre Company (CETC) is to become a leader in creative learning through innovative, quality performing arts programs and projects. CETC produces theatrical and storytelling performances, participatory events, classes, and camps with the focus of creating exciting and meaningful learning experiences that inspire students to connect with literature and appreciate how the arts can help them become the best people they can be. Examples of CETC’s educational theatre and creativity projects include the Literacy Through Stories and Drama program, many social justice-themed theatre productions, touring musical theatre for young audiences, participatory storytelling performances with music, educational field trips, community and family arts programs (such as the Urban Arts program and the annual Imagination Celebration), and summer and specialty camps.

The company is run by a volunteer board of directors, which meets quarterly. Most of the company’s programs are led by the Artistic Managing Director (AMD) with assistance from other volunteers and a cadre of artistic associates. The position of Artistic Managing Director is a volunteer position, though the company strives to do professional-quality work. For example, CETC was recognized in Washington, D.C. by the American Alliance for Theatre and Education as an Outstanding New Children’s Theatre of America. The AMD was awarded a Creative Drama citation for excellence in

drama for learning by a statewide theatre association, and a local award for Best Individual Impact for her work with CETC.

Two of the most successful and hallmark programs of CETC are the annual Imagination Celebration (a participatory creativity event for children with young families) and the Hexagon School of Wizardry (pseudonym) creativity and role-play camp. These two programs share the common elements of participant involvement and structured improvisation. In 2007, the AMD took on a full time university position, and the company reduced the schedule of all other programs and events from a regular, annual season of educational offerings to “occasional” programs that could work around the AMD’s availability. The Imagination Celebration and the Hexagon School of Wizardry camp are the two projects that have continued annually. While the Imagination Celebration activity and attendance has remained steady, the Hexagon Camp has continuously grown and greatly expanded over the past seventeen years.

Purpose of the Program Evaluation

I chose to study the CETC’s summer camp program, the Hexagon School of Wizardry, because of the unique nature of the program, which has grown and developed over the years. The inspiration for this program came from the popular *Harry Potter* young adult literature series by J. K. Rowling (1997). The first version of the camp was a daily course taught in a larger educational day camp, where each day a different magical subject was taught: Potions, Herbology, Care of Magical Creatures, Divination, Charms, etc. The class was very popular and filled all available sessions. The following summer, an all-Harry Potter day camp was formed, which also filled. Clearly, there was interest in the project, so the next season, a full-fledged, sleepover Hexagon School of Wizardry

was created in earnest. Though the camp has retained the day-to-day structure of the boarding school in *Harry Potter*, with all the campers (“wizards”) taking a full schedule of classes, the camp now explores other fantasy literature themes as well. The creativity and role-play summer camp is now in its 17th year, and consistently reaches the maximum number of attendees, with essentially no advertising. There are plans to expand the camp program in the near future.

The Hexagon camp is open to youth going into third grade through high school. Exceptions to this policy are made on a case-by-case basis. With a curricular base in creativity and character development, Hexagon uses drama as a methodology to approach academic subjects in science, math, reading, writing, music, art, sports, and drama. “Academic” subjects are taught in same age/grade groups, and aligned with traditional school subjects, but with a dramatic twist. A few examples: Chemistry becomes Potions, Creative Writing becomes Divination, Stage Combat is Defense against Darkness, Art is The Craft, Math is Arithmagic, Music is Creative Harmonics, etc. There is also Quidditch, a wizard sport, likened to soccer played on flying broomsticks. This team activity, created by J. K. Rowling in her *Harry Potter* books, is an example of one of the activities undertaken in mixed-age groups, called “houses.” On the first day of each session, students are “sorted” into the four houses of Hexagon, which represent air, water, fire, and earth. These mixed-age groups are evenly balanced by gender and age, so that diverse cooperation is encouraged, and mentoring is fostered. The older campers are excellent guides for the younger ones, and a great help to the faculty and staff.

A unique aspect of Hexagon, and the focus of this study, is the development of an original story, dramatized in real time by the campers, staff, and guest artists. The camp

refers to this aspect of the program as “The Big Drama.” The Big Drama could be defined as a scenario form of story-based learning; however, the story is created through improvisation rather than related in advance, as is typical with many applications of Story Drama and story-based learning (Ward, 1986).

The Big Drama begins on one of the first days of the camp session, unannounced. Children who have been to the camp before know to watch out for it, and are hypervigilant for any perceived conflict or change that may occur to “kick off” the new story. As all participants (campers, staff, faculty, cooks, maintenance crew, visitors, guest artists, etc.) are playing strictly “in role” as self-determined magical characters at all times, the introduction of the conflict comes within the regular activity of the camp. It is not pointed out or discussed but coalesces from various complications that may occur during a class, a meal, a house activity, or a game. It is this total immersion into the framework of the wizarding world camp that contributes to the sense of authenticity and individual commitment to the drama and its themes.

Based on a literary theme announced several months before camp, the Big Drama is devised by the AMD with input from faculty. The goal is to create an original, interactive, improvisational drama that provides opportunities for students to make creative choices and give meaning to experience. Students use their critical thinking, imagination, and role-play skills to take action in the drama, which is designed to guide students through a process of questioning good versus evil and right versus wrong, to the triumph of courageous compassion, creativity, empathy, and fun. Devising the Big Drama involves attention to plot and character, metaphor, logistics, and a great deal of theatrical devices: props, costumes, lighting, playwriting, songwriting, crafts, music,

sometimes fog, puppets, guest artists, stage combat, etc. Whenever possible, the classes taught by Hexagon's faculty relate in some way to the unfolding drama. There appears to be no formal precedent in the area for this form of large group Story Drama, where the action unfolds improvisationally from a bare bones scenario outline, with input from faculty and continuous roleplay by all participants, with no audience.

The Hexagon program seeks to encourage student learning through dramatic role-play experiences, particularly social-emotional learning and empathy. The purpose of this evaluation is to determine the most successful strategies for structuring immersive drama participation by a large group of multi-aged participants while supporting growth in social-emotional learning, creativity, and moral development.

I became aware of this particular program because I was one of the founders and helped it grow. When the camp began, 17 years ago, I thought it could only hold interest until all of the *Harry Potter* books were published, or perhaps once all the movies had been produced, but I was wrong. In fact, it grew. Students communicate with the camp director in her wizard persona throughout the year, and often submit ideas for themes and action ideas for the Big Drama. Hexagon themes come from many other places besides the *Harry Potter* books now: Fairytales, the legends of King Arthur, folk culture, mysteries of science, even the "Dr. Who" television series.

There is a camp in another part of the country that also offers story-based immersive experiences. That camp is quite different in many ways, but what is most interesting to me is that that camp has story structures that enact existing literature rather than creating an original scenario through improvisation. It is also of note that the same stories are repeated from one camp session to the next. Hexagon has yet to repeat a story

in the Big Drama, as they are all original scenarios, but perhaps there may be reasons to do so. Campers at the other camp sign up for a specific literature experience, which is offered several times at several different locations. Hexagon campers may know the theme in advance, but the stories are all new and original.

The purpose of this evaluation is to provide feedback for program development and grant-writing, and a rationale and strategy for replication of the devised drama and possible program expansion. The work of devising is long and complicated, typically taking 3-6 months to create what is played out in real time over a single week. Since Hexagon camp currently has two, one-week sessions, and many attendees stay for both sessions, each week has to have its own devised Big Drama. If the devised dramas were repeated, the camp experience could be expanded to include other students in additional weeks.

This program is related to student learning because drama is both a subject and a pedagogical method. While students are learning about the art form of theatre, they are also learning about creativity, relationships, conflict resolution, self-awareness, and skills of listening, cooperation, team building, innovation and wellbeing (Somers, 1996). In addition, summer setback in academics is a well-known effect of a lengthy summer break (Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Kindsay, & Greathouse, 1996) especially in reading (Schacter, 2003) and particularly for economically disadvantaged students (Allington et al., 2010). Summer camps can provide an experiential approach to learning that school year programs are typically not set up to meet, and gains in learning at camp have been seen to mitigate the summer setback paradigm, often advancing students academically, socially, and emotionally (Van Westervelt, Johnson, Westervelt, & Murrill, 1998). Parents send

their children to summer camps to extend and broaden learning beyond the academic year, with youth development-centered camp programs seen by parents as having positive outcomes for their children, most notably in the area of growth toward adulthood (Henderson, Whitaker, Bialeschki, Scanlin, & Thurber, 2007). Summer camp programs are considered Out of School Time in educational research. There is even an Out of School Time Special Interest Group (OST SIG) that is part of the American Educational Research Association (AERA). This program evaluation is an example of research in student learning in Out of School Time.

Rationale

I have chosen this program for evaluation because of its unique nature -- there appear to be very few truly immersive theatre camp experiences in the United States. Immersive drama learning experiences have been sometimes part of school curricula in other countries, most notably the U.K. and New Zealand but even the few U.S. schools that have a regular, mandated drama curricula do not include multi-day, immersive drama programs. The combination of an overnight, immersive, and improvisational drama program should provide some insights into the kinds of learning that can come from an experiential program that balances spontaneity with structure.

This program is important to me not only because I am involved in it, but because of the character development aspect of its mission. The mission of CETC very much reflects my personal mission -- to create meaningful and beautiful works of theatre art that effect positive change in people and in society. Many, many students have sent me testimonials and anecdotes about how the Hexagon program has positively affected them.

The stakeholders for this program include the students who attend, their parents, the faculty (many of whom are parents of students in the program), and the board of directors of CETC. It is important to the students who love to attend Hexagon every year, and expansion of the program is important to the ongoing viability of CETC, which has come to depend on the income from camp to support its other programs. Finally, and most importantly, examining and documenting the most successful of these long-form, large-group devised drama structures will contribute to what we already know about story-based, problem-based, and project-based learning.

Goals of the Program Evaluation

There are several goals for this program evaluation. These goals include: conducting a comparative analysis of the Hexagon program and other drama camp programs to determine their strengths and differences; also, to gather information about the program to be used for grant-writing to support scholarships for this not-for-profit program. It also seeks to examine ways to develop a reiterative structure for devising large-group dramatic action that specifically supports social-emotional learning. Finally, this program review may document important aspects of the original mythic story structures in a reiterative format to reuse some of the work rather than continually inventing new structures. This will be important for program development and contribute to the goal of expansion.

Exploratory Questions

My primary exploratory questions included: What do the students, their parents, and teachers report as working well in the immersive drama program? Also, what do the students, their parents, and teachers report as not working well in the immersive drama

program? As for the immersive drama program, what do the stakeholders report as the greatest challenges to the program? Finally, what do the participants in the immersive drama report as ways to improve the program?

My secondary exploratory questions focus on the relationship of the immersive drama to social-emotional learning, creativity growth, and character development. Does social-emotional learning, creativity growth, and character development from the drama camp program transfer to the lives of the students involved, beyond the summer camp program? Also, how can the immersive drama be most efficiently constructed for specific pedagogical goals? Can the responsibility of devising the drama be shared? These questions allowed me to determine the impact that the program has on the lives of the children involved as well as formulate a system for creating an effective and dramatic storyline.

Conclusion

This evaluation examined a well-established, recreational, and educational drama program for its effectiveness as an experiential method for social-emotional learning, creativity growth, and character development. The primary aspect of the program that I reviewed was the long-form, immersive drama component, which involves the creation of original narratives through experiential group role-play. I examined strategies for structuring this experiential role-play and evaluated these strategies for effectiveness, efficiency, and replicability. The study yielded information to support effective grant writing, support for the parent organization's programs, and a collection of drama structures that may serve as a resource for teachers or other recreational camp programs.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Hexagon is essentially a drama camp that combines aspects of immersive theatre in its structure, creative drama in its classes, and a devised, long-form improvised Story Drama creation in each week's session. Drama is both a subject and a method. Drama "offers two strands of learning opportunity that are both always present – learning about the nature of drama and learning through drama about other things" (Bowell & Heap, 2013, p. 4). The two intertwined and examining approaches to drama pedagogy from both perspectives is relevant to the creation process of the Hexagon Story Drama and the overall camp experience. As the students grow and gain experience in drama, there is a natural progression from creative drama with a focus on personal and group development, to an interest in and awareness of the drama as a dramatic art form. Personal development continues, but there is an expansion of experiences and a honing of skills in improvisational theatre art (McCaslin, 2014).

The mission of the sponsoring theatre company and the learning goals of the camp program place social-emotional learning and creativity development at the center of the program purpose, in which drama-as-method is very effective (Papavassiliou-Alexiou & Zourna, 2016). Summer camp programs can contribute positively to multi-dimensional growth of young people, particularly in the domains of social and emotional development (Thurber, Scanlin, Scheuler, & Henderson, 2006). Studies of drama programs also demonstrate an ability to contribute significantly to youths' social-emotional growth (Edmiston & Sobjack, 2017).

Drama for Learning

The process of devising the Story Drama through improvisation is a drama-as-subject structure, which requires much investment on the part of the director and the teachers in the program and yields additional benefits for both teachers and campers. Children involved in aesthetic experiences connect with those experiences through introspection, decisiveness, and empathy. These things are interconnected and interdependent. The children change the drama and the drama changes the children. The creation of art for no other purpose than the joy of creation has multiple expressions of value – children are able to know what they like, and to express that knowing, and critique their own work, reflectively. This shows a level of self-awareness and an ability to negotiate meaning which is critical to the development of the self (Ho, 2016).

Creative Drama as Method

Throughout the camp week various methods of Creative Drama are utilized by some of the teachers in the classrooms. Generally, “Creative Drama” is a term that refers to improvised roleplay action, designed by a leader for the benefit of the participants, not for an audience (McCaslin, 2014). Important aspects of this definition include improvisation – there is no script – for although there is a structure to the action, (a plot, as it were) provided in the scenario outline devised by the director and explained step by step to the staff every evening, any dialogue and movement is the immediate creation of the participants. There is a leader; typically, the teacher is the leader, and in this case the camp director is the leader. The benefit is for the participants alone – there is no formal audience. Other students may observe the creation of scenes or characters within the drama, serving as an informal audience for such “sharing,” but Creative Drama is by

definition not a formal theatrical production and the objectives are authentic, internal experiences for learning, rather than skilled performance to impress an audience.

“Creative Drama” is used here as an umbrella term for nonperformance role-play strategies used at the camp that include Forum Theatre, Playback Theatre, Story Dramatization, Process Drama, and Applied Improvisation. At any given time, in virtually any class, examples of these types of role-play strategies may be seen at camp.

Definition of Terms

Forum Theatre (FT) is a kind of roleplay organized and moderated by a leader. Forum Theatre was initially devised by Augusto Boal, a drama practitioner whose work originated from his political mission to empower marginalized persons – people with little or no voice in society – to share their experiences, opinions, desires, and motivations (Boal, 1995) for the purpose of changing their reality. This technique was subsequently adopted by drama/theatre practitioners the world over as a method of helping anyone who is not in power express themselves. Forum Theatre can be an effective development technique and can help children practice coping strategies such as, “being assertive, self-talk, resilience, being emotionally passive, making new friends, discussion with adults” (Hammond, 2015, p. 331). Further, Forum Theatre generally has been shown to be an effective way of empowering children to deal with numerous life challenges through a “theatrical-psychological model” (Hammond, 2015, p. 311). This model can be seen as rehearsal for life, where participants may experience difficult, challenging, frightening, or just new events within the supportive safety of a pretend, theatrical environment. Participants can choose to try on various characters, situations, and strategies for action and then experience the imaginary consequences of their choices

without real-world ramifications. By doing so, the participant has experienced a kinesthetic memory of that kind of moment and practiced potential solutions. They are thus armed with these tools if and when they are in this or a similar situation again. This is also true for any observers or the other players in the scene. It may not have been their real lived experience but they are now made aware of an abuse of power that exists and can now respond more prepared if it ever happens to them or if they see the opportunity to be an ally to someone in need of support. They have practiced that support.

Playback Theatre (PT) is a form of roleplay in which stories from participants' lives are shared with the group and then acted out. There are specific techniques for the process, including Fluid (moving) Sculptures, Pairs, Stories, and Chorus. There is a sense of ritual in PT which is often celebratory of the experience, and sometimes cathartic. PT draws its origins from psychodrama and tribal ritual (Fox, 2007). At Hexagon camp, PT is sometimes used as an acting exercise for the development of a character when exploring the background of persona created by a student.

Story Dramatization (SD) is a structured form of Creative Drama made popular by the work of Winifred Ward (1986). In SD, a story is told, a plan for the enactment is created, including casting and use of space, and then the story is played out. Reflection upon the story and the experience is an important part of learning from SD. Aspects of stories that make for effective dramatization include playable action and a changeable balance of power. Playable action and a changeable balance of power become essential playwriting aspects of the devised drama that takes place over the course of the week. At Hexagon camp, SD is also utilized to create mixed-age group stories defining personal

skills and community strengths that are shared informally with the rest of the camp during evening campfire.

Process Drama (PD) is a whole-group drama technique which begins with the introduction of a conflict, and the action continues from that point. The structure of the drama is not predetermined, as it typically is with SD or PT, but rather proceeds from the conflict, which is agreed upon by the group, and sometimes moves forward step by step with overt planning wherein the group stops to reflect on the action with the drama leader and typically by consensus decides the next point in the plot. Often, this reflective step is done “out of role” so the teacher and students objectively analyze what they have made so far in the drama, and where they would like the creation to go next. The participants are essentially “writing their own play as the narrative and tensions of their drama unfold in time and space and through action, reaction and interaction” (Bowell & Heap, 2013, p. 6). PD was pioneered in the U.K. by a gifted educator, Dorothy Heathcote, who used drama as a learning medium to celebrate and make manifest what the children already know (Wagner, 2007). PD in this sense is the one of the fundamental building blocks of devising the week-long Story Drama at Hexagon camp. However, the conflict – which is typically introduced by the teacher in PD – is planted and “discovered” by the campers some time during the first or second day of the camp week and reflection on the action typically occurs while everyone is still “in role.” This is a break from the typical PD, which often uses a timeout from the action of the drama to reflect not only on the meaning and experience of the story being created, but sometimes upon the *dramaturgical*; this has to do with the theatricality, the effectiveness of the playwriting, drama creation and the accuracy of the historical and sociological research – aspects of

the action itself – a meta-analysis of the PD if you will. By staying in role during the reflection, the camp PD keeps the enactment close at hand, depending on the final day’s program, to allow for the distancing of the actor from character, the story from reality. The “stopping to reflect” tradition of PD is described by Eriksson (2011) as an aesthetic element akin to Brecht’s *Verfremdungseffekt* – intellectual distancing – an estrangement from the action that allows for critical reflection. This is an aspect of the Story Drama that needs a closer look, wherein the director/teacher has to weigh the aesthetic experience of an intense story against the depth of learning that may (or may not) come from stopping the story to reflect critically.

Applied Improvisation (AI) encompasses a great deal of the day-to-day activities at Hexagon camp. Improv games are part of many of the classes, a popular “Wizard’s choice” class activity, utilized to create group cohesion, explore relationship topics, and just have fun. Again, this drama activity is not for performance, but for the learning experience – individually or as a group. Generally, AI uses the elements of drama and theatre and applies them for other purposes, such as leadership training, relationship development, self-efficacy, collaboration, innovation, and problem solving. These are precisely the skills that are employed and practiced at Hexagon camp. Over the course of a week, campers move from warmup games for focus, energy, and trust, to improvisation – in classes, but also in the Story Drama. Giving teachers the opportunity to practice effective facilitation can make all the difference, is ongoing practice, and is at the heart of how Michael Rohd, (1998) an accomplished director of devised theatre, encourages participants to be involved. There is a great temptation to create a tidy ending, (“a message scene”) but that does not facilitate exploration and learning to the degree that an

open-ended improvisation (“an activating scene”) can. Facilitating can mean the difference between a “message scene” and an “activating scene” where the campers must struggle with possible action steps and outcomes.

Drama as Subject

The week-long devised Story Drama is enacted by the entire camp as a whole: campers, faculty, and staff alike, based on a theme and suggested plot created by the camp director. The collaborative nature of the work, the sustained characters, episodes, narratives, and micro-narratives place this work under the definition of devised drama. *Devised drama* is a group or site-specific creation that uses collaboration and contribution as central methods to explore ideas and themes. The ideas and themes may come from literature, music, art, political conflict, tradition, or other inspiration agreed upon by the participants (Oddey, 1996). At Hexagon Camp, the initial conflict in the devised Story Drama is determined by the camp director and a small planning team, based on the specific theme announced several months before camp, often with some preparatory work requested of the campers such as reading a book, or watching a film, etc.

The overall structure of the camp itself, which is set up like a boarding school – with Prefects, teachers, staff, classes, dorms, daily schedules, etc., lends itself to the ongoing immersive nature of the devised Story Drama. This serves as the de facto exposition, or pre-text, for the devised drama (O’Neill, 1995). Each student selects a wizarding-world name, an important aspect of creating an identity that should not be underestimated. The “character” that each child creates is sustained for the entire week, is self-defined, and in the lore of the school, represents the child’s “best wizarding self.” This existing school structure is often challenged in the devised drama, provoking the

students to break out of typical student habitus: to be told what to do and when by figures of authority (McKinnon, 2016). Students are pressed to create prolifically and rapidly, to solve riddles, to engage with conflict, to fight foes, to join forces, to analyze the story and its characters – and to depend on themselves and each other rather than adults in typical roles of authority. From the first day, there is an emphasis on developing creativity. With sustained focus, improvement in a student’s “perceptions of creativity, teamwork, problem solving/design, risk taking, and learning through failure” can be realized in just one week of summer camp experience (Gerhart, Carpenter, & Gangopadhyay, 2012). Rehearsing strategies for survival and resistance by working moment to moment in the drama, depending on other students in character to build coalitions and consensus, exploring action, and solving problems can be viewed as practice for real-life challenges and helps them develop personal resilience. This rehearsal for life helps students develop what may be called a “critical-affective stance” (Gallagher, Starkman & Rhoades, 2017). Experiences such as these help students develop the skills of creativity that can be strengthened and called upon in the way that one can use what one knows, when one knows what one knows. The students know they have creativity skills because they have used them (McKinnon, 2016). The same could be said for social-emotional skills and character development.

Content and Meaning

Every drama must have content. Every drama is about *something*. The social justice focus of the sponsoring theatre company calls for the camp to teach about power, identity, and meaning, which are effectively approached through the above-defined drama models. Schroeter and Wager (2016), using the social studies classroom to

research the use of drama to teach about power dynamics, demonstrate the effectiveness of drama to develop a critical multimodal literacy. Constructing knowledge through critical multimodal literacies and negotiating communication through multimodal representations (drama, poetry, art, music, dance, stories, etc.) is central to the daily experience of camp and its learning objectives.

Hexagon students have worked through Story Dramas to see and discuss patterns of othering such as discrimination, sexism, unfairness, ownership, etc., and explored the ways in which such inequalities are built into the fabric of society. Though the Story Drama is acknowledged at the end of the session as being fictitious, students are encouraged to make critical links between the drama and contemporary dynamics of inequality to the extent appropriate to their age. The camp drama framework provides “occasions of conspiracy,” (Barone, 2000) in which all of the campers, faculty, and staff as well, live a “reality that resides neither ... as object-in-the-world nor in the subjective ‘mind’ ... but within a continuous experience between the two” (138). Interacting with the Story Drama enlarges the experience and invites the campers to create a new reality by consensus, suspend disbelief, and actively take on their roles with authority and authenticity. The campers’ relationships with the fictional drama are beheld like a mirror to real world problems and can give them meaningful ways to practice skills for proactive social justice (McNaughton, 2013).

The older students are quick to make the connections, and as they hold a special place in the camp community – that of “story makers” – they also serve as mentors to the younger campers. The story makers are learning about devising drama and are central to its plan. They contribute to and help shape the day-to-day planning of action. They also

create the scenery, props, any necessary costumes, organize communication across the whole campus, and actively involve the younger campers in certain aspects of the Story Drama, particularly reflection. Students who are older and have more experience with the dramas of Hexagon are challenged to reflect on the ethical implications of the story's conflict from a perspective that is more diverse than the binary of right/wrong. One of the many gifts of working with and studying drama is the multifaceted perspectives and points of view that are inherent in any authentic human experience – fictional or otherwise. Struggling with the conflict between relativism and absolutism makes for richer, broader critical analysis (Nielsen & Hustvedt, 2017). Dramas do not always have a happy ending for all concerned, nor should they. But the students fight for what is right, and as relative as it may sometimes seem, good vanquishes evil, and a sense of equilibrium and justice is restored at the end of the drama. Students observe that there are often more than two sides in a conflict, and that things are not always what they seem to be until revealed at the resolution.

Benefits of Drama on Learning

Contextualizing all activities within the immersive nature of the world of camp has benefits of an academic nature, for both teachers and students (Papavassiliou-Alexiou & Zourna, 2016). For example, writing as a character in the Story Drama is contextualized writing, i.e., writing to magical laboratory to a request a DNA analysis of the bones of a Windigo found in the woods; writing a song to coach a Trickster into returning a stolen dragon egg; writing a spell of protection for a story-protecting spider named Anansi – these scenarios contextualize writing, and the writers are committed to and passionate about what they have written. Alida Anderson (2012) concludes that

contextualizing activities to identify associations between skills and context used through process drama can help to address students with diverse learning needs. Other studies on the effects of drama as a learning medium for students with diverse learning needs have demonstrated the wide range of applicability and success in achieving positive outcomes, such as social behaviors and relationships (Batdi & Batdi, 2015; Buskirk-Cohen, 2015; Hanrahan & Banerjee, 2017) and interpersonal skills (Dickinson, Mawdsley, & Hanlon-Smith, 2016). The nature-immersive physical location of the camp upholds the program's commitment to learning about environmental science, which can also be approached effectively through drama (McNaughton, 2013).

Benefits of Camp Programs

Although drama-specific camps are a minority when compared to general outdoor recreational and nature camps, camp programs in general yield positive outcomes for students' social and emotional development (Henderson et al., 2007). A three-year, multi-dimensional, longitudinal study of youth development outcomes of general camp experiences (Thurber et al., 2006) showed statistically significant increases in four domains: positive identity, social skills, physical & thinking skills, positive values & spirituality. Six-month follow-up indicated that the gains made at camp were, for the most part, retained. This search and review of the literature on drama education and camping programs demonstrated that both drama and camp programs contribute to youth development (Henderson et al., 2007), most especially to social-emotional learning (Ozier, 2018) and creativity development (Lynch, Hegarty, Trauntvein, & Plucker, 2018).

Conclusion

This research examines the social-emotional effects of a summer drama camp program, where all attendees, including staff and faculty, work in a role-playing persona as wizards attending a magical school. Inspired by the *Harry Potter* book series, the camp maintains a fantasy-literature theme, but creates original stories set in a magical summer camp. Campers range in age from 8-18 and the camp is an overnight, co-educational program held in a natural forest setting. The program is well-established, having created new Story Dramas each week of the summer camp program for 17 years. During each week of the program, the participants enact a newly devised Story Drama, based on scenarios planned by the camp director and a team of counselors. Each week-long scenario takes the camp through a good-versus-evil story, and the campers work together to solve a mystery or conquer an evil force. The scenarios are enacted in improvisational role-play, and there is no audience for any part of the week-long Story Drama. Rather, the purpose of the Story Drama is solely for the participants' personal growth, the development of camp community, and to enjoy the fun of playing a fictional character of their own creation.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Research Design Overview

I was most interested in conducting research that provides information to improve the Hexagon camp program. Since I have ongoing interest in its success, a utilization-focused evaluation gave me data that I have applied to the continued improvement of the program. An applied inquiry process that resulted in conclusions about the program was of greater significance to me as a researcher than other types of inquiry and provided the program stakeholders with more value as well. A utilization-focused evaluation is most appropriate when an organization has the ability to take action based on implications of research evidence (Patton, 2008). This was the case for the Hexagon program, and the data from this study has contributed to the growth and improvement of the camp and the expansion of the program to other sites.

Problem Context

This study looked at a summer drama camp program that is an annual project created by an educational theatre company. The camp program consists of several week-long sessions where each camper creates a magical wizard student persona and stays in character for the entire session. The camp has been in existence and growing for 17 years. There are approximately 80 campers, 10 counselors, 11 regular faculty, and many guest artists. Campers range from 8-17 years of age, from third grade through high school. Counselors are college students or college graduates. Faculty are professional educators during the school year. Additional staff includes a cook, cook's assistant, a dishwasher, a nurse, an assistant camp director, a program director, an archivist, and a camp director.

All staff and faculty also create magical wizard personas and stay in character for the entire camp program.

Each week, the camp director leads a devised drama that involves the entire camp through the creation of an original, improvised story. The stories are based on mythic themes of good versus evil, where good triumphs and evil is vanquished. The story is woven into the other events and activities at the camp, which include academic classes based on magical themes, music, dance, art, creative writing, yoga, mindfulness practice, math, and science. There is no outside audience for the Story Drama. The purpose of the Story Drama is the internal, personal experience of taking part in a completely imagination-centered world.

For this study, information about the experience and value of the Story Drama was gathered by survey, interview, and focus group discussion. Parents/guardians of campers were surveyed, teachers were interviewed, and focus group discussions were held for small groups of campers. This methodology has helped to answer my research questions by giving me insight into the perceptions the participants have about their experience of the program. I utilized voluntary, anonymous surveys gathered online via Google forms for the parent survey to determine their perceptions regarding the impact of the camp program and the improvised Story Drama. The survey included questions about the parents' perspective on their children's academic school experiences as well as camp experiences. The survey also included questions identifying areas of weakness in the current program and suggestions for improvement as the camp program plans to expand.

Interviews of faculty were conducted to collect perceptions about the program and anecdotes of camp experiences that have been impactful for them as teachers, and observations of campers' development during the Story Drama. Nine of the teachers from Hexagon camp volunteered to be interviewed. Their experience teaching at the camp ranged from two years to fifteen years. All of the teachers at Hexagon camp have experience teaching outside of camp programs.

Two focus group discussions were held for groups of campers. The focus group discussions of campers took place during camp. These focus group discussions were voluntary and took place during an optional free activity period where the campers could choose among a wide variety of activities. The campers in the focus groups voluntarily chose to be part of the focus group discussions during this activity time.

Exploratory Questions

My primary exploratory questions included:

1. What do the students, their parents/guardians, and teachers report is working well in the Hexagon program?
2. What do the students, their parents/guardians, and teachers report is not working well in the Hexagon program?
3. What do the students, their parents/guardians, and teachers in the Hexagon program report as the greatest challenges in the program?
4. What do the students, their parents/guardians, and teachers in the Hexagon program report as ways to improve the program?

My secondary exploratory questions included:

1. According to the perceptions of the parents, teachers, and students, what is the relationship of the Hexagon program to social-emotional learning, character, and creativity development?
2. According to the perceptions of the parents, teachers, and students, how does social-emotional learning, character, and creativity development from the Hexagon program transfer to the lives of the students involved, beyond the summer camp program?
3. According to the perceptions of the teachers, how can the planning of the Story Drama be most efficiently conducted?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to understand how the devised Story Drama is implemented at the creativity and roleplay camp. The study also examined how the drama experience contributes to social-emotional learning, as well as creativity and character development.

Research Contribution to Camp Program

This camp program grew over 17 years from a small, unstructured project undertaken by a group of six dedicated, volunteer teachers and 20 campers, to a maximum capacity-filled facility of 80+ annually returning campers, 25 or more various faculty, staff, and guest artists. Building on tradition and best practices, this research has contributed to the camp program by articulating and making explicit the principles of improvisation that have guided the development of the drama program. This research undergirds the camp program parent organization's mission to "promote learning and

engage the creative spirit of children of all ages through relevant, thought-and-emotion provoking experiences in the theatre arts” (CETC, 2002) and to “enrich the lives of youth during camp—and throughout the year—by providing a memorable experience which cultivates the creative, emotional, and imaginative intelligence in campers” (Hexagon, 2017). This research has determined the efficacy of the program toward reaching these goals and contributed to the recommended changes that have improved the camp program.

Research Contribution to Field of Education

Although a camp program is not a traditional school per se, the purpose of a summer camp is parallel to the purpose of formal education, with a focus on experiential learning in community and individual development. The American Camp Association website points out that camp programs “help children develop self-esteem, character, courage, responsibility, resourcefulness, and cooperation. Quality camp experiences help children develop the healthy emotional and social skills necessary to grow into strong, considerate, competent adults” (American Camp Association, n.d, p. 1). Organized camps are an important part of the field of education, considered out-of-school programs or outdoor education. They are often sponsored by schools or universities and the educational application of camp programs is a core area of research in outdoor education, recreation, and adolescent learning. Organized camp programs are part of the Out of School Time Special Interest Group (OST SIG) of the American Educational Research Association (AERA), which seeks to research how youth spend their time when they are out of school. This research project contributes to the field of education by enlarging the body of research on drama for learning within an organized camp program.

A perennially discounted and under-researched area of the formal school curriculum, drama for learning has awakened a renewed relevance in education. Batdi & Batdi (2015) found that creative drama has a considerable effect on achievement. They also found that “students have acquired significant experiences in areas such as cognitive domains; thinking and creativity, critical thinking skills; the learning environment and process; and social aspects, the affective domain, and attitude” (p. 1467). Particularly where efforts to cultivate creativity and innovation are concerned, drama for learning is growing in popularity and interest (Wang, Po-Chi, Kim, Kok, 2013). However, the difficulties encountered in measuring social-emotional learning or creativity via standardized tests contributes to the dearth of research in drama in education, and consequently the struggle to keep a foothold in the formal school curriculum. Camping programs are outside the purview of state-mandated curricula and have a great deal of freedom to engage children in activities that encourage affective growth, creativity, and social-emotional development.

Participants

Participants in this study included campers’ parents/guardians, teachers, and campers who have attended the creativity camp. These are all the individuals and groups involved in the Hexagon program. All those involved in the program were invited to participate, though there was no incentive to do so. These individuals were chosen because they are invested in the program, as evidenced by their multiple year returning attendance. These individuals know the program well and have often demonstrated a loyalty to the camp and an interest in seeing it continue.

Data Gathering Techniques

I gathered data for this research by sending out a survey to the parents of the campers who have attended for at least one recent year. I also conducted focus group discussions with campers during the camp. Campers were invited to participate; they were not be required to do so. Interviews of the camp faculty were conducted by another CITI certified researcher who was familiar with the Hexagon program but not involved in the study, so that the teachers could feel free to say whatever they would like to say without risk of my judgement or of hurting my feelings. I felt this was necessary because most of the faculty are close friends of mine and I wanted them to be as objective as possible.

Surveys

I sent an invitation to take the survey (Appendix A) to all the parents/guardians who have sent a child or children to camp in 2017. This was approximately 79 parents/guardians. The survey was created and conducted via a Google form linked to the invitation (Appendix B). I had an excellent return on the survey because most of these parents/guardians are very motivated to provide the best they can for their children. Since attending a summer camp is a voluntary act as there are no mandates requiring parents to send their children to a summer camp program, parents who send their children to a camp do so because they seek to provide them with the extra experiences that camp programs can provide which schools often cannot. Parents/guardians taking the surveys range in age from 21 to 80. The participants came from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds, from parents/guardians whose children could not attend camp without a scholarship, to parents/guardians who not only pay for their own child to attend, but also donate scholarships for other children to attend.

Individual Interviews

All the teachers were invited to participate. Informed consent forms (Appendix C) were offered, which they turned in to the interviewer. Nine teachers were interviewed. None were required to participate, so only volunteers were interviewed. The teachers were invited to participate during a general camp meeting, and the interviews took place during a free period so that their planning or teaching time was not interrupted so they did not feel coerced. There was no remuneration or any kind of compensation for participating, and no negative consequences for not participating. Participating or not participating in the interviews did not affect their schedule, compensation, or our relationship in any way. All received the same questions (Appendix D). The interviews ranged from 29 to 49 minutes. There were nine teachers interviewed, both men and women, between the ages of 21 and 65. The interviews were audio recorded and confidential. No one was identified.

Focus Groups of Campers

I conducted two voluntary focus groups of campers during camp. The group sizes were 6 and 12. Campers ranged in age from 11-18. As with many activities at camp, the focus group discussions were in mixed-age groups. Permission to participate was requested when parents/guardians signed their children up for camp. No one was required to participate in a focus group. Participation was entirely voluntary. Campers did not have to miss out on other activities to participate. Camp does not have any grades, so that campers would not feel coerced. All the campers in the focus groups had attended this camp for more than one year.

Field Notes

I took participant-researcher field notes during the drama as it played out during camp for each of the camp session stories, and during the daily teacher/staff drama planning meetings. These notes include the initial plot plans for the drama, improvised scenes, moments of theatricality, and turning points in the drama. I attempted to capture the actions, reactions, creations, and statements of the students participating in the drama. I also included comments or actions made by faculty and staff and descriptions of any artifacts made by the participants, including costumes, props, puppets, potions experiments, writing assignments, stories performed, dances created. I also described any interactions between guest artists' and the campers.

Ethical Considerations

Surveys

The sponsoring theatre company provided me with a complete list of campers' parents/guardians email addresses, phone numbers, and home addresses. A general email invitation (Appendix A) was sent to parents/guardians of campers who had attended camp for at least one year in the past. This was 79 emails. Participation was entirely voluntary. No one was required to participate, and there were no benefits or remuneration for participation and no negative effects for not participating. The child's experience at Hexagon was not and will not be affected in any way by either participating or not participating. Parent participation was also voluntary and anonymous, and parents/guardians or child could discontinue participation at any time with absolutely no negative effects. Although I know all the campers and their parents, I do not know which parents completed the survey and which ones did not. I will keep the identity of the camp

and all participants confidential, as it will not be attached to the data and I have used pseudonyms for all participants as well as the name of the program.

Interviews

Teachers were invited to participate during a general camp meeting, and I let them know that the interviews would happen during a free period, so they did not feel coerced. Only volunteers were interviewed. There was no remuneration or any kind of compensation for participating, and no negative consequences for not participating. Participating or not participating in the interviews did not affect their schedule, compensation, or our relationship in any way. There were 11 faculty members, nine of whom volunteered to be interviewed. The two who were not interviewed were simply not available. All the faculty are unpaid volunteers. I let them know that they were neither expected nor required to be interviewed and that their responses would be kept anonymous. The interviews were conducted by another CITI-trained and certified researcher, who recorded the interviews and sent them to me for transcription.

Focus Groups

Campers were invited to participate in a focus group during an open period during camp, if their parents/guardians had given written permission during registration for their child to participate. All the campers' parents gave permission except for one. That camper chose to do something else when the focus group discussions were open. The focus group discussion was an optional activity offered during an open period at camp, called "Wizard's Choice." Some children chose to participate in the focus group, while others chose another activity offered at the same time. The drama discussion focus group turned out to be a very popular activity, and the campers asked if they could do it every

year. No one was required to participate, and there were no benefits for participation.

Two focus group discussions that included campers that had returned for multiple years were used for this study.

Data Gathering Logistics

To gain insight into the evaluation of this program, I used the following processes and procedures:

Surveys

I surveyed the parents/guardians through an online questionnaire sent to them. The survey was sent to all families whose children attended Hexagon camp in the previous year. I sent one announcement email and a second reminder email a month later, asking them to take the online survey. The survey took approximately 20 minutes to complete. The survey questions are listed in Appendix B. I sent the email to 78 families. I received 49 responses, a response rate of 62.8%. Through the survey, I collected demographic information and information about why they send their child to camp. I also collected information about whether or not learning from the camp experiences transfers to the children's lives beyond the summer camp program.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted by a Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) certified interviewer. The interviewer was a former camp counselor, familiar with the program, who had recently completed a Ph.D. in technical writing and is an APA editor. All the teachers volunteered to be interviewed. There were 11 possible teacher interviewees, nine of whom were interviewed. The two that were not interviewed were

unable to meet up with the CITI certified interviewer because she was only available the first week of camp and they did not come to teach until the third week of camp. All interviewees were asked the same interview questions (see Appendix D). The interviews ranged in time from 29 minutes to 49 minutes, and were audio recorded and then transcribed. No follow up emails were necessary.

Focus Group Discussions

Parents/guardians of campers were sent informed consent forms (Appendix E) in the welcome packet that each camper received before camp. Included in the packet was an informed consent form for child participants as well. (Appendix F). All the parents gave permission for their child to attend a focus group if they wanted to do so. Only one camper opted not to participate in the focus group discussions before camp, though the parent had given permission. The camper declined signing the form and did not participate in the groups. Before each focus group discussion began, I read aloud the form that they had all signed and got verbal assent from each of them. This was in addition to their written assent. I recorded the camper focus group discussions, took notes, and transcribed them myself. The camper focus group discussion questions are listed in Appendix G. The camper focus group discussions lasted 45-65 minutes. There were 6 campers in one group and 12 in the other. All the participants had attended the camp for at least two years previously. Two counselors who had been campers for many years also participated and answered questions from the perspective of their extensive experience as campers.

Data Analysis Techniques

This program evaluation was based on mixed-methods research, including a survey of parents, interviews of the teachers, and focus groups of the campers and counselors. Analysis procedures included content analysis and framework analysis of the qualitative data. I analyzed the content by reading and re-reading the transcripts of the interviews and focus groups multiple times and highlighting key thoughts and concepts. From these meaning units, I described central themes. I then generalized these themes into emergent codes and summarized them.

Surveys

The surveys provided me with both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data gave me respondent descriptors and parameters for limitations of this study. I analyzed the qualitative data by compiling and comparing responses.

Individual Interviews

I analyzed the individual interviews by reading and re-reading the transcripts, highlighting ideas expressed by the interviewees. I sorted the main ideas into central themes. These emergent central themes became emergent codes for my analysis.

I analyzed the camper focus groups by noting emergent themes from the discussion. I grouped the themes into concepts. Then, I categorized the concepts into codes. From these codes, I was able to generalize meaning for my analysis.

Conclusion

Through voluntary surveys, interviews, and focus groups, I examined the value and effects of the Story Drama procedure at Hexagon camp. Just over 57% of those sent the survey responded, most of the teachers were interviewed, and the focus group

participants included campers that had been returning to camp from 2 to 15 years. A very solid representation of the major stakeholders at the camp was accomplished through this research plan.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Findings

Analyzing the data from the parent/guardian surveys, teacher interviews, and camper focus groups gave me a great deal of useful information about the Hexagon program. Some of the information reinforced what I already knew about the camp, but some findings were surprising. The respondents were forthcoming with information and very eager to share. This was especially the case for the camper focus groups, which were so popular that the campers have asked to continue the focus group discussions as a regular feature of the camp. This will be an opportunity to tell the stories of their camp experiences in a reflective format, where they can step out of their wizard character personas and talk about what was fun, what was scary, what was exciting, and so on.

Surveys

Parent/Guardian Surveys – Quantitative Section.

Out of the 78 parents emailed, I received 45 survey responses. This is 57.6%, which is an acceptable response rate according to Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The survey is included in Appendix B. The first section of the survey is quantitative, with some initial demographic questions, which gave me a general idea of the population that responded to the survey. In this section, I have reported the responses with the most frequently reported category first, descending to the least frequently reported category.

The first survey question, “How old was your camper in Summer of 2018?” was intended to show the age range of the students this survey primarily would reflect, since older campers have a more involved experience with the drama than the younger ones. For this survey, 22.2% (10) of the respondents were parents of campers that were 15

years old (y/o); there were 13.3% (6) respondents each that were 16, 14, 13 and 12 y/o, 11.1% (5) 11 y/o, and finally there were 2 each (4.2%) whose children were 10, 17, and 18 (see Table 1). This represents a normal distribution bell curve, with parents of 15-year-old campers being the most common respondents. This data suggested that most of the respondents were parents of the children who attended camp at least five years ago, which was when we added a second week to the camp program because the one week camp version was completely full. The decision to add a second week to the camp program represented a commitment on the part of the administration to keep the program going. Since the same group of children came back year after year, the camp was starting to age out. We added a second week so that we could admit newer, younger campers in the interest of program continuation. That same group of children continued to attend but simply moved up the grade levels. This survey was completed by parents whose children were in that group and were well invested in the program. These data also show that at least some of the respondents were parents of Prefects – camp counselors who had attended the camp for many years as campers.

Table 1

Camper Age

Answer Choices	# of Respondents	Respondent
10 years old	0.9% (2)	#30, #38
11 years old	11.1% (5)	#10, #28, #31, #37, #43
12 years old	13.3% (6)	#19, #21, #32, #34, #44, #45
13 years old	13.3% (6)	#2, #6, #9, #17, #40, #42
14 years old	13.3% (6)	#11, #13, #16, #24, #26, #35
15 years old	22.2% (10)	#3, #4, #7, #8, #11, #13, #16, #24, #36, #35
16 years old	13.3% (6)	#1, #15, #20, #22, #23, #25
17 years old	0.9% (2)	#12, #38
18 years old	0.9% (2)	#5, #14

The second question, “How long has your child attended Hexagon?” was intended to find out how the phenomenon of consistently returning campers would be reflected in my data. The responses to this question were: 31.1% (14) attended for three years, 26.6% (12) attended for five or more years, 17.7% (8) attended for two years, 17.8% (8) attended for four years, and 6.6% (3) attended for one year (see Table 2). This shows that a majority of the respondents were parents of campers who have come back to camp for at least three years. These are the parents that I want to hear from because they believe in the program enough to send their children again and again. It makes this information very valuable to me, as they will be able to respond about their child’s change over time, if any.

Table 2

Camper Attendance by Year

Answer Choice	# of Respondents	Respondent
1 year	6/6% (3)	#30, #37, #42
2 years	17.7% (8)	#2, #6, #9, #10, #17, #36, #43, #45
3 years	31.1% (14)	#8, #11, #16, #19, #21, #26, #28, #29, #31, #32, #34, #38, #40, #44
4 years	8	#7, #13, #15, #20, #25, #27, #35, #41
5+ years	26.6% (12)	#1, #3, #4, #5, #12, #14, #18, #22, #23, #24, #33, #39

The third question, “what gender does your child identify?” was worded in this way because we do have some students that identify differently from their biological gender. This is a relatively new phenomenon for the camp, but since all children are welcome, we have sought to make dorm and group arrangements that meet the specific needs of individual campers. In this response, 53.3% (24 respondents) of respondents were parents of female-identifying students and 46.6% (21 respondents) were parents of male-identifying students (see Table 3). No parents responded “non-binary” or “prefer not to say,” which were options in the survey. These responses were significant because the camp attendance male/female ratio has been consistently much closer to 50/50 than

the respondents to the survey. In the past three years, the male/female ratio has been 49/51, 54/46, and 48/52. This means that the data reflects female campers’ experiences slightly more than male campers’ experiences. Also, parents of students who identify as non-binary apparently did not respond to the survey, though sexuality came up in the qualitative survey section as an observation from a parent of a student whose gender identity matches the sex they were born with.

Table 3

Camper Gender Identity

Answer Choices	Responses	Respondent
Female	53.3% (24)	#1, #3, #6, #10, #12, #14, #15, #16, #17, #20, #22, #23, #24, #26, #27, #28, #30, #31, #33, #34, #36, #37, #42, #43
Male	46.6% (21)	#2, #4, #5, #7, #8, #9, #11, #13, #18, #19, #21, #25, #29, #32, #35, #38, #39, #40, #41, #44, #45
Prefer not to say	0	0

Question #4 asked parents to weigh in on the statement, “My child loves school.” 40% (18) of respondents agreed, 28.8% (15) were neutral, 22.2% (10) Strongly Agreed, 8.8% (4) disagreed, and no respondents Strongly Disagreed (see Table 4). These

responses show that most of the students love school, which is important in that Hexagon camp is primarily an academic arts camp. Hexagon camp is much more like a school than like a camp. Thus my program review results are more about the specific program than simply the difference between a school program and camp program.

Table 4

Camper School Reaction

Answer Choices	Responses	Respondent
Strongly Agree	22.2% (10)	#6, #7, #10, #14, #16, #20, #30, #37, #43, #44
Agree	40% (18)	#1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #11, #15, #18, #23, #24, #25, #27, #28, #31, #33, #34, #36, #42
Neutral	28.8% (13)	#8, #9, #12, #21, #22, #26, #29, #32, #35, #38, #39, #40, #41
Disagree	8.8% (4)	#13, #17, #19, #45
Strongly Disagree	0	

Question #5, “My child is bullied in school,” was intended to dig deeper into a phenomenon that has often come up in my observational field notes, that the children sometimes refer to themselves as the “outcasts” and “loners” at their regular, academic year school. Some of the older campers sometimes refer to the Hexagon camp as “nerd

camp,” and the issue of belonging to a community is frequently discussed by the children in terms such as, “Hexagon is the only place where I feel at home,” or “Hexagon is my real home,” or “I don’t fit in anywhere else.” I included this question in the survey to gain some perspective on whether or not the parents perceive their children as being outcasts at their regular school setting, sending them to camp as a getaway from bullies. The responses here surprised me in that the preponderance of parents responding did not generally seem to reflect this perspective. The responses to this question were: Disagree 55.5% (25), Strongly Disagree 20% (9), 13.3% (6) were Neutral, and 11.1% (5) Agree, and 0% responded Strongly Agree (see Table 5). Perhaps these responses reflect a difference between being “bullied” versus being an “outcast,” or rather what the children perceive those categories to be. Bullying is not tolerated at the camp, and instances of such aggression are extremely rare. Feeling unique and different amongst peers, however, is a common experience for many adolescents. I see clearly now that Hexagon campers referring to themselves as “Outcasts” describes their feelings of uniqueness rather than specific instances of bullying. The term is one they have given themselves. Many Hexagon students over the years have told me that the camp is the only place that they feel at home and can truly be their authentic self. If I could do this survey over again, I would ask it differently, using the word “outcast” instead of “bully.” However, “Nerd camp” seems to be a proud title that the students have given the program themselves, so perhaps being an outcast is also a term of pride. Nonetheless, the campers reflect that they see themselves as somehow separate and apart from their standard school colleagues, whether that is because they have been bullied into the separation or if it is because they have voluntarily set themselves apart, sensing or choosing that they don’t fit

in or are somehow different. This phenomenon could also signify a shift in the stigma of the label “outcast” which, according to a study by Galinsky et al. (2013) can occur when a group re-appropriates a negative label by taking possession of it. The study demonstrated that group possession of a negative label increased the group members’ sense of power and attenuated the stigma of the label after self-labeling. Individuals’ willingness to self-label was only increased with group membership. Being part of a proud group of “outcasts” by attending “Nerd camp” may be one way of taking possession of terms that have a negative connotation outside of the group of camp participants.

Table 5

Camper Bullying Victim Experience

Answer Choices	Responses	Respondent
Strongly Agree	0	0
Agree	11.1% (5)	#10, #26, #28, #36, #45
Neutral	13.3% (6)	#9, #13, #15, #40, #42, #44
Disagree	55.5% (25)	#1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8, #11, #12, #18, #20, #21, #22, #23, #24, #25, #27, #31, #32, #33, #35, #38, #39, #41
Strongly Disagree	20% (9)	#14, #16, #17, #19, 329, #30, #34, #37, #43

Question #6, “My child is academically gifted,” was similar in purpose, in my attempts to gain insight into the phenomenon of students feeling set apart from their grade level colleagues in some way. If they were not outcasts because of bullying, were they outcasts because of a level of academic giftedness? Answers to this question reflected a similar distribution as the question about bullying: 37.8% (17) Agreed, 22.2% (10) Strongly Agreed, 22.2% (10) were Neutral, 15.6% (7) Disagreed, and one (2.2%) Strongly Disagreed (see Table 6). The parent respondents demonstrated that they felt their children were good in academics and not bullied in school. From this information I can infer that the parents do not recognize their children’s self-identification of “outcast” as being something that influences their academic success negatively if they are aware of their social standing at all. It is also possible that the parents do not understand their children’s sense of being “outcasts,” separate and different from their peers.

Table 6

Camper Academic Giftedness

Answer Choices	Responses	Respondent
Strongly Agree	22.2% (10)	#1, #3, #9, #14, #19, #29, #30, #31, #37, #38
Agree	37.7% (17)	#2, #4, #5, #7, #11, #15, #16, #17, #23, #24, #25, #27, #40, #42, #43, #44, #45
Neutral	22.2% (10)	#10, #12, #13, #21, #28, #33, #35, #36, #41
Disagree	15.6% (7)	#6, #8, #18, #20, #26, #32, #39
Strongly Disagree	2.2% (1)	#34

Question #7 was related, in my attempts to understand the children’s relationship with academics and fitting in or being seen as outcast. The question, “My child struggles academically in school” predictably reflected the opposite of the previous question. Responses were Disagree: 42.2% (19); Strongly Disagree: 36.7% (12) Agree: 15.6% (7); Neutral 13.3% (6); and Strongly Agree: 2.2% (1) (see Table 7). These data serve to verify the responses of Question #6. From these data, I can infer that the students of Hexagon are academically successful, and they enjoy school. Most of the respondents who indicated their child struggles academically in school in this question also answered that they disagreed with the statement that their child is gifted academically in Question #6.

Table 7

Camper School Struggle Experience

Answer Choices	Responses	Respondent
Or	2.2% (1)	#26
Agree	15.6% (7)	#9, #10, #13, #18, #28, #36, #38
Neutral	13.3% (6)	#1, #8, #17, #20, #32, #39
Disagree	42.2% (19)	#4, #5, #6, #7, #11, #12, #15, #21, #22, #23, #25, #27, #31, #33, #34, #35, #40, #41, #42
Strongly Disagree	36.7% (12)	#2, #3, #14, #16, #18, #24, #29, #30, #37, #43, #44, #45

Question #8, “My child loves to read,” was asked to gain understanding into the interest of the children in literature, since the origin of the camp was based on the Harry Potter series of books and many of the subsequent dramas have been based on other works of fantasy literature. More than half, 51.1% (23), of respondents chose Strongly Agree in this category, with 24.4% (11) selecting Agree, 17.8% (8) Neutral, and only 6.6% (3) selecting Disagree (see Table 8). No parents chose Strongly Disagree in this category. This shows that an affinity for literature is a common factor among students at Hexagon camp. This has significance for my study because the Story Dramas of Hexagon camp are almost always literature-based plots, and the students bring the experience of

much love for story to the drama. This undoubtedly influences their demonstrated, rich understanding of the themes, characters, and relationships in the Story Dramas, even though they are original.

Table 8

Camper Reading Enjoyment

Answer Choices	Responses	Respondent
Strongly Agree	51.1% (23)	#1, #3, #7, #11, #13, #14, #17, #19, #20, #24, #26, #29, #30, #31, #33, #34, #35, #36, #37, #38, #42, #43
Agree	24.4% (11)	#2, #4, #5, #10, #15, #16, #18, #22, #23, #25, #39, #44
Neutral	17.7% (8)	#6, #12, #21, #27, #28, #32, #40, #45
Disagree	6.6% (3)	#8, #9, #41
Strongly Disagree	0	

Question #9, “My child struggles socially in school,” was asked to see if there was a perceived difference between academic success and social success with regard to the children’s perception of themselves as “outcasts.” Here, the responses indicated that most of the parents did not feel their children have extraordinary social problems at school,

responding as follows: Disagree 48.8% (22); Strongly Disagree 22.2% (10); Neutral 17.8% (8); and Agree 11.1% (5) (see Table 9). No respondents Strongly Agreed. These data indicate that the parents of Hexagon campers who dub themselves as “outcasts” do not see their children as socially unsuccessful.

Table 9
Camper School Social Struggles

Answer Choices	Responses	Respondent
Strongly Agree	0	0
Agree	11.1% (5)	#9, #22, #26, #36, #45
Neutral	17.7% (8)	#3, #10, #23, #28, #34, #38, #40, #41
Disagree	48.8% (22)	#1, #2, #4, #5, #6, #8, #11, #12, #15, #20, #21, #24, #27, #29, #31, #32, #33, #35, #37, #42, #43, #44
Strongly Disagree	22.2% (10)	#7, #13, #14, #16, #17, #18, #19, #25, #30, #39

Question #10, “My child is naturally very creative,” was included to find out if parents sent their creative kids to camp or if the kids were just creative when they got there, since the campers demonstrate a high level of creativity during the camp program. Most of the respondents indicated that their children are creative naturally, responding as follows: Strongly Agree 48.8% (22), Agree 35.6% (16), Neutral 6.6% (3) Disagree 8.8%

(4), and 0 Strongly Disagree (see Table 10). Here, the data suggests that parents of creative kids send them to creativity camp to get creative together with similarly creative kids. Since nearly 15.5% (7) of the respondents selected either Neutral or Disagree, perhaps this reflects a disinterest in the idea of creativity as a reason to send a child to camp. Although creativity development is indeed an important part of the mission of the camp, it is possible that some parents do not value this part of the mission. In fact, one of the most frequent questions I get from prospective camp parents about the curriculum is about the Math or Science aspect of the program. Many of our current campers heard about the camp from a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) exhibit event where Hexagon annually has a booth about its programs. Although Hexagon does include Math and Science in the daily classes, neither of these areas is a major focus of the curriculum. Considering this, Hexagon could be more purposeful about ensuring that STEM-related classes are highlighted in the parent communication.

Table 10

Camper Creativity

Answer Choices	Responses	Respondent
Strongly Agree	48.8% (22)	#2, #3, #4, #5, #7, #14, #17, #18, #20, #24, #25, #28, #31, #33, #34, #36, #37, #38, #39, #40, #42, #45
Agree	35.6% (16)	#1, #6, #9, #10, #11, #12, #13, #15, #16, #21, #22, #23, #26, #27, #43, #44
Neutral	6.6% (3)	#19, #29, #32
Disagree	8.8% (4)	#8, #30, #35, #41
Strongly Disagree	0	0

Since Hexagon camp has a leadership development program for the older campers, and it is an aspirational position, I asked the following question (question #11) to gain insight into the parents’ interest in the idea of their child developing leadership skills. The responses to “My child is a leader” were Agree 44.4% (20), Neutral 35.5% (16), Strongly Agree 13.3% (6), and Disagree 6.6% (3) (see Table 11). Parents value leadership skills in their children, often inquiring about the levels of responsibility that are given to older campers in the creation of the drama, and “graduation” from the program often means moving into a position as a Prefect (counselor) or other staff position. This system is by no means a guarantee, however, and has developed over time, as the need for Prefects

grew. This data tells me that a defined and articulated system for leadership development would be appreciated at Hexagon, where instead of simply “aging out” of the program, students would actually “graduate” and could then apply to become Prefects in a formalized way.

Table 11

Camper Leadership Skills

Answer Choices	Responses	Respondent
Strongly Agree	13.3% (6)	#4, #5, #7, #16, #18, #20
Agree	44.4% (20)	#1, #2, #15, #17, #19, #21, #22, #24, #25, #27, #28, #29, #30, #31, #37, #39, #40, #42, #43, #44
Neutral	35.5% (16)	#3, #6, #8, #9, #10, #12, #13, #14, #23, #26, #33, #35, #36, #38, #41, #45
Disagree	6.6% (3)	#11, #32, #34
Strongly Disagree	0	0

Collaboration, or the ability to work together toward one goal is an important aspect of the camp program, so the next question, #12, “My child is a follower,” was aimed at teasing out this trait. Respondents answered Neutral 48.9% (22), Disagree 28.8% (13) Agree 13.3% (6), Strongly Disagree 8.9% (4), and Strongly Agree 0 (see Table 12). These responses indicated to me that parents value leadership more and

followership less, perhaps not recognizing the importance of effective followership within a working group. At least some of the faculty have interpreted the honorary society of Head Boy or Head Girl, into which exemplary wizard campers may be nominated and admitted, as a leadership group; the administration has had to point out that leadership has never been defined as a required quality for admittance into the honorary society. There does seem to be a negative connotation associated with the idea of followership, which may need to be addressed in the future. Effective followership is at least as important a quality as leadership, and ought to be valued as such. I have observed many Hexagon campers move easily between leadership and followership roles in the drama, often exhibiting great patience with others' ideas and lauding their fellow campers for problem-solving ideas or leadership. This data says to me that articulating the importance of collaboration and teaching ways of working together in groups would be an excellent point of learning to incorporate into the Hexagon program.

Table 11

Camper Followership Skills

Answer Choices	Responses	Respondent
Strongly Agree	0	0
Agree	13.3% (6)	#1, #8, #9, #32, #36, #42
Neutral	48.9% (22)	#1, #2, #6, #10, #13, #14, #18, #19, #20, #24, #25, #26, #28, #29, #33, #35, #37, #38, #40, #41, #43, #45
Disagree	28.8% (13)	#4, #5, #7, #11, #12, #15, #23, #27, #30, #31, #34, #39, #44
Strongly Disagree	8.9% (4)	#16, #17, #21, #22

Question #13, “My child participates in extracurricular sports at school,” is related to the wide range of interest in the sport “Quidditch” played at camp. Quidditch is a wizard sport played in the Harry Potter books, an imaginative combination of soccer, basketball, and jai alai, intended to be played on broomsticks. Some of the campers love it, some hate it, but it was at one time related to the achievement of the “house cup” in which one of the school houses was awarded a winning trophy at the end of the week. This practice was done away with after seven years of the program to eliminate or reduce the sense of competition between the houses. Recently, Prefects who were campers seven years ago, requested that we reinstate the house cup tradition. At present, no one is

required to play Quidditch, and there are very few other sports offered at this camp, but we could add more sports activities to the program if the students or parents wanted them. A few students who run for their high school cross country teams have requested to get up extra early and run miles in the morning before breakfast. These students are allowed to do so, as long as a Prefect runs with them.

The responses to this question were Agree 31.1% (14), Strongly Disagree 20% (9), Strongly Agree 24.4% (11), Disagree 20% (9), and 4.4% (2) Neutral (see Table 13). Given this broad spread of representation, we should offer more sports at camp but only as part of a Wizard's Choice activity, where students may select an optional activity from a broad range of choices. I was also attempting to understand if a facet of the "outcast" self-description was related in some way, where sometimes the most popular students in a school are athletic and play on sports teams. The answers to this question were so evenly distributed that I gained no understanding of the contribution of sports to the description of outcast, other than to conclude that some Hexagon campers play extracurricular sports and some do not. These data suggest that reverting to the old tradition of having the house cup determined in large part by the winners of a Quidditch tournament is not recommended.

Table 12

Camper Extracurricular Sports Participation

Answer Choices	Responses	Respondent
Strongly Agree	24.4% (11)	#4, #5, #9, #14, #18, #19, #23, #28, #29, #34, #42
Agree	31.1% (14)	#2, #8, #10, #12, #13, #15, #17, #20, #21, #26, #31, #40, #41, #43
Neutral	0.9% (2)	#25, #32
Disagree	20% (9)	#3, #6, #7, #16, #22, #27, #33, #35, #44
Strongly Disagree	20% (9)	#1, #11, #24, #30, #36, #37, #38, #39, #45

Question #14, “My child participates in extracurricular arts at school,” was asked to see if there is a correlation between the children who participate in the arts at school and the children who choose to attend an arts-based summer camp. Most of the respondents answered that their children do participate in the arts at school, with Strongly Agree 44.4% (20), Agree 33.3% (15), Neutral 6.7% (3), Disagree 13.3% (6), and Strongly Disagree 2.2% (1) (see Table 14). As many of the Hexagon faculty have noted, many of the children perform very well in the camp “open mic” events as well as the many short, improvised plays that are part of the program. The music teacher has also noted that the kids who bring musical instruments to camp are very skilled musicians, and extra time is set aside to work with them on camp music selections. Clearly, these are children who are

partaking in the arts outside of camp. This data tells me that camp is an enrichment activity for children who excel in the arts.

Table 13

Camper Extracurricular Arts Participation

Answer Choices	Responses	Respondent
Strongly Agree	46.6% (21)	#1, #2, #4, #5, #7, #14, #16, #20, #23, #24, #25, #28, #30, #31, #34, #36, #38, #39, #40, #44, #45
Agree	33.3% (15)	#3, #9, #10, #11, #13, #15, #17, #21, #26, #27, #29, #35, #37, #42, #43
Neutral	4.4% (2)	#18, #19
Disagree	13.3% (6)	#6, #12, #22, #32, #33, #41
Strongly Disagree	2.2% (1)	#8

Question #15 was related, “My child has access to the arts at school.” I asked this question because I grew up in the same community as many of the low income children in this camp, at a time when there were no extracurricular arts of any kind offered at any of the schools, and indeed no arts in the curriculum at all, and I wondered if (and hoped that) things had changed. I was also interested to find out if those who answered Disagree or Strongly Disagree to the previous question did so because the arts were simply not available to their children as an extracurricular choice at their school. This seemed to be

at least the case for some of the respondents, as the answers to this question were: Agree 64.4% (29) and Strongly Agree 35.5% (16). No respondents selected Disagree, Neutral, or Strongly Disagree (see Table 15). I was happy to know that all of the students have access to the arts during the school year. This data underscores the conclusion that the arts are an important part of the Hexagon curriculum since the children at camp choose to participate in the arts during the school year as well.

Table 14

Camper School Arts Access

Answer Choices	Responses	Respondent
Strongly Agree	35.5% (16)	#1, #8, #14, #16, #17, #18, #20, #21, #24, #28, #29, #31, #35, #39, #40, #42
Agree	64.4% (29)	#2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #9, #10, #11, #12, #13, #15, #19, #22, #23, #25, #26, #27, #30, #32, #33, #34, #36, #37, #38, #41, #43, #44, #45
Neutral	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Strongly Disagree	0	0

Question #16, “My child shows compassion for others.” I was not surprised to see that parents overwhelmingly responded that their children show compassion for others, since this is one of the main themes of the camp dramas. Strongly Agree was selected by more than half of the respondents, at 57.8% (26), followed by Agree at 33.3% (15). Neutral was only 6.7% (3), Disagree 2.2% (1), and Strongly Disagree 0 (see Table 16). I was heartened to find that the parents recognize this about their children. The data suggests that sending a child to a camp where compassionate action is practiced through drama is an important aspect of the program for parents.

Table 15

Camper Compassion

Answer Choices	Responses	Respondent
Strongly Agree	57.8% (26)	#1, #2, #4, #5, #9, #10, #11, #15, #16, #17, #18, #20, #24, #27, #28, #30, #31, #35, #36, #37, #38, #40, #42, #43, #44, #45
Agree	33.3% (15)	#3, #6, #12, #13, #14, #21, #22, #25, #26, #29, #33, #34, #39, #41
Neutral	6.6% (3)	#7, #19, #23
Disagree	2.2% (1)	#32
Strongly Disagree	0	0

The next question, #17, was a scale rating. “On a scale of 1-5 where 5 is the highest or best rating, how would you rate your child's Hexagon experience?” The highest rating of the overall camp experience shows that parents overwhelmingly think Hexagon is a good camp experience for their children, as 95.5% (43) gave it a rating of five, and 4.4% (2) gave it a rating of four (see Table 17). No respondents selected 1, 2, or 3 on this scale. A 95.6% highest approval rating is very good, a score that is reflected in the consistent number of campers who return. There was a 79.5% return rate from 2017 to 2018, not including campers who graduated. These responses indicate to me that parents are very happy with the program, and though every program can be improved, the overall experience for the campers is a very good one.

Table 16

Camp Experience Rating

Answer Choices	Responses	Respondent
5 Highest rating	95.5% (43)	#1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8, #9, #11, #12, #13, #14, #15, #16, #17, #18, #19, #20, #21, #23, #24, #25, #26, #27, #28, #29, #30, #31, #32, #33, #34, #35, #36, #37, #38, #39, #40, #41, #42, #43, #44, #45
4	4.4% (2)	#10, #22
3	0	
2	0	
1 Lowest rating	0	

There were four more quantitative questions at the end of my survey, with response options Yes, No, and I'm Not Sure, with another option to write in something else. Three of these questions were directed at a difficult aspect of my study to examine, and that is whether or not the drama program has any lasting effect on the child after the camp is over. These three questions and their answers are as follows:

#1 -- Has the Hexagon experience contributed to the development of your child's creativity? 93.3% (42) of the parent respondents answered Yes, 0 answered No, and 6.7%

(3) answered Not Sure (see Table 18). This data tells me that most of the parents who send their children to Hexagon value the creativity development that their children experience.

Table 17

Camper Creativity Development

Answer Choices	Responses	Respondent
Yes	93.3% (42)	#1, #2, #3, #4, #5 #6, #7, #8, #9, #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, #15, #16, #17, #18, #20, #21, #22, #23, #24, #25, #26, #27, #28, #29, #30, #31, #32, #33, #34, #35, #36, #37, #39, #40, #42, #43, #44, #45
No	0	0
I'm Not Sure	6.7% (3)	#19, #38, #41

#2 – Has the Hexagon experience contributed to your child’s social-emotional development? Answers here were similar, with 88.8% (40) selecting Yes, 11.1% (5) selecting Not Sure, and 0 answering No (see Table 19). This data tells me that most of the parents who send their children to Hexagon see the contribution that the program makes to the social and emotional development of their children.

Table 18

Camper Social-Emotional Development

Answer Choices	Responses	Respondent
Yes	88.8% (40)	#1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8, #9, #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, #15, #16, #18, #20, #21, #22, #23, #24, #25, #26, #27, #28, #29, #30, #31, #32, #33, #35, #36, #38, #39, #40, #42, #43, #44, #45
No	0	0
I'm Not Sure	11.1% (5)	#17, #19, #34, #37, #41

Question #3 in this group – Has the Hexagon experience contributed to the development of your child’s moral character? led to more varied responses, with 73.3% (33) answering Yes, 26.60% (12) answering Not Sure, and 2.1% (1) answering No (see Table 20). These answers suggest that parents overwhelmingly feel that the Hexagon program is making a difference to their child’s development in various ways, especially in creativity and social-emotional intelligence. One explanation for the difference in response between creativity and social-emotional development on one hand and character development on the other is that parents may not be clear about the relationship between social-emotional development and moral character (Krettenauer, Colasante, Buchmann, & Malti, 2014). Another reason may be that since the majority of parents responded that

their child shows compassion towards others in question #16 above, they feel their child already has a strong moral compass, and they do understand the relationship between social-emotional development and moral character (Lane, Wellman, Olson, LaBounty, & Kerr, 2010).

Table 19

Camper Moral Character Development

Answer Choices	Responses	Respondent
Yes	73.3% (33)	#2, #3, #4, #5, #9, #10, #11, #12, #13, #14, #15, #16, #17, #18, #20, #21, #22, #23, #25, #26, #27, #28, #29, #30, #31, #32, #33, #35, #36, #39, #40, #43, #45
No	2.2% (1)	#34
I'm Not Sure	26.6% (12)	#1, #6, #7, #8, #17, #19, #24, #37, #38, #41, #42, #44

The last quantitative question in this section was asked on behalf of the board of directors, which is always trying to balance the Hexagon budget with an eye to scholarship opportunities, growth, and future planning: “Has Hexagon camp been a good value for the money?” Here, the parents said Yes at 93.3% (42) and Not Sure at 6.7% (3),

with 0 responding No (see Table 21). This is an important consideration given that the scholarship students' experiences are subsidized by campers whose families pay full price.

Table 20

Camp Value

Answer Choices	Responses	Respondent
Yes	95.5% (43)	#1, #2, #3, #4, #5, #6, #7, #8, #9, #11, #12, #13, #14, #15, #16, #17, #18, #19, #20, #21, #23, #24, #25, #26, #27, #28, #29, #30, #31, #32, #33, #34, #35, #36, #37, #38, #39, #40, #41, #42, #43, #44, #45
No	0	0
I'm Not Sure	4.4% (2)	#23, #43

Parent/Guardian Surveys – Qualitative Section.

I have reported the qualitative section of the survey next, in which parents were asked open-ended questions about the Hexagon camp experience. I have summarized the answers and drawn meaning from the themes reported (see Table 22). The questions are listed in the order they were asked in the survey.

#1. Why do you send your child to Hexagon? Recurrent themes in this answer include that the parents send them to this camp because the children love it or enjoy it. The campers have a sense of community where there is acceptance and encouragement to be self-expressive in a nonjudgmental atmosphere. The parents see the camp as a nurturing environment that gives their children an opportunity to be creative. The children love the drama. Parents send them to Hexagon for personal growth and development. The children's self-esteem improves at camp. Clearly, the responding parents show that their child's happiness is of paramount importance to them. From these answers, I know that the parents who send their children to Hexagon camp are involved and actively supportive parents. Many of the parents reported that their summer vacations are planned around Hexagon, which stands as the non-negotiable summer event in the life of the family. These are not parents who send their kids away to summer camp to get rid of them, they send them for the joy and growth that it gives their children.

Table 21

Parent Reasons for Sending Campers

Themes	Responses
Fun & Enjoyment	55% (25)
Creativity and Arts	33.3% (15)
Nonjudgmental Acceptance	26.6% (11)
Personal Growth & Self-esteem	22.2% (10)
Community: Friendships	17.7% (8)

#2. What do you perceive to be the overarching values that are taught at Hexagon? The parents here identified compassion and empathy, acceptance of self and others, inclusion, imagination and creativity, leadership, self-expression, self-confidence, self-discovery, integrity, kindness, joy, and fun. These responses demonstrate that parents of the Hexagon campers understand the program and support the values taught there.

Table 22

Perceived Values Taught

Themes	Responses
Personal Growth & Self-esteem	60% (27)
Creativity and Arts	55% (25)
Character Development	48.8% (22)
Nonjudgmental Acceptance	33.3% (15)
Joy and Fun	15.5% (7)

#3. What do you feel is working well at Hexagon? Given the high rankings the parents gave the overall program as referenced in Question #17 above, it was not a surprise that so many of the parents surveyed answered, “everything” to this question. Of course, a general approbation is of little use for evaluation, but it is nice to hear. Other themes in the answers to this question include creativity, compassion, community, personal growth, and development (see Table 24). Specific program aspects cited here include many references to the week-long Story Dramas, the mixed-age groups for many activities, the yearly theme, and the leadership program. The dedicated and passionate staff was also cited repeatedly, with the camp director and assistant director often cited by name.

Table 23

Working Well

Themes	Responses
Everything	22.2% (10)
Creativity & Story Drama	46.6% (21)
Character Development	37.7% (17)
Staff	26.6% (12)
Personal Growth	20.0% (9)

#4 What is your child’s favorite activity at Hexagon? Every class taught at Hexagon was mentioned at least once, with the Story Drama cited more than any other activity. There were twenty responses that spoke about the Story Drama, with the Transfiguration Ball (a weekly costume dance party), Potions (which is taught by a drama

teacher), and Divination (meditation and mindfulness) tying for second place with four mentions each (see Table 25). These responses underscored for me the importance of the Story Drama as a central activity of the camp program. Clearly, Hexagon would not be the same program if there were no overarching Story Drama each week.

Table 24

Campers' Favorite Activity

Favorite Activities	Responses
Story Drama	44.4% (20)
Transfiguration Ball	8.8% (4)
Potions	8.8% (4)
Divination	8.8% 4

#5. What do you see as Hexagon’s program weaknesses? There were very few concrete responses to this question, where most of the respondents answered “nothing,” “none,” “can’t think of any” (see Table 26). Most other responses were logistical in nature, citing the crowded sleeping arrangements in the bunk rooms, the distance this camp is from their home, website registration lag time, website communication with parents during camp (there is extremely limited internet access in the woods), even mosquitos, and the weather. One response, which was quite unexpected and revealed something about one camper’s experience that had not come up anywhere else, was a parent’s reading of her daughter’s experience at camp as being one that emphasized “gender/sexual fluidity/questioning.” This parent emphasized that this was not something that should be changed about Hexagon but suggested it as an “additional element to more

explicitly focus on for those struggling in other ways.” This statement is difficult to interpret, but I also see this as one parent’s method of letting the camp know something that he or she wasn’t comfortable just calling and talking to the staff about. The camper age range now includes the broad range of youth through puberty, it has hosted several transgender students and several non-binary students in the past few years, and several older campers have recently self-identified as homosexual. Therefore, it stands to reason that campers would talk about the topic of sexuality and sexual identity with their parents after camp. Of particular note is the fact that just before the previous summer, one of the transgender campers took his own life during the school year. This was a shocking and tragic event that was exceedingly difficult for many of the campers who knew him when he was an extremely unhappy and troubled girl, and then a more centered yet troubled boy. There was a ritual of remembrance at the end of the camp program that year, which was both dramatic and cathartic. Several parents of the young boy’s friends contacted the camp director to express appreciation for the healing that was attended to their children at this camp, where the children care so much for one another. Given this context, and at a camp where acceptance of differences is emphasized, I see this parent’s response to this otherwise straightforward question to be a reminder of the importance of communication with parents – about the Story Drama, the theme, the curriculum, activities, and everything, including the policies of acceptance of differences. This data suggests that a clear policy should be articulated regarding questions or statements of “gender/sexual fluidity/questioning,” (sic) and even adolescent development in general. This idea is supported by research and recommendations based on that research conducted by Gillard, Buzuvis, and Bialeschi (2014).

Table 25

Program Weaknesses

Themes	Responses
Nothing or None	57% (26)
Crowded Bunkhouses	6.6% (3)
Organization Issues	6.6% (3)
Logistics (mosquitos, gift shop, snacks, schedule, décor, travel time, weather)	4.4% (2)

#6. What do you see your child getting from Hexagon that they do not get in other activities or parts of their world? The emergent central theme in this response was acceptance (see Table 27). The respondents identified unconditional, full acceptance of their children and the ability to be fully themselves without judgement as something their children get uniquely from Hexagon. Another common theme that emerged was creativity and creative expression. This data supports research in camp programs, where a sense of acceptance and community is one of the most common benefits of camping programs (Baker, 2018), and is not necessarily an effect that is as unique to Hexagon as may be reported by parents.

Table 26

Unique Outcomes

Themes	Responses
Acceptance	40% (18)
Creativity	28.8% (13)

#7 What makes Hexagon special? The most frequent response to this question was the staff, the teachers, and the directors (see Table 28). Several people noted the “family” origin of the camp, and the family feeling that the camp has because of that. The next most frequent response was the feeling of unconditional acceptance that the children experience at the camp: a sense of belonging, experiencing a non-judgmental place with non-judgmental relationships. The encouragement to be creative was the next most frequent theme, with the creation of the wizardry world and its drama being noted as an important and unique feature of the camp. These data demonstrate the importance of teaching unconditional love and acceptance as a cornerstone of the camp program.

Table 27

Special Qualities

Themes	Responses
Staff	33.3% (15)
Acceptance	26.6% (12)
Creativity	15.5% (7)
Story Drama	13.3% (6)

#8 Is Hexagon a successful experience for your child? Why or why not? Every response to this question was affirmative, with many enthusiastic responses such as, “absolutely” (see Table 29). The fact that the children want to return year after year was cited most frequently by the parents as evidence that the experience is a success. Fun and enjoyment were the most frequently reported reasons why parents consider Hexagon a successful experience for their children. Other reasons cited include the creative

environment and personal growth in the area of self-confidence. Individual parents noted the positive effects of being technology-free for the duration of camp, anxiety management, and leadership skill development. These data tell me that Hexagon is a successful experience for the campers for a variety of reasons.

Table 28

Successful for Child

Themes	Responses
Fun & Enjoyment	57% (28)
Relationships, friends	22.4% (11)
Self-confidence	14.2% (7)
Creativity	12.2% (6)

#9. What do you feel could be improved in the Hexagon program? 31.1% (14) of the respondents stated that they feel Hexagon needs no improvement (see Table 30).

Three respondents said that their child complains about the food, and three other parents stated that they would like to see more photos online during the week so they can see what their child is up to at camp. Both of those “issues” are constantly being worked on at the camp, so the camp administrators may need to address communicating with the parents more about how these issues are being improved. In particular, one of the respondents said that their child complains of being hungry often, and that there isn’t enough food available. This demonstrates a miscommunication or misunderstanding because there are snacks available to the children at ALL times, and they are free to help themselves. The variety of snacks is very broad, from fresh fruit and vegetables, to

granola bars, pudding cups, and juice. These data tell me that this policy needs to be made clearer to both the parents and the children.

Table 29

Areas for Improvement

Themes	Responses
Nothing	31.1% (14)
Food	6.6% (3)
Parent Communication	6.6% (3)

#10. What are some of the greatest challenges to the Hexagon program? 28.8% (13) of the respondents stated that they could not think of what the challenges could be (see Table 31). Other respondents noted logistical challenges, such as access for low-income campers 6.6% (3), low diversity, feeding 100+ people for three weeks, staffing for just three weeks, the distance that they have to drive to bring their child to camp, and one person noted that the camp needs better or more interesting things in the gift shop. These data tell me that most of these parents are happy with the Hexagon program. Increasing diversity and scholarships are two areas that the camp constantly works to address.

Table 30

Greatest Challenges

Themes	Responses
No idea	28.8% (13)
Scholarships	6.6% (3)

#11. How could we address these challenges? There were no identifiable themes in the responses to this question, but several responses suggested raising funds for a permanent facility or for scholarships. One respondent used this opportunity to thank the camp for the scholarship their child receives as a low-income family. The data here suggests that the parents are aware of the challenges faced by the administration of the camp and the efforts of the camp to address logistical challenges.

#12 What does your child tell you about the story that is dramatized? A significant proportion of the respondents, 31 (68.8%), wrote about theatre-related elements, such as plot, theme, characters, and mystery (see Table 32). Another 10 (22.2%) wrote about the Story Drama as the favorite or most fun aspect of camp for their child. Slightly fewer, 8 (17.7%), pointed out that the scary, mysterious, unpredictable part of the Story Drama was what their child reported back to them after camp. A few respondents (4, or 8.8%) said that their child does not tell them anything about the drama. The data suggests that the Story Drama is memorable enough to the children that they tell their parents about it, and the parents see it as a theatrical experience.

Table 31

Camper Reporting about Story Drama

Themes	Responses
Drama & Theatre Skills	68.8% (31)
Fun	22.2% (10)
Scary Stuff	17.7% (8)

#13. How has the Hexagon program changed your child outside of camp? Nearly half, 22 (46.9%), of the respondents pointed out an aspect of social-emotional learning, such as self-confidence, increased compassion and empathy, and self-acceptance as changes they would attribute to their child’s experience at Hexagon camp (see Table 33). Growth in creativity, imagination, or interest in the arts was also reported at 24.4% (11 persons), with several parents noting that their child now has an interest in and participates in theatre at school. Five parents reported that their child has closer friend relationships with other campers, and that they maintain that friendship even after camp is over. These data suggest that the Hexagon camp experience contributes positively to the children’s lives even after the camp program is over.

Table 32

Camper Change

Themes	Responses
Social-Emotional Learning	48.8% (22)
Growth in Creativity	24.4% (11)
Relationships and Friends	17.7% (8)

#14. Is there anything else you would like to share with me about Hexagon?

Many respondents, 18 (40%), used this question as an opportunity to express appreciation for the director and staff (see Table 34), many reiterating the same things that they replied to the question #7, “What makes Hexagon special?” Specific statements reported that the program has been influential in their child’s growth and development. Three respondents

identified the camp director specifically as an inspiring educator, passionate, and committed to youth development.

Table 33

Other Feedback

Themes	Responses
Thank You	40% (18)
Personal Growth	20% (9)

Teacher Interviews

To maintain anonymity, interviews were conducted by another CITI-certified researcher who was familiar with the program. A response rate of 9 of 11 possible teachers were interviewed for this study. This is a response rate of 81.8%. The range of interviews was 25 minutes to 65 minutes in length, with the average length of the interviews at 48 minutes. Nearly all of the interviews, 8 of 9, interviews were conducted face to face, with one interview done over the phone. No email follow up was conducted.

Question #1: How long have you been teaching at Hexagon? Teachers responded 8 years, 8 years, 2 years, 3 years, 12 years, 7 years, 2 years, 6 years and 15 years. These data are important to my study because it means that these interview responses reflect teachers who have returned to teach in the program for more than one year, with 66% of the respondents returning for at least six years or more. This means that the teachers interviewed have a rich history with the Hexagon program and its development.

Question #2: Why do you teach at Hexagon? 77% of the teachers responded that they teach at Hexagon to share the experience with their child or children. A sentiment

shared by most of the interviewees is summed up in this quote: “We have to go. Every year. It’s more of a tradition in our family than Christmas.” Most of them originally taught at Hexagon in exchange for their child’s camp tuition (66%), but some continued, even after their child aged out of the program. One teacher uses the tuition exchange for her niece and nephew. Another one uses it for her grandchild. The rest use it for their own child or children. These data demonstrate that bartering for camp tuition is an important benefit for the teachers.

The next most frequently reported theme, To Have Fun, was identified by six respondents, or 66%. These data suggest that camp is a break from work, and recreational enjoyment is important to their experience. Next, at 44%, teachers responded that they first started teaching at Hexagon because they were invited by the camp director. These data show that personal invitation from the director is an effective staff recruitment strategy.

There was a two-way tie in the next most frequently reported themes of Personal Growth and the Camp Mission, which were identified by three respondents each, or 33%. These data suggest that teachers find the program to be beneficial to them personally, and that the mission of the camp resonates with them. Regarding teachers and children attending Hexagon as a family, this quote from one of the teachers is representative: “We don’t want to miss it. We can’t miss it. We will move our schedule to be there. We grow and learn and develop so much because of this.” As a result of the data from teacher interview question #2, I can see that the teachers of Hexagon gain personal benefit from their position as faculty. In addition to spending fun, recreational time with children that they care about, they also find the experience of teaching at Hexagon personally

enriching. As the camp director, I can infer that the enjoyable experiences of Hexagon that should be continued or expanded include Tuition Exchange, opportunities for Personal Growth, and Shared Experience. This may help address the concern of faculty attrition, encouraging teachers to continue teaching at Hexagon even after their child or children no longer attend as campers.

Question #3: What do you feel is the most successful aspect of Hexagon? A full 100% of the teachers interviewed said that Nonjudgmental Acceptance is among the most successful aspects of the Hexagon program. Two-thirds, 66%, of respondents also pointed to Personal Growth in social skills development as successful. Creativity was reported next at 44%, and 22% of the respondents offered the program structure of Story Drama or World Building as a successful aspect. One teacher summarized these areas in one quote, “I think having kids come here and feel comfortable being themselves...is the biggest strength of this place. It’s funny because, here, they’re somebody else, but I think they actually become themselves more.” By referring to kids being “somebody else,” this teacher is talking about the characters in the week-long drama that the children embody. From these data, I infer that the teachers feel that unconditional acceptance of self encourages students to be creative and take risks in role-play, which helps the children develop social skills and identity. Another teacher noted, “It gives them a sense of authority in their own life. One for the best things about it is that the kids just have a reference point to their own self formation.” From these responses, I understand that the confluence of Acceptance, Creativity, and Social-Emotional Growth and Development is the real recipe for magic at Hexagon.

Question #4: What do you feel is not working well at Hexagon? Scheduling was a common concern, with 44% of the respondents indicating that scheduling issues should be addressed. These scheduling issues include the lack of defined free time with official breaks, many classes on one day and few or none on another, classes being interrupted or changed for various reasons such as rain, swimming, or an event in the Story Drama. Half of the teachers who indicated that the schedule needs work also stated that there are pros to having a flexible schedule as well as cons, where team teaching is an option and sometimes there are rotating staff, which gives the children the opportunity to work with a variety of teachers and guest artists. They saw it as a real-life lesson as well.

One-third, 33%, of the teachers see the growth of the camp as a problem, where new kids who come in to the program don't always "fit in" and it takes time to get to know the new kids, even just their names. One of these wondered if we are aware of the impact we are having on these kids. Two teachers (22%) stated that the organization of the camp needs work, while a different two (22%) stated that the administration needs to be recognized for the tremendous amount of organization they do, and that there is constant organizational improvement. One of them stated, "I feel like they're constantly evaluating the program, listening to the people who work here, and then they make modifications...[they] will bend over backwards to make it work ...I'm surprised they can put up with all of the complaining." These data tell me that some of the teachers find the day-to-day organization and the necessarily flexible schedule to be particular challenges for them, and that there is some bickering about the administration that I don't hear about or know about. This may be an opportunity to invite some of the more experienced faculty to assist with aspects of the administrative side of the camp, such as

the class schedule. Teachers may see ways to improve the teaching schedule that administrators may not, since they are living the schedule rather than seeing it on a piece of paper. Additionally, some of these concerns could be addressed through improved communication. The data regarding the growth of camp and issues surrounding new kids tells me that teachers may need more support in how to integrate new kids into their classes and additional time to get to know them.

Question #5 What is your favorite thing about teaching at Hexagon? Two-thirds, 66% (6), of the teachers talked about the fun of learning by teaching at Hexagon, where there is flexibility and freedom to try new approaches or be creative in their teaching with No Fear of Judgement. Tied at 66% (6 persons each) were the teacher responses of fun in the Story Drama and world building as Shared Experience, citing their unique contributions to the story, the reflection and the process, most notably the moments of epiphany that they have witnessed when students figure out how to solve a dilemma, unlock a mystery, or create a solution through their own ingenuity. One teacher said, “just the ability to be creative and be magical and to improvise and world build with a group ... is one of the greatest things about teaching at [Hexagon] and flexibility to try things out that might not work.” Another described it this way:

“I like the interaction with the students and the teachers, and the surprise developing of the climax of ... the long-form Story Drama when it finally unfolds, [is] reflected on, and processed. That’s the ...best part about [Hexagon]. ... or contributing to the creation of [the big moment].”

Creativity, both teachers’ own creativity and the creativity of the children, was identified by 44% (4 persons) as their favorite thing about teaching at Hexagon. Another 44% (4

persons) identified the kids themselves as their favorite thing about teaching at Hexagon – playing with them, learning from them, trusting them, and watching their empowerment through risk-taking, seeing them flourish, and riding high on their enthusiasm. These data suggest that teaching and learning both bring joy through Shared Experience and Significant Relationships. The data also points to world building through the Story Drama as a powerful shared experience that provides teachers with opportunities to participate in experiential learning with their students.

Question #6: What frustrates you about teaching at Hexagon? More than half, 55% (5), of the teachers said nothing frustrates them about teaching at Hexagon, and 55% turned this question on themselves by talking about what they perceive as their own shortcomings in teaching, rather than the Hexagon program, including, “sometimes my lesson plan doesn’t click.” A part-time teacher said, “I wish I could commit more time to being here,” another said, “my point of view isn’t really academic,” and another one stated, “kids like a lot more fun experiences than I realized.” Three other comments were equally represented: 22% (2 persons) said the flexible schedule can be frustrating, 22% (2 persons) said that not knowing what’s going to happen next in the drama can be frustrating, and 22% (2 persons) talked about team teaching or collaboration, however, one said “I love team teaching,” and the other one said “collaboration can be frustrating.” These data suggest to me that teaching at Hexagon is a varied and rewarding experience for the teachers, and that the program is set up for teachers to try new things without judgment, including the option to team teach or not, according to their preference or desire to try it.

Question #7: How has Hexagon affected your teaching outside of camp? All the interviewees described a change in attitude towards teaching outside of camp attributed to teaching at Hexagon. These attitudes include: a new-found zest for teaching, flexibility in thinking, patience with students and listening, higher expectations of their students, creativity in teaching, and being more open to the inner world of the child.

Two themes tied at 55% (5 persons) in response to this question: use of Improvisation or Role-Play in the classroom, and Relationship Building. These data suggest that the significant relationships developed between teachers and students at Hexagon camp positively impacted teachers' attitudes toward teaching in general, and their use of drama in the classroom specifically. Improvisation or role-play as a teaching method can be a very effective technique for a wide variety of subjects – those taught at Hexagon camp or elsewhere – science, reading, language and culture, history.

(Suleimanova, Yaremenko, & Vodyanitskaya, 2018). As a result of the data from teacher interview question #7, I can surmise that all of the respondents perceived that teaching at Hexagon camp positively affects their teaching outside of camp. As the camp director, I can infer that the faculty of Hexagon apply what they're able to practice without judgement at Hexagon to their teaching responsibilities outside of camp – namely, improvisation, creativity applied to lesson planning, relationship building by taking time to listen to their students, patience, and understanding.

Question #8: What observations do you have about the campers' experience at Hexagon? A significant majority, 88% (8), of the teachers interviewed noted the high return rate of the campers. The 2017-2018 return rate of 79.5%, (which does not include campers who did not return because they graduated or aged out of the program) is typical

for Hexagon camp. These respondents pointed out the value of witnessing the children's change over time, the depth and significance of the relationships developed over time, and the layering of the lessons learned through world-building traditions and rituals. More than half, 55% (5), of these respondents said that because of this return rate there is great cohesion. This consistency contributes to a sense of belonging, of kinship, and the community of Hexagon, frequently referred to as a "family." One-third, 33% (3), of the faculty interviewed pointed out that identity establishment is an important through-line at Hexagon camp. This quote reflects similar statements of the other teachers:

The greatest opportunities are seeing kids who suffer with anxiety and no confidence and low self-esteem and depression and gender identity, come to this camp and they can work out some of those things in their lives in a safe environment, go back to their everyday lives, come back the next year and if they want to continue to be that same person that was at camp last year they can modify that, even. And so we see this constant growth and evolution of these kids in a really positive, healthy environment.

This long quote is important because it sums up the experience of so many of the campers over time as well as the flexibility the camp provides the children in relation to their positive identity development.

One-third, 33% (3), of the faculty interviewed stressed the importance of the mixed age groups and adults role playing with children, and that this policy contributes to group cohesion. "Group cohesion is a huge observation. Without any exception that I've noticed, there's a huge effort to include everyone.... All the sizes and ages of children become part of the story... belonging is the key word here." These data underscore the

general success of the program, where a 79.5% return rate indicates that the Hexagon community coheres from year to year, and teachers witnessing Growth over Time in identity and social-emotional development. The sense of belonging is also underscored by these data, demonstrating that children feel emotionally secure at Hexagon camp and effectively negotiate the process of individuation within a familiar support system.

Question #9: What do you perceive to be the relationship of the Story Drama to the children's social-emotional learning? All of the faculty interviewed suggested that social-emotional growth is at the core of the Story Drama enacted at Hexagon camp. One respondent stated,

“one of the social-emotional benefits [of the drama] is having kids try on roles and letting them experience not real fear but fear and realizing they can survive it. It's very ... impactful...I think that the social-emotional learning is trying on roles in a safe environment and trying on what it's like to be afraid in a safe environment.”

The emotional intensity of the Story Drama provides an opportunity to reflect on feelings and actions, to learn from them. Another respondent said, “...we're giving them a platform to discuss how they feel, and we're showing them that we respect, and we value their opinion and their feelings on the matter. And I think that's really important.” These data tell me that students feel safe expressing their thoughts and feelings about the Story Drama, and that the teachers consider those expressions seriously.

The next most frequently reported theme, at 44% (4 teachers) was Significant Relationships. Once again, the benefits of mixed-age groups were noted by the teachers, pointing out mentorship and leadership as qualities that the younger campers witness and

strive to achieve over the years. These mixed-age groups are seen as Significant Relationships by the teachers, helping to break down age-related stereotypes and binding the kids together through emotional support.

Also reported at a 44% frequency (4 teachers) was the theme of Deep Learning with Lasting Impact. These teachers noted that the high emotions that occur during the drama concretize learning and make it memorable. Even many years later, staff and campers both recall with vivid detail the feelings and thoughts they had during high moments of theatrical tension in a Story Drama. The Moral and Ethical Development theme was also reported at 44% (4 persons) as the teachers spoke of having witnessed the children's growth in empathy and compassion over time, demonstrated understandings of point of view or seeing from the eyes, thoughts, and feelings of another person or character. These data are important in that it says to me that the teachers see the social-emotional benefits of the Story Drama, and that they understand how important the experience of the Story Drama is to the children and to the learning that occurs at the camp. This is significant because even though summer camp is not part of a formal educational system, the experience of the Story Drama is more than frivolous fun; there is deep learning that takes place.

Question #10: What do you perceive to be the relationship of the Story Drama to the children's character development? All of the respondents suggested that the Story Drama contributes to the character development of the children, in different ways. The most common point made was the opportunity to practice ethical thoughts and behaviors, to reflect upon them, and make the felt experience an overt and conscious one. In the words of one of the faculty:

They get to practice [courage and integrity] in an environment where it's comfortable and safe for them to fail and to try new things and then, once they realize that they can do that, they ...adapt those characteristics to themselves. It feels good... it also helps them build relationships. And helps them be good people, I think they really hold on to that, and take that with them into the [real] world.

These data underscore the situation in which it is very difficult to play a person of courage and integrity in the on-going Story Drama but to be vicious or disingenuous in interpersonal relationships at the same time. While being a good, wise character in the Story Drama is highly valued, the continuous role-play as a wizard character within the overall camp program makes them one and the same. Triumph in the Story Drama is reflected as a personal win for each child and, according to the teachers interviewed, these personal triumphs of courage and integrity become part of the child as he or she individuates, over time, in real life.

Other respondents (66%) pointed out the fact that every Story Drama has not only a defined moral but also layers of gray value beyond the black and white binary of Good versus Evil. Honing a sense of, or an understanding of, right and wrong is a skill that can be developed through the Story Drama, a sharpening of values. One of the teachers responded:

Usually in the Story Drama there is a demand for some skill set that is appropriate to addressing the negative force, and as a character, each student finds what they can contribute and also starts to show an appreciation for others who have things that will help solve it. So, it builds their openness to other peoples' strengths and

talents and it encourages their own. And that's very character building. I know it's just make believe, but in those spots, they get to be a hero using whatever they can fathom or pull up. It's very empowering, I believe. They think about it at night when they go back to their dorms, and when they go home, reviewing what they added into saving someone, or helping.

These data underscore the all-encompassing nature of the role-play at Hexagon, where playing a character that is skilled in various ways, including the skill of integrity, is a lived experience. Four of the respondents, 44%, discussed building moral life skills, such as strength and courage, by practicing them within the safety of the Story Drama play. These data suggest that the Story Drama gives children a unique opportunity to formulate a personal framework for good moral character by trying on and practicing ethical excellence.

Question #11: What do you perceive to be the relationship of the Story Drama to the children's creativity development? All the respondents described the Story Drama as integral or foundational to the children's creativity development at Hexagon camp. Eight of the faculty, 88%, spoke of creativity as a skill that is practiced during the Story Drama, pointing out that the elements of world building such as plot development and character definition are shared with the campers as they grow in experience. The campers with more experience in the Story Drama are given increasing responsibility to make decisions about what will happen in the drama, though anyone at any age or any group can contribute and will be supported for their contributions. The shared experience of creativity is at the heart of the Story Drama. This is an example of social imagination (Edmiston, 2013) which allows persons to learn and experience in collaboration and

community that which one cannot learn alone. As one faculty member described it, "...there's something to be said about realizing there are adults and peers who embrace creativity and that it is a valued thing, because I don't think that traditional schools necessarily assess that at the level that perhaps they should." There is tremendous creative output at the camp, and there are high expectations of the children's creativity within the Story Drama. The children rise to the occasion, and 77% (7) of the respondents described witnessing a very high level of creativity output in relation to the Story Drama, describing it as "a celebration of imagination," "a wide range of creative generation," "fantastic," "creativity is an impactful aspect of the drama," and "you can SEE their minds in action." These data suggest to me that the Story Drama provides a central focus for the collective creativity of the Hexagon students and faculty.

Question #12: Does the social-emotional learning from the camp transfer to the lives of the campers outside of the summer camp program? And what makes you think that? All of the respondents suggested that yes, the learning transfers to the campers' "real world" lives. Eight of the respondents, 88%, gave examples of witnessing Change Over Time, a theme that was related more frequently by respondents who have taught at the camp for more summers. These data suggest to me that the high return rate of the campers is an important aspect of their social-emotional growth, and that perhaps the children can test and then re-test what they have experienced in their own development, solidifying their identity over multiple summers.

All of the respondents gave examples of children at the camp whom they witnessed as having made advances in prosocial behavior such as greater confidence, generosity, self-awareness, leadership, empathy, and kindness. Four of the respondents,

44%, gave examples of witnessing connections made during camp that followed through during the regular school year by supporting one another's events, creating music or dramas together to be shared at camp the following year, and planning reunions throughout the year to maintain the friendships and get a quick dose of Hexagonal love. Sometimes they need that dose very badly, for life is often difficult for youngsters in our modern world. One of the most veteran Hexagon teachers stated:

For many of our students at Hexagon, who they are here is a life preserver for who they are during the normal school year. But I really would argue that when they grow up and have more control it will have an impact on who they are as adults. I don't know if they go back to their [traditional] school somewhat different ... but inside they know that there's more to life after middle school or life after high school. As someone who works with middle school kids, when that life is going so badly for so many kids, knowing that it's going to get better, that that exists, is huge.

Some of the teachers whose children also attend the camp gave examples from their own family experience. One said, "my own three kids often say this is very [Hexagonal], you know, when they're making a big decision about something, or in a social-emotional conflict they tend to resolve it using Hexagon camp strategies." These data suggest to me that the Hexagon camp experience has long lasting value for the campers and contributes positively to their social-emotional development over time and beyond the camp. As a result of the data from interview question #12, I can determine that the respondents value the social-emotional growth that is engendered by the Hexagon camp experience.

Question #13: Does the creativity development from the camp transfer to the lives of the campers outside of the summer camp program? And what makes you think that? All of the respondents said that yes, the creativity development transfers to the lives of the campers outside of the camp program, although 33% (3) of the respondents suggested that their real answer is yes and no. These respondents suggested that the kids who come to Hexagon are already creative, and they come to Hexagon camp to flourish with other creative kids. That said, 22% (2) of that same group also suggested that at Hexagon camp, they learn new or different ways to be creative.

Seven of the respondents, 77%, suggested that the kids of Hexagon camp participate in the arts at school, and gave examples of kids who were in plays at school, create costumes, design video games, make films, write songs, write plays or stories, play in a band, or publish CDs. One camper wrote and self-published a fantasy novel, donating all of the proceeds from the book to the camp scholarship fund. Of course, most of the people who purchased the book were other Hexagon campers. This is a good example of the kind of support the kids give each other, even during the regular school year.

One-third, 33% (3), of the respondents pointed out that many of the children look forward to camp all year long, making plans and practicing for the open mic nights, rehearsing via the internet with other camp friends. One camper taught three others how to play the ukulele via the internet so they could perform a song together at camp the next summer. These data suggest to me that not only does creativity come in many forms, and is difficult to measure, in some cases it is difficult to define. Clearly Hexagon camp does not MAKE kids creative, but rather it gives them a place to apply it and a network of

others with whom to create, and a focus for the work of creativity. These data also suggest that creativity is an ability that is best seen in tangible artifacts: a song, a dance, an invention, a Story Drama. Creativity is an ability that must be applied to something – turning imagination into reality. For the purpose of this study, creativity, ethical character formulation, and social-emotional learning all contribute to the child’s development of self. For if a child can imagine herself as an ethical person who has sound social-emotional skills, she can create the person she wants to be. The mission of Hexagon camp is to provide a place where children can practice doing exactly that. From this data, it appears that Hexagon camp is integral to and a successful part of the fulfillment of the sponsoring theatre company’s mission.

Question #14: How involved have you been with the Story Drama? Seven of the respondents, 77%, indicated that they Contributed Uniquely to the Story Drama, based on the plot or the subplots. Sometimes their contributions were related to the classes they teach, but oftentimes their contributions were borne of just being part of the Hexagon community, or their particular role there. The Potions teacher, for example, sometimes works with the children to create a potion that is used in the drama, or the Divination teacher may know a charm or have the children use a divining technique to come up with an answer to a riddle or a way to see the future. The Code Making and Breaking teacher may teach the children a way to make ciphers that are then used to solve a difficult riddle in the Story Drama, or the Magical Creatures teacher may show the children how to look at their DNA -- and compare it to werewolf DNA -- as part of the drama, too.

Four of the respondents, 44%, specifically plan their lessons to tie in with the Story Drama, based on the theme or in response to the Camp Director’s request for a

specific element to undergird the drama. One-third, 33% (3), teachers pointed out that the Camp Director plans the drama and they don't get involved unless she specifically asks them to, even though they are there to witness the story. One-third, 33% (3), said that they are not much involved in the drama except as a spectator. The remaining third, 33% (3), said that their Unique Contribution is sometimes processing the drama in discussion with the children and relating it to the children's real world lives, which enriches the learning from the drama, especially the social-emotional aspects of the experience.

Question #15: How could the planning of the Story Drama be more efficiently conducted? The most frequently reported theme at 55% (5 persons) was Director Plans the drama, suggesting that the theme is chosen, the plot is designed, and the action is planned day-to-day by the director, and that this method works well. One of the respondents in this category suggested that directing the drama is a thankless task, where it's impossible to use suggestions from everybody and some people get upset when their idea isn't used. Another pointed out that the method overall has improved over the years, with practice. All of these respondents stated that the director is very skilled at planning and directing the drama. This data tells me that a major change to the drama planning process may not be necessary, but that one central director should probably stay in charge of the plot.

The next most frequently reported response was a three-way tie. One-third, 33% (3 persons), flatly stated that efficient isn't better. "I frankly don't think efficiency is the goal when it comes to creativity." This answer is of significance to me because it demonstrates that teachers understand the greater mission of the Story Drama, which is a helpful consideration when the drama is sometimes inconvenient or makes the teaching

schedule suddenly difficult to deal with. Another 33% (3 persons) suggested that an advance plan would be preferable, even if it is just the major plot points to be shared secretly with the faculty before camp starts. Yet another 33% (3 persons) described what they thought was the existing set-up, where “someone usually throws out a theme,” and then “the oldest group brainstorms a plot,” and “they have one class a day for that,” which is entirely inaccurate. These data are very valuable to me as a stakeholder who plans the drama because they suggest that a change to the current method of planning the Story Drama should be made, while keeping the creativity at the forefront. These data also demonstrate that making the planning method overt may clear up some of the mystery surrounding how the Story Drama comes to be, since the children love the mystery aspect of the plot and not knowing what is going to happen or how the conflict will resolve; however, the teachers could better plan their theme-related classes if they knew in advance more of what was going to happen than just the theme. One of the respondents related that he inadvertently skewed the drama one year by letting the campers in on an aspect of the plot that was supposed to be kept secret, to be discovered by the campers as part of the plot. This data tells me that a balance must be struck between enough communication that the teachers feel comfortable, and enough mystery that the drama can unfold naturally according to a plan.

Question #16: How do the Story Dramas impact your teaching at Hexagon? Two-thirds, 66% (6 persons), of the respondents said that they tie their lessons to the themes of the Story Drama. More than half, 55% (5 persons), said that they let the kids lead the way, if the Story Drama themes or plot points make their way into the classroom. Similarly, 55% (5 persons) said that they use the themes or the moral of the Story Drama

as Essential Questions that relate the real world to the magical one. The reflection and discussion often take place during classes, as pointed out by several respondents: “I often process what they’re thinking during my class,” said one. “My curriculum is driven by the overarching theme,” said another. These data are significant to this study because they underscore the importance of the annual theme, which has been sometimes purely action-oriented in the past. The theme is more useful when it is relatable to the social-emotional focus of the entire camp experience. These data also demonstrate the importance of having experienced, thoughtful faculty on the Hexagon staff.

Question #17: What are the greatest challenges at Hexagon? How could these challenges be overcome? Over half, 55% (5 persons), of the respondents suggested organizational challenges were the most pressing ones at Hexagon, including scheduling, rotating staff, or staff attrition. Four respondents, 44%, talked about New Kids being a challenge, in that it takes some time for new kids to be integrated into the whole family/community aspect of the camp. Also, some new kids come in with behavior issues or other personal challenges that the staff don’t know about. Two individuals, 22%, discussed physical aspects of the camp itself, such as the heat and humidity which are sometimes overwhelming, or the facilities, only some of which are air conditioned. These data are significant because they indicate that the challenges of Hexagon are ones that can be addressed through changes to the day-to-day organizational set up and facilities management.

Question #18: What else would you like to tell me about teaching at Hexagon? Is there anything that we didn’t cover? Two-thirds, 66% (6), of the respondents talked about how much they see Hexagon as a family, and that they experience true,

unconditional love there. Two-thirds, 66% (6 persons), also said that Hexagon brings them much joy, it's a fun experience, and that it gives them something to look forward to each year. More than half, 55% (5 persons), talked about Shared Experiences, including adults and children together, that they all feel welcome. Four individuals, 44%, talked about Acceptance, that Hexagon is a place where they feel free to be themselves, and that children can be themselves as well. First, these data are important because none of the respondents brought up something that hadn't been referred to in other questions. This is important to me as a researcher because it appears that I asked all of the most important questions. Second, these data are important because I can infer the reasons these faculty have come back to Hexagon year after year, a consideration that is especially significant as it relates to faculty attrition. Once I determine why these faculty return year after year, I can build those reasons into the structure of the camp, and more people will be likely to stay for longer and longer.

Camper Focus Groups

I conducted two focus groups of campers who have been to Hexagon camp for at least two years. Permission to participate was sent to the parents, as both parental consent and child consent forms (Appendices E and F). The focus group discussion questions were sent to the children in advance (Appendix G). I recorded the focus group discussions, taking notes and transcribing them later. One was attended by 12 campers and the other was attended by 6 campers. The participants responded to my questions, but I also allowed them to take the discussion in directions that were relevant to them.

My first question was: How many summers have you been coming to camp? The participants stated they had been coming to camp for 3, 6, 8, 5, 8, 7, 5, 9, 2, 12, 5, 15, 5, 3, 4, 6 and 7 summers. I asked this question because I wanted to have data from campers who were really invested in the program and chose to return. This data tells me that the participants in the focus group return again and again, care about the camp, and feel they derive value from the program.

Question #2: What is your favorite thing about camp? The most common response to this question was related to feelings of Acceptance: no judgement, finding friends, finding others who identified themselves as “outcasts,” a term which the campers use in a positive way, as if they set themselves apart from undesirable qualities in the world outside of camp. The next most common response could be described as aspects of Individuation: children stated that they felt they could be themselves, express themselves, develop confidence, and try on new personal traits at camp. Equal in response to Individuation was Community: the children stated they “feel at home,” they love the “people connection,” being part of a community, and working toward the common good. Finally, campers described aspects of Creativity: being able to escape the conformity of the outside world while at camp, and the joy they feel in creating traditions that they share and world-building. These data are significant to this study because they give me a clear picture of why the participants come to camp, and these are things that should be given a measure of attention, to be supported in the overall camp plan.

Question #3: What is your least favorite thing about camp? In answer to this question, the participants all agreed that the worst thing about camp was leaving at the end of camp. The rest of the answers were mostly about logistical or personal issues at

camp, such as not always liking the food, having to switch beds halfway through the week, having to give up their cell phone (although this was also described as a good thing), and not enough Quidditch games. A few of the children said that incorporating new kids was a challenge that sometimes caused them problems. This data was significant to me because it highlighted a drawback to the phenomenon of the high rate of returning campers: the difficulty of integrating new campers into the culture, habits, and traditions that have been created by the returnees. The camp director places a great deal of emphasis on the importance of welcoming newcomers, turning strangers into friends, and bringing newbies into the fold with joy. This data tells me that more needs to be done to officially welcome new people, perhaps to create a more formalized orientation for them, or mandated ice breakers for groups to conduct.

Question #4: What are the most challenging things about camp? Again, the campers pointed out the difficulties of incorporating new kids into the program. Several children stated that they found it a challenge to always see the best in people and to practice compassion or leadership (qualities described by the campers as the Hexagon way, or Hexagon expectations.) Other, individual answers to this question included exhaustion and the difficulty of being on time for classes. These data tell me that there may be an expectation of character excellence that is made visible to the children in the challenge of having to accept new people into their sphere – a challenge that sometimes stretches them to the point of being uncomfortable. I cannot help but see this as a good thing.

Question #5: Do you have any ideas for how to improve camp? The campers brainstormed a list of minor but actionable steps that could be easily taken to make the

day-to-day experience of camp easier for them and would address some of their frustrations which are borne of crowded quarters, extremely busy days, and group dynamics. These included rules for the little campers who tend to run around disruptively during Chillax (rest period), a defined passing period between classes so they aren't late, clocks on campus so they know what time it is since no one is allowed to have electronic devices at camp, rules for flashlight time at night after lights out so they can read, at least one "Derfing" (do-nothing) class during the week, and more competitive games like Quidditch. From these data, I understand that the overall camp experience is positive, since these suggestions are minor ones and in each case, there were pros and cons discussed. There began to emerge with this discussion a perspective of "experienced" campers versus "newbies," and the younger campers were referred to as the "littles" which became more defined as a term for the youngest campers as we discussed the believability of the Story Dramas.

Question #6: What were your favorite Story Dramas? This question opened a flood gate of sharing story experiences, with every participant retelling dramas from the last fifteen years, throwing in highlights and memories of dramatic climaxes, emotion-filled moments, and some arguing over titles for the stories. They chimed in with details and enthusiastic agreement over the best moments and their favorite tales. Aspects of the stories that gained the most agreement as favorites included the most complex tales, the ones that were built upon group goals, stories that used the physical environment of the camp (a nature-rich environment in a forest setting), and stories where they were required to solve mysteries. Many of the stories recalled were from more than five years ago, but were told with excitement, emotional perspective, and detail. These data tell me that the

Story Dramas were memorable to the students, and that they brought up emotional memories for the students.

Question #7: What do you tell your folks about the Story Drama? Responses to this question were very divided. Slightly more than half of the participants said that they tell their parents everything about the dramas, or at least the highlights. They spoke of having great pride in the story. Two participants said that they wrote school essays about their camp Story Drama experiences. A less common response suggested that “outsiders don’t understand” and that they and their friends see it as an adventure camp, but adults think it’s an “imaginary camp.” Some adults think the dramas are “cute,” which is frustrating to them. The term “outcasts” was brought up again here, when some of the participants talked about keeping the Hexagon camp experience to themselves when in the “outside world.” The group as a whole felt united in their outcast-ness, and the consensus was that the drama was integral to their experience of being set apart from their peers in the “outside world.” These data suggest that the phenomenon of feeling as though they can “be themselves” at Hexagon but not outside camp, includes the imaginative participation in the dramas which tend to be emotionally charged experiences. Many of them hold the stories as sacred, not to be shared with non-participants. The intensity of their drama work not being taken seriously by people outside of camp was a shared experience mourned by the entire group. These data tell me that the Story Drama is critically important to the participants, defining the camp experience for them.

Question #8: What makes the Story Drama fun for you? The most common emergent theme in this discussion was the theme of Scariness. This was a universal

response. The participants cited the “fear factor” of either being scared, or in the case of the campers in the oldest group (the Story Makers) to DO the scare or participate in the creation of the scary experiences for the younger campers. They agreed that the scare gives it “spice.” Encountering the Unknown or Unexpected and the scary Surprises was part of this theme as well. The next most common theme was Adventure. The participants suggested that the Story Drama was like being in literature, where a “quest” or a “mystery or a problem solved” was a goal achieved with lessons learned. The next most common theme was Believability, both in acting so that others will find their participation or performance authentic and also in letting themselves Believe. Everyone knows the Story Drama is made up, but no one ever steps out of character unless there is an actual emergency. They pointed out that the Story Dramas feel real to the “Littles,” the youngest campers who are sometimes removed from the action by the director when she deems an upcoming scare to be too intense or too close to bedtime for the 8 and 9 year olds to be present or participate.

Other themes that emerged in response to this question were Inclusion (in the drama) and being Trusted with Responsibility. For example, in a recent drama that involved a guest artist named Dr. Hoo-Doo, who had stolen the animus from the oldest group of campers by locking their spirits inside cornhusk dolls that they had made, which they thought he stole. The wizards found themselves divided up into five different escape rooms. In order to rescue the campers’ animus and save them from Dr. Hoo-Doo, they had to escape from the rooms by solving a series of riddles, puzzles, and challenges. They were in mixed-age groups which seemed random (but were in actuality carefully selected by the faculty). Once in the escape rooms, the wizards were left to their own devices to

figure out how to get out – taking care of each other, and making sure that everyone was safe and accounted for and had contributed a skill or an idea to the unlocking.

Even the youngest campers cited their pride in being Trusted with Responsibility in the drama. For example: in a drama about the huge spider that gathered and kept stories in her nest in the woods, the youngest campers were given the responsibility of the story's inciting incident – running up the hill, screaming about a spider sighting, and describing the monster to the rest of the group in great detail – though no one had actually seen it, as it was a huge puppet that hadn't even been built yet. Their commitment to acting in this most important part of the drama was a moment of great pride for them as the rest of the Story Drama rested on their success in convincing the entire camp that the monstrous spider was real and was in distress. They did an amazing job of it, and they knew it.

Yet another example of being Trusted with Responsibility was demonstrated by the wizards who planned a route to traverse the haunted forest at night, during the full moon, in order to pluck the Moonlight Iris (a flower that glows in the dark and only blooms during a full moon). The forest was haunted by phantasms that resembled the oldest campers (the story makers, in costume) who shrieked and taunted the flower hunters on their quest through the very frightening forest. They all made it to the flower despite the dangers, the high dramatic tension and emotional peril, helping each other navigate the path through the woods to the fairyland meadow and back again.

These data are significant for me because they underscore the importance of the emotional content of the design of future Story Dramas. These examples are among the most memorable experiences from the Story Dramas as cited by the students. From these

emergent themes, I understand that children love to meet challenges that are emotionally intense with imagination and responsibility.

Question #9: How do you feel when you're acting in the Story Dramas? With this question, I wanted to find out if the children were able to analyze their experiences from a position of cognitive reflection on emotional experience. I wanted to find out if they have achieved a level of self-awareness that would allow them to dissociate from their acting in the Story Dramas to be able to talk about their emotions from a perspective outside of the characters they played. The most common theme that emerged was a sense of Power. Students spoke of feeling "like gods" and "in control" like they were "creating reality" that gave them a "rush of power and emotion." The next most common theme was Special: they felt "high" "excited" "the coolest" "hyped," and "happy." Several participants said that they felt Loved, that people care about them. The participants agreed with the one student who said it feels real. Another student pointed out that there is an expectation to take it seriously, and another said it is like a rite of passage. These data are significant because they demonstrate the importance of the process of world building that takes place at the camp. What happens in the Story is ultimately lived out by the students and is an important aspect of the overall experience. Contributing to the outcome of a Story, witnessed by the entire community and seen as a rite of passage, is an important experience that should be planned for in creating the Story Drama.

Question #10: Do you ever think about or talk about the Story Dramas during the regular school year? All of the participants stated that Yes, they think about them and talk about them after camp all the time. The Story Drama is the thing they talk about the most, though it was difficult to separate the overall camp experience from the Story Dramas

because they are interwoven. The Story Drama happens within the overall world of the camp. Two of the participants wrote essays about the dramas for school. This question brought out many stories of participants thinking about or talking about their camp Drama experiences when outside of camp. One emergent theme here was Grounding: several students said that the camp was a place where they could be truly happy and felt grounded. Several others agreed that the Story Drama made them a better person and changed their perspective. These data tell me that the Story Drama and camp experience are influential in the lives of the children outside of camp and that the camp experiences carry over into the lives of the children who attend.

Question #11: How does Hexagon help you understand and control your thoughts and feelings in your life outside of camp? With this question, I was interested to know if the children were aware of the influence, if any, that Hexagon camp has on their lives outside of camp. The strongest theme that emerged in this discussion was the theme of Personal Growth. The participants talked about changing and improving themselves and each other, feeling free to try on a new personal trait, and to step back from day-to-day experience to consider life. There was solid agreement with one participant's statement, "Camp for me, is a time of healing. If there's something I don't like about myself or I want to change, I know that I can do it at Hexagon." The next strongest theme that emerged was Moral Character. Students talked about how all the dramas teach a lesson, that they reflect on and use the lessons in their outside lives. The next strongest theme was Confidence. Students said that the Story Drama gave them confidence and courage, helped them with anxiety in the outside world. There was general agreement when one student said, "because of [Hexagon,] I can go out and face people that I look up to and be

just as brave as them.” The next strongest theme was Outcasts. In the outside world, many of the students feel different from their peers and consider themselves to be Outcasts, unique in the typical world. They feel that they are united in their uniqueness at Hexagon and aren’t judged for it. Finally, the theme of Empathy was expressed by several of the participants. They feel they are more empathetic because of the Story Dramas, and that Empathy is an important quality for human beings to have. These data are significant to my study because they tell me that the students of Hexagon are changed by their experiences there, and that the stories we create together have lasting impact on their lives outside of the camp.

Question #12: How does Hexagon help you be more creative in your life outside of camp? Since Hexagon is touted as a “creativity and role-play camp,” I was interested to know if the children who attended the camp were impacted by its creative focus. The most common theme to emerge is the theme of Social Imagination. In this theme, the students spoke of inspiring and being inspired by each other. They gave many examples of being invested in their own creative output and in celebrating others’ creativity. For example, in a drama wherein the Queen of the Night Sprites begged the wizards of Hexagon to defend the Night Sprites against the River Trolls that had decimated their numbers, the wizards worked together to hone their fighting skills (stage combat, taught in Defense Against Darkness class.) The River Trolls, however, had cast a spell on the wizards’ magical eyesight and they were invisible to them. How difficult would it be to fight off a huge River Troll if you could not even see it? In groups of two and three, the wizards practiced fighting an invisible foe, and when the River Trolls attacked the defenseless Queen, the wizards took the Trolls down in a mighty one-sided battle, using

only their bodies – no weapons, no wands – the Trolls were defeated and the Night Sprites were freed from River Troll tyranny, forever. Watching the wizards imagine the invisible trolls *together* was a sight to behold, but the real evidence of social imagination came during the “stories of the battle” when each group of two and three wizards described what they saw and did. “He was at least eight feet tall, as big as that tree!” “I kicked that troll in the shin while Hercules (a wizard) jumped on its back and poked it in the eye!” Their work together, and their celebration of each other’s work was an example of inspiring each other in creativity, while at camp.

Additionally, they inspire each other’s creativity outside of camp. Focus group participants talked about paintings and stories they wrote outside of camp based on Story Dramas from camp experience. One of the older campers recorded and released a CD of original songs, using many of the song-writing techniques he learned at camp. He sang all the vocal parts, including the harmonies, and played all the instruments himself. This camper told everyone in a focus group that he felt he was only able to do that because of the creativity, support, and confidence that he got from camp.

Another example of the campers inspiring each other is the incredible support they show each other at the twice-weekly Open Mic night, where the campers encourage each other to sing, dance, tell jokes, or play an instrument, without fear of judgement. When a first-timer gets up for Open Mic and tries to squeak out a disclaimer such as, “this isn’t going to be very good,” or “I haven’t really practiced,” the other campers shout out, “no excuses!” “you can do it!” and “we got you!” After the performance, there is huge applause for the performer and shouts of, “you did it!” and it is great to see the newbie glow in acceptance and appreciation. Everyone has something to contribute.

They spoke of the importance of the processes of creativity as a group over the products of creativity individually. They said that the camp was an inspiring environment, where they felt recognized, celebrated, and trusted with artistic choices and materials. Another theme that emerged with nearly the same frequency as Social Imagination was Creative Mindset. The participants talked about how they see themselves as creative because of their experiences at Hexagon camp, that it has changed their perspective on themselves, that it is creatively transformative. Another theme that emerged is Personal Growth. The students did not differentiate between creativity and personal growth but rather conflated these two concepts with confidence, bravery, happiness, trust, and responsibility. The students gave many concrete examples of ways that the creativity processes they learned at camp have carried over into their lives outside of camp, notably: choreographing dance for the school musical; writing and publishing a CD of original music; designing costumes for school plays; auditioning for school plays and choir; choreographing stage fights for school theatre; creative writing; creating sculpture; learning to play the ukulele or the tin penny whistle; and storytelling or participating in speech activities. These data are valuable to my study because they confirm that the students of Hexagon are enriched in their creativity, and that that enrichment carries over into their lives outside of camp.

Observations, etc.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) has defined five areas of competency in critical social and emotional life skills: Self-Awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision-making (CASEL, n.d.). In analyzing the data from this study through a

framework of social-emotional learning, themes of self-awareness, self-management, responsible decision-making, social awareness, and relationship skills emerged clearly. Self-awareness was presented in terms of creating a fictional character that the campers could sustain for a week, deciding what parts of themselves and their individuality they wanted to bring out in their fictional character. Characteristics most frequently identified included courage, kindness, and nonjudgmental compassion toward others. Social awareness and responsible decision-making themes presented in response to the Story Dramas as concern for the well-being of the community overall, making decisions, and taking action to benefit everyone, regardless of personal cost. Relationship skills were most frequently described in terms of acceptance of others, an ability to make group decisions, and taking group actions in the Story Dramas. Themes of self-management included responding to fear with action, thinking before responding, and moving through shyness to work with a group.

Salient themes that emerged from the data included involvement in the Story Drama to reports of self-efficacy, with enhanced confidence carried through to the campers' lives outside of camp. Most notably, experiences of dramatic fear, or what is described at the camp as "delicious fear," where campers enacted scenes of great peril in the Story Drama, were reported by participants as promoting greater anxiety management outside of camp. Campers suggested that when they are in situations that caused them personal anxiety, they could recall the emotions of successfully resolving the Story Dramas and see themselves as empowered. Parents and camp faculty described this phenomenon as well.

Based on the data, the Hexagon program is proving to be successful at providing opportunities for children to develop their social-emotional skills both in and outside of camp. Additionally, the children's creativity development and character growth are also positively influenced by their camp experiences. Based on the data, both creativity and character growth from the camp program carry over into their lives outside of camp.

The Hexagon program appears to be successful in helping children develop social-emotional skills and competencies, and the learning appears to be a by-product of the fun and excitement of creating and playing devised stories together. In the interest of empowering the Hexagon community through metacognition, a transparent focus on the social-emotional competencies gained through the drama experience could make the learning even more transferable. This calls for a change in the Hexagon program, to articulate a focus on the social-emotional learning that occurs at the camp. Although there is much evidence of successful social-emotional learning, few participants defined this in actual terms of the SEL competencies. This lack of vocabulary could be viewed as a null curriculum in that not talking about it or teaching about it keeps it hidden or gives the impression that it is not important.

As evidenced in this study, the camp program has sometimes been viewed by those outside the program as frivolous. This is a frustration shared by campers and staff alike. Children in the focus groups spoke repeatedly of outsiders calling their camp experience "cute." Faculty interviewed also spoke of outsiders' comments about the camp experience and their dedication to it as "fun" or "sweet" in a pejorative sense. The experience, however, is often a deeply transformative one, where social-emotional skills are creatively tested in a liminal community space between fantasy and reality. SEL is at

the heart of why the camp, and indeed, the educational theatre company that sponsors it, even exist, though neither had used the term “social-emotional learning” in their descriptions. This private, recreational arts camp program does not have an external set of standards imposed upon it, so articulating a vision and purpose against which the camp can measure itself is important to guide program development and assessment. The mission statement of the parent theatre company calls on the importance of “relevant, thought-and-emotion provoking experiences” to engage the “creative spirit” of children. Provoking emotional response and encouraging thoughtful reflection on it are hallmarks of the Hexagon program. SEL is well addressed through the Story Dramas, but these are concepts and a vocabulary that had not previously been articulated to the campers, staff, faculty, parents, or public.

In some ways, it is remarkable that the social-emotional learning through the Hexagon program has grown and flourished to the extent that it has without articulated objectives beyond “to engage the creative spirit of children.” From another perspective, the art forms of theatre and drama have always been about social-emotional learning in community. The ancient Greeks recognized this and considered participation or attendance at theatre a civic duty. But our modern culture seems to have forgotten that we learn from such participation, having ousted drama from most mandated school curricula or relegated it to after-school, voluntary programs. STEM education proponents imprudently leave out the Arts even though much experientially-based STEM approaches use the arts as a teaching method, product, or vehicle. Television and video lack the element of community and our tiny hand-held screens serve to further isolate us physically from one another. If community is the “secret sauce” to the creatively

transformative experience of Hexagon camp, then learning about social-emotional competencies as a community will contribute to the common good and empower the camp participants in applying life skills outside of camp.

There are three main constituents in the Hexagon community: the campers, the counselors, and the faculty. The faculty have less constant contact with the campers than the counselors and are responsible for delivering course content. Most of the faculty are professional educators outside of camp. They are older than the counselors and are authority figures. The young adults who serve as counselors spend the most time with the campers, supervising 12-20 campers in teams of two or three for 24 hours every day. The counselors serve as mentors, big sisters/brothers, and lead campers to classes and activities where they also participate. The counselors are young adults who have graduated from the Hexagon camp and are only a few years older than the campers themselves. Most of them are college students. They get to know the campers very well individually. For this reason, the first organizational change that should be made at Hexagon is SEL training for counselors. Understanding the SEL competencies will be personally empowering for them first of all, and help guide their work with the children, too. An annual training at orientation and re-orientation in SEL competencies and strategies would address this very well, in part. Formalizing a systematic approach of the vocabulary, definitions, actions, and guided reflection within the overall camp program can grow a reflexive artistic community that grows in self- and social awareness.

The second organizational change that should be made at Hexagon is a decentralization of the Story Drama planning process. At present, devising the scenarios for the week-long Story Dramas falls into the hands of one person: the camp director or

designate. Several of the past Story Dramas were designed by one of the faculty who has experience as a drama teacher in a public-school setting. Over the years, however, students have been given more and more responsibility for contributing to the Story Drama as Story Makers – those who create the props, costumes, and puppets or who play a group antagonist in the Story Drama. However, part of the mentorship of the Story Makers can include developing strategies for large-group improvised participation, and instruction in devising effective, exciting scenarios. Brainstorming and sharing story development can happen during the regular school year, by using an internet meeting platform such as Zoom, GoToMeeting, or Skype. By sharing the Story Drama planning, the director can be relieved of the high expectations to originate something new every year. Planning the Story Drama by committee could also mitigate the confusion expressed by some of the faculty who suggested that the Story Drama “just happens,” or that “someone throws an idea out there,” neither of which is an accurate representation of the extensive, painstaking drama devising process.

I have identified this issue to be addressed because plans to expand the camp cannot move forward without a means of effectively delegating the process of devising the Story Drama to other individuals. Given that the Prefects have all attended the program for many years before graduating from high school and have all served as Story Makers, a drama devising mentorship should be developed originating from this subgroup of Hexagon participants. One of the most pervasive themes to emerge from the camper focus groups was the thrill of being specifically identified as a participant in the dramatic action, rather than a watcher. Instances where the participants were actively involved in contributing to action decisions in the drama were consistently described as

“favorite” parts of the Story Drama. Just as becoming a member of the oldest group of campers, the Story Makers, is seen as an aspirational position, becoming a drama deviser or planner in preparation for the summer’s activities will also be a sought-after honor. This could prove to be a very positive change for the camp administration and camp community.

The Four Cs

Introducing change to an organization, even positive change, can be knotty and have critical ramifications throughout the system. Wagner et. al. (2006) provide a useful framework for analyzing and planning for organizational change. This change framework asks for an “As Is” description of the organization in terms of Context, Culture, Conditions, and Competencies as a means of diagnosis for organizational weaknesses or areas of needed improvement (see Appendix H). It also asks for “To Be” descriptions of the same areas, and the processes necessary to transition from the “As Is” into the “To Be” (Appendix I). A change to one part affects the whole system, so considering all the four Cs of this change framework keeps the entire organization in mind and helps to guide balanced planning and policy advocacy.

Context

The context of the program is a private summer camp, the special project of a nonprofit educational theatre company. As it is a private camp, there are no mandatory governing standards or overseeing regulatory bodies that dictate curriculum, focus, or audience, beyond the board of the sponsoring theatre company. The racial diversity, or

lack thereof, of the camp reflects the larger community of the area. Most of the campers are white, from a lower socioeconomic background, and many would not be able to attend without at least some scholarship assistance. The program runs for two or three one-week sessions each summer, with a significant number of participants that return for multiple weeks and multiple years. The camp program rents space from another nonprofit organization on a daily facility-rate basis. The camp is situated in a forest setting, surrounded by lush woods and hiking trails. Most classes take place in air-conditioned buildings, but a few classes are held outside. All the participants eat meals together in the large dining hall, where whole group drama action often takes place.

Students' families have a close relationship with the camp. Many of the campers attend camp with one or more parents. Siblings often attend camp together, sometimes requesting to be sorted into the same house, a request which is almost always accommodated. The camp has a policy that children may call home at any time, but they have to use the camp director's phone. Parents are encouraged to call to check in with their child or to write letters or emails. Most of the campers sleep in the dorms, but a small number of campers are picked up at night and dropped off in the morning.

Culture

Culture is the shared interactions, traditions, quality of relationships, expectations, and values of a community (Wagner et al., 2006). There is a high expectation for all students at Hexagon to be creative and participate. Maintaining a steady and high level of commitment to the co-created immersive world is required of all participants.

Communication between the administration and the teachers is swift and regular. The

administration walks the camp often to observe or participate in classes several times every day. The relationships between the adults are trusting, with open communication.

Faculty and students alike describe the culture of Hexagon as one of Family. This aspect of culture is not just a metaphor. The family culture of Hexagon has a historical basis, since the original camp staff and much of its student body were the family of the camp director when the camp began. The board of the theatre company has had a close relationship with the camp director, with at least two immediate family members serving on the board of directors since its inception. Over the years, the camp grew and then relocated to a larger and better equipped facility. The camp director's family involvement was attenuated by other involved parties, namely teachers who came to value the camp program as an experiential learning and bonding activity for their own families. Teachers have been encouraged to bring their spouses and small children with them if they otherwise would not be able to teach at an overnight camp. If their children are not old enough to be regular campers, they are considered "House Elves" and serve as mascots to the older groups, sometimes even attending classes or house activities. Thus, the culture of Family has spread and annealed, by embracing other families as well. For example, one of the faculty couples contributed uniquely to a Story Drama by having their wedding at the camp during an Arthurian legends-inspired drama that culminated in an "Act of True Love" to break a spell of "Involuntary Invisibility." The wedding was attended by the entire camp, plus personal guests of the couple, who attended in role as Arthurian characters. The student-designed and led nuptial ceremony and reception were part the resolution to the week-long drama.

A Family culture has shared values, hierarchies, relationships, and patterns of behavior or interactions. In a Family culture business or organization, commitment to values such as stewardship, intergenerational interaction, and orientation to the traditions of the organization may yield a harmony and strategic flexibility that help to reduce existential risk (Adiguna, 2015). Themes emerging from the camper focus groups included campers who stated unequivocally that they consider Hexagon camp their “true home,” and the Hexagon community their “true family.” The culture of Family, as lived out in social interaction, creates and relies on deep emotional connection. A hallmark of this culture is a commitment to the organization, its relationships, and traditions. In spite of this, or perhaps because of it, the Hexagon Family culture is a dynamic one, not a static one, where members contribute creatively and confidently as in an entrepreneurial setting (Hall, Melin, & Nordqvist, 2001). I see this as a valuable aspect of feeling accepted and supported in community.

As lived out at Hexagon camp, Family culture can also make it difficult for new campers or new faculty to join, as they interrupt established relationships, are unaware of the shared values and interactions, and have not learned the shared traditions or patterns of behavior that the existing participants are privy to. Themes from the focus groups and the teacher interviews revealed this to be a common, though not insurmountable challenge. For example, this culture was challenged five years ago, when an additional week-long session was added to the program, to make room for new campers. Existing campers were not excluded from signing up for the second week, but they almost entirely signed up for the original first week to be with their old friends. New campers were defaulted to the second week when the first week was full. A small percentage of the first

week campers also signed up for the second week, encountering the challenge of integrating most newbie wizards into the culture and traditions of Hexagon. Within just a few days, old and new campers blended seamlessly. Based on this precedent, the phenomenon of being a “newbie” wizard is one that can be approached effectively from a systematic standpoint and is addressed in my recommendations.

Conditions

The conditions of the program are situated within its recreational purpose. No one has been sent to camp as a punishment or to make up for academic deficiencies. All participants are voluntary and hold fantasy literature as a special interest. Camp finances are tight, due to several variables: the necessity of renting the camp and the limited resources of the theatre company’s target audience, underserved children in the area surrounding the theatre company. The faculty are almost entirely volunteers, many in exchange for their child’s or sibling’s camp tuition. There is an undefined scholarship program, which varies depending on available funding, but no one who qualifies for a scholarship has been refused. There are no merit-based scholarships, but several need-based scholarships vary annually. To qualify for a scholarship, the student must be eligible for free or reduced lunch and hand-write a five-sentence minimum essay about why they want to attend the program. The camper to staff ratio is 4:1.

Teachers at Hexagon have a great deal of free time to plan and prepare lessons. There is less time for talking about student challenges, since the daily staff meeting is typically consumed with planning for the Story Drama, though there is a formal agenda item dedicated to talking about any problems or concerns staff have with specific

children that could be addressed by the group. There is little to no student data available, other than past experience with returning campers. There is no articulated agreement about what standards are approached, other than that the needs of the campers come first. This is a clear and focused priority. The facilities can be a challenge, wherein traditional teaching spaces are at a premium and some classes are taught in very informal places or even out of doors where heat and mosquitos can be distracting.

The facilities are rented, and for this reason, staff training is very short: one or two days is what the organization can support financially. In this short amount of time, very little training can be accomplished beyond safety training, CPR certification, and camp set up. The limits of the facilities require that the number of students who can participate in the program be no more than 80. The camp can only house approximately 80 children, and the program is full without much advertising. Almost all attendees find out about the program by word of mouth from other campers and parents. A change to this condition of renting the facility may be insurmountable in that purchasing a location of their own would be extremely cost prohibitive, necessitating a full-time development staff to raise several million dollars.

Competencies

The camp competencies include an experienced director, who has been an administrator of various summer camp programs for 35 years. There is a great deal of experience represented by the faculty as well, including an elementary school drama teacher (K-5), an AP English high school teacher, certified Mindfulness instructor, a middle level science teacher, science and English faculty from various universities, and

professional musicians, artists, and choreographers. There is a core of seven faculty who have helped to build the program by returning year after year and bringing new ideas to the curriculum, such as Mindfulness, Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) tapping, journaling, Celtic folk arts, and game strategies. Students and teachers who return year after year understand and have helped create traditions that carry over year after year. In this context, the pretext of a wizard world has been firmly established and is one of the camp program's strongest competencies. All the counselors in the program are former campers and they remain in contact with one another and the director throughout the year, meeting for informal reunions often.

Camp faculty have expressed a frustration with the lack of information they have about new campers. All camper information is submitted by parents on the registration form, but any information beyond demographics is only available if volunteered by parents. This information would include health needs, requests for special food accommodations, gender identity specifics, notes about sleeping difficulties, and anxiety triggers. Most of the parents do not share any specifics about their children, however. Evaluative data has been gathered occasionally, as evaluations have not been a regular part of the camp cycle but have been done only occasionally when specific feedback is needed. There are no grades for campers. There is great collaboration on plans for the Story Drama, which is fine-tuned every evening in a staff meeting. Occasionally, faculty will teach together, but there is neither directive nor incentive to do so. Regular critiques are not scheduled, though input for planning is often sought at staff meetings. The camp community is very good at disagreeing productively, as brainstorming and idea generation is a central focus of the daily meetings. Reflection is a regular part of the

program for the students and takes place in layers, from discussion, writing, scenario creation, informal short original plays, and acting. These expressions often result in midcourse corrections of the dramatic structure or plot of the Story Drama.

Questions that have yet to be answered include: can a method for Story Drama devising and planning be streamlined and turned over to a team of students? How much guidance and control should the drama mentor exercise in troubleshooting the design for action? What would a reiterative structure for the Story Drama look like? Can the SEL goals be layered into the Story Drama by such a team? Would writing the Story Drama plan extend learning in SEL, creativity, or character development? Is there a relationship between understanding theatrical production and effective involvement in the Story Drama planning process?

My next steps will be to share the data analysis with the faculty and staff and present the framework for layering explicit SEL goals within the day-to-day camp plan. An important part of the framework will be to make evaluation a regular part of the camp program for planning and growth. The response to my requests for survey completion, interviews and focus groups was very positive, so annual program evaluations should prove to be well received. I will set up internet meetings on a regular basis during the off-season with the prefects who have been or would like to be mentored in the drama devising process and create a reiterative structure for the week-long drama plans. I will create an evaluation tool to assess the effectiveness of the planning process and the drama itself so that we can move toward continuous improvement of the experience. In addition, I will ask the staff to help me develop a plan to help integrate new students into the program. This may take the form of a more detailed orientation, assignment of mentors,

regular check-ins, and required icebreakers for new campers and their groups. Integration into the community often takes a week, but a shorter span of one or two days of welcoming and get-to-know-you rituals should be our goal.

As one of the leaders of the camp program, I see that there are both technical problems and adaptive challenges to be addressed for program improvement. Heifetz, Grashow, and Linsky (2009) describe technical problems as those that can be solved by using resources that the organization already has, including knowledge and processes currently in place, with a locus of change effort that comes from the leadership. Adaptive challenges require an organization to reorient priorities, patterns and understandings through learning and discovery, with a locus of change effort that comes from the stakeholders. Based on interpretation of my observations, there are interventions that can address some of the technical challenges that were articulated in the data analysis. These technical challenges include daily class schedule design and posting, consistent parent-staff communication procedures, development of a more comprehensive training manual, and a responsive, in-depth plan for integrating new campers and staff. Adaptive challenges will require a learning plan process in the explicit articulation of SEL goals and Story Drama planning mentorship. To do this, professional development in SEL must be implemented and a mentorship plan created. Layering the SEL goals into the Story Drama should be part of the mentorship plan, since devising the Story Drama is much more all-encompassing than simply planning a scenario of action-packed adventure; it must include dramatic, fictional conflict exploration of SEL goals, a testing of the mettle of ethics, and strategies for reflection upon those goals.

Interpretation

There is a richness of interplay among various factors at the Hexagon camp that contributes to the effectiveness of the social-emotional learning, creativity growth, and character development in the program. Participants demonstrate their enjoyment of the camp by returning again and again, calling it “home” and its community of participants “family.” The most significant result of the data analysis overall is the attachment that the participants have to the community created at the camp. Facets of working together, planning together, and playing together were cited again and again in interviews and focus groups, as significant meaning units related to social-emotional learning, creativity, and character development. The “together” part of this theme cannot be emphasized enough. The Hexagon experience is one of belonging to a community. The Hexagon community is a creatively supportive one, where students are challenged to make moral decisions and take ethical action in a co-created fictional world of their own making.

Salient themes that emerged from the data included involvement in the Story Drama linked to reports of self-efficacy, with enhanced confidence carried through to the campers’ lives outside of camp. Most notably, experiences of dramatic fear – what is described at the camp as “delicious fear,” where campers enacted scenes of great peril in the Story Drama – were reported by participants as promoting greater anxiety management outside of camp. Campers suggested that when they are in situations that caused them personal anxiety, they could recall the emotions of successfully resolving the Story Dramas and see themselves as empowered.

The significance of the results is that the Hexagon program is on solid footing, with a Story Drama procedure that achieves well its aims of social-emotional learning,

creativity growth, and character development. The enactment of moments of high dramatic tension, with “delicious fear” in anticipation of the event, makes the experience memorable. Successfully resolving these scary conflicts gives the students a sense of indelible achievement, confidence, and practice in moving through anxiety to accomplish a goal for the common good. Community is the glue that holds the camp aims together. In developing a model that could serve or transfer to other programs or camps, attention to community is paramount. That the effect and benefit of being a part of the Hexagon community transfers to the lives of the students outside of the camp program is another significant aspect of the results. These results mean that the learning from the camp can be transformative and enduring, not temporary. The Hexagon drama camp program is an effective pedagogical method for teaching social-emotional skills, encouraging creativity growth, and character development.

Exploring human experience through creating a fictional version of it is central to the Story Drama practice at Hexagon. I think the results turned out this way because social-emotional learning, creativity, and character development are interpersonal as well as intrapersonal aspects of human experience. At Hexagon camp, the gains in these areas are challenged intensely and frequently. The students measure themselves against a fictional ideal. This ideal is referred to as “the best wizard you can be.” The ideal is beheld not only in action of the Story Drama, but also in day-to-day interactions among all the camp attendees. Hexagon creates a microcosm of fantasy, separated from the real world, but reflecting real world issues in dramatic form. Being a world unto itself, students practice social-emotional skills, creativity, and moral character in community

action, visible to people they care about. It matters what they think and feel about each other. Their growth is reflected back to them in the community and in the Story Drama.

Judgments

My primary research questions asked what is working well and what is not working well at Hexagon. I also asked what the challenges to the program are and what might we do to address those challenges. My research demonstrates clearly that the program is working well, with technical challenges to be addressed regarding planning, organization, and communication. The major stakeholders – the parents, the faculty, and the students – are very happy with the program and are deriving educational benefit from it.

My secondary research questions asked about the devised Story Drama specifically, and its relationship to social-emotional learning, creativity growth, and character development. My research demonstrates that the Story Drama is an important learning function in these three areas. The learning from the Story Drama transfers to the lives of the students outside of the camp after camp is over.

In terms of social-emotional learning (SEL), the students demonstrated the five competencies of SEL as articulated by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (Self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making) through the Story Drama. Creativity growth was observed frequently in the great quantity and high quality of artistic output from the students both during camp and afterwards. Character development was demonstrated in the actions taken in the Story Dramas, where students consistently made choices or took

actions that benefited someone else or the community as a whole rather than self. This was reported by teachers, campers, and parents.

The results of this study are very positive. Salient themes from results of the parent, teacher, and student response data include enduring growth in self-awareness and self-management, demonstrated advances in relationship skill and social awareness, and observed responsible decision-making. Parents, teachers, and students reported that these positive themes carried on into the lives of the participants even after the camp program was over. Observations of student action taken during the Story Dramas reinforced this data. That these results demonstrate the personally transformative effects of the program is very positive.

Recommendations

As the members of the Hexagon camp have demonstrated enduring commitment to the community experience, a decentralization of the aspects of the administrative leadership can be very effective. Doing so should motivate members to continue to contribute creatively to the program for many more years to come. Camp administration tasks should be delegated to staff that have long-standing membership in the camp community, who have interest, know-how, and experience with the program. The daily schedule and its dissemination, the organization of staff breaks, new camper welcoming and orientation, and the development of a comprehensive training and procedures manual are administrative tasks that can be delegated with confidence to committed staff members.

The Story Drama planning process, which is a central focus of the camp program, can be codified and taught to the Prefects in mentorship by the camp director. As an

experienced drama leader and theatre director, the camp director has devised many effective dramas and taught play analysis and scenario structure creation in a wide range of applications. Inviting the Prefects to devise large-group, long-form Story Dramas in mentorship will take the onus off the director to generate new scenario structures and plan their enactment. More importantly, the experience of creating scenario structures for the Story Drama will provide the Prefects with a rich learning experience, of great import because the camp community values the experience on many levels. Most important of all, devising the Story Drama is creating, an act of learning which occupies the highest level of the revised taxonomy of Bloom's educational objectives (Anderson, 2014). That makes the experience a highly valuable one in which the students are demonstrating an understanding of what they know, applying it to the dramatic situations they have encountered, analyzing what makes them work, evaluating the qualities of the devised dramas, and creating new, original action structures for other students to enact.

For the youngest campers, those from third grade through eighth grade, we will take a skills-development approach for SEL. With the older campers, however, we will change the approach because typical social skills training SEL programs do not work well for adolescents. The same skills training SEL approach that works well with elementary students has not proven to be effective with middle adolescents going through puberty, generally 14 to 17 years of age (Yeager, 2017). This is a time of great social stress and emotional change, in which the brain's processing of emotion undergoes marked transformation. What does show effectiveness, however, are programs that motivate adolescents by focusing on values that they care about and changing their mindsets. There are various ways in which effective SEL programs for adolescents

achieve this: by providing them with opportunities for authentic input, by giving them sources of pride and honor among their peers, and by helping them imagine themselves as the kind of person they would like to be in the future.

I selected this issue for organizational change because the Prefects of Hexagon camp, most of whom attend the program from the age of 8 to 18, grow through adolescence to adulthood over their years of participation. Adolescents have great need of social and emotional guidance and growth. Although the soon-to-be explicitly articulated goals of social-emotional learning at the camp may be approached effectively with the elementary school age campers through a skills-development curriculum, a more effective method of supporting their SEL growth as they enter adolescence should be planned. This connects to student learning because taking on more responsibility in the design and implementation of the Story Drama will honor the older campers' position as experienced wizards, giving them opportunities for authentic creative input, and underscore the kind of person they would like to be in the future, or in the parlance of Hexagon, "the best wizard you can be."

CHAPTER FIVE: TO-BE FRAMEWORK

Introduction

As a result of my data analysis, I identified the need for greater transparency about the goals of the camp and professional development for the staff. Professional development for counselors in social-emotional learning would be beneficial for them personally, as well as enhancing and make more effective their work with the children. The Story Drama itself will illuminate the SEL, which the camp does well, by using the vocabulary of the SEL competencies to plan it and talk about it. The process for planning and implementing the Story Drama will be done in a new model, using a Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) process as a mentorship framework. Professional development for the teachers in Applied Improvisation will help them develop active teaching strategies and a more action-oriented understanding of how improvised drama works. Finally, decentralizing some of the organizational tasks of administration will help

address some of the technical problems of the camp, and bring more authority to community members that have demonstrated commitment to the program.

Review of Literature Related to Change

Social-Emotional Learning

As one of the goals of the parent theatre company is to “promote learning,” (Company website) a transparent focus on the social and emotional aspects of learning will be a productive and appropriate goal. Many studies have demonstrated a link between SEL and academic achievement as well as continued success in life (Kautz, Heckman, Diris, Weel, & Borghans, 2014). SEL has many benefits beyond childhood, including social inclusion and economic mobility. In addition to awareness and understanding of one’s own and others’ emotions, conscious perspective-taking, relating well to others, and making well-reasoned, sound choices, the numerous personal benefits of SEL include positive self-image, self-confidence, and self-efficacy (Weissberg, Durlak, Domitrovich, & Gullotta, 2015). Though Hexagon camp takes the form of a school – a fictional school of wizardry – it has the flexibility to build curricula with nearly any focus. As such, the fun of learning through drama will have more direct benefit to the students’ lives as the intention of developing the students’ social-emotional skills comes into focus.

For the youngest campers, I recommend a skills-development approach. This approach has been found to be effective in building social and emotional skills for elementary aged students, particularly in school-based programs (Weissberg & O’Brien, 2004). For the older children, a different approach will be used, since skills-based programs do not work as well with adolescents (Yeager, 2017). Instead, a model based on

a Youth Action Participatory Research (Kaplan, n.d.) structure will be utilized. This model has shown success in helping youth develop agency and leadership skills (Anyon, Bender, Kennedy, & Dechants, 2018). Developing agency and leadership skills are two goals for the Story Drama mentorship plan, which will include the oldest, most experienced campers who are juniors and seniors in high school, in the planning and implementation of the devised drama. The reflection upon the drama experience, which is a critical application of a skills based SEL approach for the younger campers, can also be built into the YAPR process in the evaluation step. As an action-oriented research project, the students in this group, who care deeply about the camp experiences and community, can explore what elements of devised drama-making are most effective, what interests the camp community most, and how those interests can be implemented in the drama. This model will capitalize on the strengths that both SEL and YAPR have in common, providing significant learning experiences for adolescents. These strengths include a purpose for learning, emotional engagement in something that matters to them, and envisioning themselves as becoming the kind of person who uses their personal agency to make a difference in the world. It will underscore and reinforce growth mindset for the youth involved.

Youth Action Participatory Research (YAPR)

A model for successful YAPR, which comes from the YPAR Hub, sponsored by the University of California at Berkley (YAPR Hub website) outlines the following steps. In parentheses, I have listed parallel steps for devising Story Drama:

1. Form a strong team (community building)
2. Reflect on prior experiences (discuss Hexagon story traditions)

3. Develop critical perspectives on “what could be” (discuss what themes are relevant to their experience)
4. Figure out what you know and don’t know (what lessons do we want to learn)
5. Identify research questions (determine story concepts)
6. Meet with key players (same)
7. Design research protocols (decide *how* the planning will take place)
8. Collect data (input for Story Drama plot)
9. Analyze data (analyze plot)
10. Decide key findings from data (reflect daily on the action plan)
11. Discuss implications of data – “so what?” (what lessons here matter?)
12. Map who has power in relation to the problem (map who has the ability to take action in the scenarios)
13. Select action steps – “now what?” (decide what happens on the 5-day timeline)
14. Engage in dialogue with adult personnel about your findings (meet with faculty about their contributions to the Story Drama and its lessons)
15. Evaluate whether you achieved your goals (reflect on the story overall and the planning and implementation process)

This is a model for a way to involve adolescents in the examination and creation of a reiterative process that involves them and gives them agency throughout. Yeager (2017) points out that, “when SEL programs offer adolescents a route to feelings of status and respect, it’s likely that they’ll internalize acquired skills and apply them in the real world.” This model will engage the social imagination in ways that respect what they

value most, building upon positive youth-adult relationships and contextualizing a purpose for social-emotional learning.

Applied Improvisation

The teachers at Hexagon have a wide range of experience in the field of traditional education, but only one has experience in improvisation. Considering that the heart of the day-to-day program is based on a devised, improvised Story Drama, training in improvisation will be most useful to the faculty. The purpose of this is two-fold: first, to encourage their increased participation in the Story Drama (not as story makers, planners, or directors, but as active participants), wherein faculty reported that they only participate peripherally or when specifically asked to do so by the director. The students will enjoy more commitment to the drama when they see this modeled by their faculty. Second, as an active teaching technique with strengths in collaboration and community building, improvisation training may help them become even better teachers. Almost any day in almost any classroom, a range of improvisation occurs, whether planned or not (Maeland & Espeland, 2017). Pedagogies for beginning teachers often target planning, scripts, and management techniques, but professional improvisation should be included in the assemblage of best teaching practices. It is well to point out that planning is a valid and important part of improvising, as is a game plan for a sports team, a strategy for an army, a form for a jazz tune, or a structure for a Story Drama. Improvisation is not just “winging it.” Adaptive learning strategies modify the presentation of instructional material in response to student performance, which is surely improvisation in its organic form. Indeed, in France, improvisation has been endorsed as a learning tool (Hainselin, Aubry, & Bourdin, 2018) and framing the improv with strict guidelines has been shown

to “enhance creation and richer play, which can be translated into cognitive flexibility and divergent thinking” (p. 7).

Teaching with improvisation goes far beyond the traditional theatrical acting training with which it is most commonly associated. Teaching through improv training is also known as Applied Improvisation (Koppett, 2001). Applied Improvisation (AI), is the practice of using improvisation in non-theatrical applications such as medicine, business, science, law, engineering, technology, and nearly any field where collaboration and communication are paramount for success. Currently, medicine education sees the most use, with business applications growing quickly as well (Rossing & Hoffman-Longtin, 2015). AI uses the tenets and techniques of theatrical improvisation beyond traditional theatre spaces or uses to build community, practice flexibility, generate ideas quickly, practice active listening, take risks, accept rejection or failure with grace, create and tell stories, and engage authentically with other people (Dudeck & McClure, 2018). The main concepts behind AI come from the theories and practices of improv theatre, which were developed separately by Viola Spolin (1969) and Keith Johnstone (1981) both considered to be pioneers in the field of improvisation. These are simple yet profound concepts that have application to much of life experience. For example, the improv concept of, “yes, and ...” refers to acceptance. This is often misconstrued to mean “agreement” but there is a difference between acceptance and agreement. Agreement is the opposite of refusal, on a binary of yes/no, with no consideration of divergence for action. Acceptance is an openness to what exists or is presented (Madson, 2005). It is the opposite of rejection. Acceptance can mean taking what you are given and making the best of it. It can also

mean assessing a situation for what is present. Acceptance in another sense refers to having an open mind and heart toward other people, a key concept in social awareness.

Another equally important improv concept is, “make your scene partner look good.” This is, essentially, a shortcut to making a positive connection with another person. To make them look good asks that you see them, the situation, or the world from their perspective and try to understand. It asks that you de-throne yourself from the center of your world and put someone else there. This is a mindset that encourages collaboration by bypassing the ego. For example, this concept, in an application of AI to a medical situation asks physicians, patients, and care partners to see each other as equal members of a healthcare team, and recognizes the humanity of the patient as the expert in their own experience (Hoffmann-Longtin, Rossing, & Weinstein, 2018).

A third concept is to “see everything as a gift.” This idea is a reframing concept, a mindset wherein mistakes are seen as opportunities to grow and change. This improv concept is very much aligned with the idea of a “growth mindset” (Dweck, 2016) in which individuals see themselves as teachable, rather than static. People continue to grow and change over their lifetime, but only those that can picture themselves as being able to grow and change actually do. Persons with a “fixed mindset” change or grow very little, even though the world around them changes. A teachable, growth-minded person understands that they can learn, grow, change, bounce back, gain skills, get better, heal, recover, and move forward. This is a skill in resilience, an extremely important ability in the current era wherein the world changes faster than ever before. Practitioners of AI often frame the need for and the relevance of their work in terms of VUCA, or the “volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous” nature of the world (Dudeck & McClure,

2018, p. 1; Tint, McWaters, & van Driel, 2015). Learning to respond with flexibility to a VUCA world is an aspect of resilience that encompasses SEL skills. Within a fixed mindset, anxiety may be seen as a static trait, rather than an ability that can be changed with practice (Schroder, Yalch, Dawood, Callahan, Donnellan, & Moser, 2017).

Children tend to be open to concepts of improvisation more readily than adults. Children approach experiences from a natural state of play, and see improv, whether for fun or learning, as just another game, whereas many adults see games as frivolous or pointless (Tint, McWaters, & van Driel, 2015). Children make the leap from dramatic play to improvised drama for learning easily, as the only functional difference between the two is the locus of control. In improvised drama for learning, the teacher is the leader. By comparison, dramatic play originates with the child's own need for the expressive experience (Cornett, 1999). For children, the dramatic impulse is close at hand and without judgement. Adults, however, often approach both improv and games from a critical perspective of self-judgment. Adults tend to assume that they already know what they are good at and how they will or will not succeed (Salinsky & Frances-White, 2017). Breaking from this thought pattern is an example of moving from a fixed mindset to a growth mindset.

Envisioning the Success TO-BE

Once my organizational change plan is realized, some of the "4C's," or arenas of change, will be different. The context, culture, conditions, and competencies will reflect the change plan variously, and though all arenas will be affected, some will be affected more so than others. Conditions and competencies will change the most, but the context

and culture – which are currently arenas of great strength and inspiration, will remain largely the same.

Context

The context of the summer camp will continue to be a program sponsored by a nonprofit educational theatre company. This context suits the camp well, since the company's focus on creativity and drama for learning provides the camp with an appropriate network, goals, and options for diverse programming. Outreach to two local multicultural centers contribute to a growing diversity of students and teachers. The on-going scholarship program allows for most of the students to attend camp without causing a hardship for their family. The facilities are big enough and nice enough to have classes indoors, out of the humidity, heat, and away from the mosquitos. Each teacher has their own teaching space that they can set up and leave intact for the duration of the program. The camp program is no longer site-specific, but has several locations – in the Midwest, the west coast, and other places as they come available. There is one long weekend program that is a family camp, where children attend with their parents and siblings and participate in the imaginative world-building scenarios of a Story Drama, together.

Culture

The culture of Hexagon camp is one of extended Family, where each member is valued and considered an important part of the community. New participants are welcomed and mentored through a decentralized welcoming program that begins with orientation and continues throughout the session with check-ins and feedback. Camp traditions are explained, and the stories are told to the newcomers so that they feel they

are welcome and part of the culture. The competencies and vocabulary of SEL are part of this culture. The competencies are posted, and teachers work together to layer the SEL goals into the classes, the house activities, and the Story Drama. The community shares a growth mindset, and we support each other in the endeavor to become the “best wizards we can be.” Teachers have consistently high expectations of students. The school agenda is one of creativity, courage, and compassion. This extended Family culture is not changed, but rather enhanced with the shared goals of articulating SEL and layering it into all levels of camp experience.

Conditions

There are technical challenges that have been addressed to make the organization of the day-to-day camp experience streamlined and structured. This includes schedules for daily tasks that occur regularly, such as a class schedule that is created at the beginning of the week, and only tweaked if the Story Drama requires changes to be made. Breaks are scheduled in, with a spare counselor – a “hopper” who hops from group to group and gives each counselor a two-hour break. A schedule for check-in day assignments, with a new camper routing procedure so they have all of their questions answered and see the camp facilities, meet their Prefect, have a photo taken for the year book and select a bunk before their parents/guardians need to leave. Camper data is compiled and given to the teachers and counselors in advance of campers’ arrival so they know a little bit about the children that will be in their care. The staff meets every evening for a meeting about any camper concerns they may have, and the Story Drama outline is reviewed for any necessary changes or additions.

Competencies

The camp staff are expert collaborators and improvisers, working together to create a joyous learning environment of creativity. Flexibility and improvisation are expected and accepted as part of the everyday camp experience. Teachers feel free to try new methods in their classes. They team teach occasionally and learn from each other. They work with the oldest students in the Story Makers group, who are devising the drama, to bring SEL into the drama wherever possible.

Conclusion

An explicit and articulated focus on social-emotional learning competencies, a Youth Participatory Action Research-based approach to the devised Story Drama, and professional development for the faculty in the field of Applied Improvisation will serve to make the Hexagon camp program even better. Technical challenges in day-to-day organization can be streamlined by decentralizing some of the administrative tasks. This strategy will improve the contexts, culture, conditions, and competencies of the Hexagon summer camp program.

CHAPTER SIX: STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS

Introduction

To bridge my “as-is” observation of and my “to-be” vision for Hexagon camp, there are several strategies that I needed to select or devise, in each of three areas. The SEL goals to be addressed for elementary, middle school, and high school aged campers will need different age-appropriate approaches, or curricula. The teachers will need professional development in Applied Improvisation facilitation strategies. The administration will need a clear and straightforward way to address organizational issues that may be decentralized among the most committed and experienced community members. A chart that lays out the proposed strategies and actions is found in Appendix J. This chapter describes the strategies, actions, and necessary resources to cross the bridge and bring the “to-be” closer to the “as-is.”

Strategies and Actions

SEL Strategy for the 3rd-5th Grade Campers

The curriculum I recommend for this age range is based on the “Acting Right” program designed and detailed by drama teacher Sean Layne (2017). This approach seems right for Hexagon camp because it is directed at teaching cooperation and community through drama and is based on the belief that behavior is a literacy. This makes sense to me as a theatre director and teacher, since in my experience, teaching the art form of theatre is to also teach a literacy of theatre culture. Among other things, the theatre culture includes an open mind and heart, very high standards for follow-through, the habit of being early instead of late, respect for technical as well as artistic expertise,

and an understanding of the importance of giving credit where credit is due. A behavior literacy taught through drama may include these things as well, but more importantly, literacy in the behavior of learning. The objectives of this approach include practicing a calm body, a focused mind, and balanced emotions. These practices of Mindfulness are already an important part of the Hexagon program, primarily taught and practiced in a class called Divination. In the Acting Right program, these Mindfulness practices are brought into drama instruction through a metacognitive approach, having the children demonstrate a reflective response rather than a reactive one. Beyond Mindfulness, this program uses theatre games to teach behavior-based vocabulary grounded in SEL. The way the theatre games are deconstructed, reflected upon, and discussed are very much a facilitation approach like Applied Improvisation. There should be a seamless transition from the SEL approach through Acting Right for 3rd through 5th grade, to the Middle School SEL curriculum. I recommend that this be taught as a regular class in the Hexagon program.

SEL Strategy for 6-8th Grade Campers

The SEL curriculum that I recommend for this age range comes from the Princeton-Blairstown Center, a summer camp program sponsored by Princeton University, with the mission of providing healthy, character-building camping experiences for disadvantaged youth (Princeton-Blairstown Center, n.d.). This curriculum has high ratings and has been developed for use at a summer camp. It is also free, which is helpful given the financial constraints of Hexagon camp. This curriculum is an activity-based one, with many role-play activities included. The format similarly follows the activity – reflection – discussion plan, which will seem like a continuation of the Acting

Right approach to SEL. Again, the vocabulary of SEL is used to process the activities. I recommend that this also be taught as a regular class in the Hexagon program, perhaps by the same instructor as the Acting Right SEL strategy for 3-5th grade campers.

SEL Strategy for High School Campers

For the campers in high school, the SEL strategy that I recommend is one based on the process of Youth Action Participatory Research (YAPR). I believe this process will bypass the low success of SEL curricula for high school students (Yeager, 2017) and involve them in an exciting way in something they care about – the Story Drama. By approaching the Story Drama with the high school students as a YAPR project, I can relieve the camp director of the onus of having to devise a new drama each week and replace that formerly secret process with an experience that is relevant to the high school age wizards. One of the biggest challenges for the camp director in devising the scenario has been selecting themes and plots that are of current interest to the campers in attendance. Themes from the *Harry Potter* series of books by J. K. Rowling are always on point, but to avoid the risk of creating predictably formulaic scenarios involving the same old cast of characters, the camp reached out to other stories within the genre of fantasy literature and popular entertainment. Researching and selecting an appropriate, exciting topic, devising a scenario that includes the wizard groups of all ages, casting, resourcing, and resolving it satisfactorily through a process outlined like YAPR will give the Hexagon program a unique way to layer SEL into the process. The process will provide opportunities to practice and discuss Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Skills, and Responsible Decision Making. The YAPR process

will require the students to learn by problem-solving, taking leadership turns, making responsible decisions, communicating, mediating conflict, and setting goals.

Empowerment Training for Prefects

SEL training for adults can be a powerful and transformational experience. At Hexagon, this is called “empowerment training.” I recommend bringing in a specialist trainer to work with the Prefects on their own social and emotional skills. The Prefects will spend more time with the campers than any other group. Adults need SEL, too. CASEL assessment group is starting a new research focus on adult SEL, a perspective that was somewhat overlooked when the organization’s goals were first conceptualized (“Strengthening Adult SEL” 2019). This newsletter points out that there have been many requests for research on adult SEL and if they could start the entire project over, they would have started with adult SEL. This makes sense. Everybody benefits from SEL, and adults working with children should have the best SEL skills that they can. For the Prefects, awareness of their own skills in empathy and self-management will help them work with the campers in a much more effective way. Responsible decision-making is a must, as they are mentors and models for the youth in their charge. Since they will attend the SEL classes for their campers, they will gain another understanding of how their own charges are growing and learning. The metacognitive skills that come with empowerment training will give them another perspective on each of the children they are mentoring as Prefects. Their social awareness and relationship skills will be challenged many times in working with the children. Making responsible decisions is of paramount importance in the role of a Prefect, with so many youngsters in their care. I recommend that

empowerment training for Prefects be a regular, required part of staff orientation each summer.

Applied Improvisation Professional Development for Faculty

As evidenced by the data, there is some reluctance on the part of the faculty to engage in professional development. As one faculty member put it, “I teach all year long, but I come to camp to relax and be creative in this community.” Other faculty stated that they learned so much about themselves as teachers at camp that just being at Hexagon is professional development enough. This may be so, but on the other hand, I discovered a profound disconnect between the actual drama devising process and that process as perceived by some faculty. Also, there was expressed on the part of one faculty member, a disappointing lack of respect for what the skills of improvisation can contribute to an individual, a group, or to the vagaries of life experience in general, such as resilience and anxiety management. Improvisation, however, is not the same thing as being unprepared. With this in mind, I recommend that the techniques of Applied Improvisation be used for staff orientation, which is attended by all faculty, and at each nightly staff meeting as well. This way, the faculty will be experienced the process of Applied Improvisation without setting aside time or team-teaching preparation. Improv games can provide a frame for nearly any topic, and can enhance learning, especially metacognitive approaches to learning (Koppett, 2001). Koppett lists the fundamental skills of improvisation as: “trust, spontaneity, accepting offers, listening and awareness, storytelling, and non-verbal communication” (p. 6). All of these are critical teaching skills. In Applied Improv, although the activities are based on improvisation, the real key is facilitation (Lawlor & Handley, 1996). A facilitator’s job is not to get everyone to

agree on the same thing, but rather to examine their own thinking or working processes so they can work together more effectively. In this sense, in teaching through Applied Improvisation, the content is the process. In running the nightly meetings, I recommend that three signature practices of adult SEL be used. These practices are: (a) open with a Welcoming Ritual, (b) use Engaging Practices to explore topics, such as Applied Improvisation, and (c) end the meeting with a positive, or Optimistic Closure. This simple approach is recommended by the Oakland Unified School District (2019), Social & Emotional Learning (OUSDEL) project which focused their SEL approach by starting with the adults who are then teaching SEL to the students. According to this project, these three practices work well in adult learning because adults learn best when they are involved in their own learning, when they use their own experience, and when the learning involves relevant, problem-centered topics. The practices are also aligned with culturally responsive teaching practices, restorative justice, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and trauma-informed teaching practices. Starting a meeting with a Welcoming Ritual gives the participants a sense of safety and predictability, inclusion, and belonging. This can be an effective bridge to the goals for the meeting, where engaging practices such as Applied Improvisation can be used to explore the immediately relevant topics of the meetings. Ending with a positive, reflective closure may include an opportunity to ask when or how each person might use what they learned in the meeting next, or even just a statement of recognition and appreciation for the work they do. In my experience, teachers are rarely recognized enough or thanked enough for the tremendous work that they do. Incorporating this into a ritual of closure may help it become a habit.

Decentralizing Administrative Tasks

With a committed, stable, and experienced staff, organizational tasks no longer need to be centralized at the level of director or assistant director. Due to the informal origin of Hexagon camp, the organizational tasks have always defaulted to the top two administrators, with one taking charge of registrations and schedules and the other one personnel and program issues. Since most of the staff have been members of the community for at least seven years, the daily program and class schedules could be easily delegated to one or more of the teachers who have to deal with the class schedule and know its trickier planning challenges. Creation and dissemination of group lists can be delegated to the head Prefect or the archivist. The creation of a rite-of-passage ritual for the graduation of campers who are aging out of the camp could be delegated to experienced Prefects who understand what it is like to grow up and complete the Hexagon program. A mentorship process for campers who are first-time participants could be planned and administered by Prefects who remember the challenges of being a newbie and trying to fit in to a community of individuals who have built a world together and already know its histories, traditions, and characters. Turning over some of these critical aspects of the camp program requires a level of trust and commitment on the part of the administration as well as the staff. But doing so will allow the administration to focus on some of the legal and financial issues that tend to present little or no flexibility, as well as parent communication.

Conclusion

Bridging the “as-is” and the “to-be” can be accomplished with the strategies of implementing an age-appropriate SEL curriculum that is drama-based, and uses the

vocabulary of SEL to teach cooperation and community. I outlined several recommended curricula, and approaches for the various age groups of children that attend Hexagon camp, including one which changes the way the Story Drama is planned and turns it over to the oldest, experienced campers in a research and mentorship model. I have recommended faculty and staff professional development in SEL and Applied Improvisation and listed several administrative tasks that should be delegated to experienced, committed staff.

CHAPTER SEVEN: IMPLICATIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

From looking at the history of the development of Hexagon camp, it is clear to me that the informal, family origin of the camp gave an entrepreneurial spirit and a caring community culture to the program. It did not, however, start with an organizational plan, only a program plan. The organization of the program emerged over time, based on an annual end-of-camp meeting focused on brainstorming “what to do differently next year.” As a result of these meetings, an organizational plan and structure emerged that was never formalized but simply became part of the camp traditions. As a devised-drama-based SEL program, Hexagon is remarkably successful. As an organized camp, however, there are several policies that would lead to greater stability, better communication, longevity, and recognizable success as a camping program. These policies are already outlined by the American Camp Association (ACA), which provides guidance and standards for member organizations in a broad range of areas.

Policy Statement

I am recommending two policies for Hexagon: first, a policy of SEL training, appropriate for campers, staff, and faculty. Second, I am recommending that the Hexagon camp seek accreditation from the American Camp Association. The ACA publishes standards for physical camp facilities and camp programs, hosts regional and national conferences, conducts research, and publishes reports on camps. The ACA has over 12,000 members and has been in existence since for over 100 years. Its mission is to [enrich] “the lives of children, youth and adults through the camp experience” (ACA, 2019). I am recommending this policy because the Hexagon camp program will have

established ACA standards against which to measure itself. I have no doubt that it will measure up very well; however, several areas of program planning that have never been articulated will need to be created. Such plans will serve to strengthen the program by clarifying procedures for communication, safety, and work expectations. It will also give the program the recognition it deserves as a creative and high-quality program for youth. This policy will be effective in meeting the problem by addressing organizational gaps or gray areas and replacing assumptions with actual policies that are articulated and made available to the stakeholders: board of directors, parents, staff, and faculty. Since Hexagon does not own its facilities, but rents an ACA-accredited facility, I will only focus on the ACA standards that are applicable to stand-alone camp programs, or programs that are not site-specific (Standards at a Glance, 2019). Hexagon fits this description, as the program has been conducted variously at six different locations and is currently considering duplicating the program at new site in a different area of the country. Achieving the status of an ACA-accredited camp will make this transition easier and more attractive to new campers' parents.

Analysis of Needs

To analyze the needs of the Hexagon program, I looked at the proposed policies from six different disciplines that will impact the program. I have analyzed the proposed policies from Educational, Economic, Social, Political, Legal, and Moral/Ethical perspectives. Analyzing the needs from these perspectives has given me a deep understanding of the problems involved and a broad-based awareness of the implications my proposed policies will have on the program.

Educational Analysis

The whole purpose of seeking ACA accreditation should be to assure better outcomes for those involved in the program. Whether or not achieving actual accreditation will result in that, however, is not certain (Shackman, 2015). If the desired outcomes of a high quality SEL, creativity, and character development program are already being achieved, there should be other reasons. The other reasons for seeking accreditation include: the credibility and prestige of touting an ACA-accredited program; demonstrating to an outside evaluator that we have the knowledge, experience, training, and skills to provide an excellent program; demonstrating a delineated code of ethics; providing a basis for reprimanding or terminating those who do not follow this code; and forming a basis for developing training and education programs. Summertime programs have implications for the educational development of children. When out of the structured system of school, disadvantaged students who lose the needed support that schools provide in terms of healthy meals, supervised activities, medical care, and programs that enhance development, are at higher risk than children whose families can afford structured summer programs (National Academies of Sciences, 2019). These inequities are exacerbated by the lack of access to summertime programs. Achieving ACA accreditation would put Hexagon in the position of being able to apply for more scholarship grants to support summertime program access for disadvantaged students. This could also help Hexagon achieve its stated goals of greater student diversity.

Economic Analysis

The economic impact of accreditation on Hexagon will be minimal because the accreditation fee is reasonable for a program of its size. Associated costs are already

being covered, such as comprehensive insurance, renting an ACA-accredited facility, and staff pay. Accreditation standards require that these things be articulated and regulated, which will benefit the program. Hexagon program contributors (parents and faculty) have had various verbal agreements regarding honoraria and tuition exchanges, or bartering goods (for example, locally grown vegetables) or services (for example, equipment repair). Accreditation could mean regulating these kinds of exchanges, which may be beneficial, although often the exchanges are agreed upon through the camp administration's private knowledge about the financial situation of the camper. The impact of regulating such exchanges will be less economic in nature than informational since they have not been budgeted for in the past. This would mean a more transparent budgeting procedure in place so that scholarships, barter exchanges, and tuition exchanges are accounted for accurately.

Social Analysis

Part of the program accreditation procedure is to develop statements of purpose regarding the rights and dignity of campers and staff, the goals and outcomes of the program, camper development, and environmental activities ("Standards at a glance," 2019). Most of these things have been taken for granted or assumed based on past practices or traditions. Writing these statements together as a staff will have an impact on the social experience of the camp community. Developing these statements in staff groups may serve as a professional learning community (PLC) project. Cohorts of Prefects and faculty will bring much personal experience to this process and create authentic understandings of the purposes of the program and the relationships of the cohort members to the community (Witteveen, 2015). This strong sense of emotional

connection and investment in the cohort community will yield effective problem-solving and the creation of inspiring purpose statements that accurately reflect the Hexagon program. Faculty and Prefects will learn from each other and be invested in each other's learning experiences.

Political Analysis

One aspect of the accreditation process is writing core statements and publishing them as commitments of the program. The camp director could write these statements but leading the staff through a community statement writing process would be more democratic. Creating the core purpose, goals, and outcomes statements as a community represents a shift in the locus of camp governance at a fundamental, core level. Instead of a top-down, director-mandated set of values and objectives, the community-created statements will strengthen shared values and clarify purposeful understandings. The four core statements that are mandated for ACA program accreditation include:

1. Rights and Dignity of Campers and Staff.

This is where a statement of nondiscrimination will be articulated. The staff and faculty together will create a statement of acceptance regarding all individuals, including LGBTQ+ campers and staff. This will then be clearly communicated, so that any parents who may question how their child might be viewed or treated at Hexagon will know that Hexagon camp is a place where their child will be accepted and treated with respect and dignity (Gillard, Buzuvis, & Bialeschki, 2014). This is an important first step in a multi-level process of authentic inclusion (Therriault, 2017). The process of crafting the statement can start with a suggested statement for nonprofits as an outline such as,

[NONPROFIT] does not and shall not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion (creed), gender, gender expression, age, national origin (ancestry), disability, marital status, sexual orientation, or military status, in any of its activities or operations. These activities include, but are not limited to, hiring and firing of staff, selection of volunteers and vendors, and provision of services. We are committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our staff, clients, volunteers, subcontractors, vendors, and clients. (“nonprofit inclusiveness” statement).

2. Goals and Outcomes

Once SEL, creativity, and character development have been articulated as the main purposes of the Hexagon program, a statement should be crafted that makes this evident to parents and campers. These intended outcomes are not a secret. Having a written statement of these goals, with measurable outcomes, will be salient talking points about the camp to offset the sometimes-perceived value of it as “cute” or insignificant.

3. Camper Development

As part of a statement on camper development, the activities that contribute to this, such as Mindfulness, the Story Drama process, and the community bonding activities can also be delineated. This will place the program solidly in the child development sphere and move it away from the gaming and Live Action Role Play (LARP) category, which has a different focus. Although world-building is an aspect of what goes on at Hexagon, pure role-play games such as Dungeons & Dragons or Magic the Gathering have a different focus and purposes. Although these games are very creative and fun, they are sometimes competitive and sometimes even seen as subversive.

There are plenty of opportunities to play these games at Hexagon, but they are peripheral to the child development focus of the program, not central to it. Camper SEL, creativity, and character development, as the aims of Hexagon place it in a child development category.

4. Environmental Activities

Hexagon camp has always placed stewardship of the natural world at a high priority, including intensive composting procedures, recycling, and reusing resources. The location of the camp in a lush forest makes integration of the natural world into the Story Drama a natural fit. Creating a community statement about program activities that develop an appreciation for and awareness of the natural world will be an affirming part of the accreditation process.

Legal Analysis

ACA accreditation will strengthen the standing of Hexagon in the case of any catastrophe or emergency. Although Hexagon purchases camp program insurance every year; any time that 100 or more people are brought together for an event, no matter how organized it may be, there is always the possibility of an accident. It has happened rarely, but it has happened – even the camp director broke a wrist one summer. By completing all of the safety checks mandated by the ACA, the camp would demonstrate that it has done everything it could to prevent accidents from happening. This would include hiring practices as well, including staff and faculty background checks, health screenings, CPR, first aid and lifeguard certifications, medication storage, staff training, healthcare recordkeeping, food storage, and food service management, etc. This is where the long history and experience of the ACA is to be recognized and depended upon. Every item on

the accreditation checklist is there for a reason. Even the most conscientious camp director and camp staff can easily overlook something but completing the checklist for accreditation would prepare the camp program for emergencies.

Moral and Ethical Analysis

The moral and ethical implications of advocating for the pursuit of ACA accreditation are simple: it is the ethical thing to do. Historically, the ACA has pursued the same goals as Hexagon camp. Both organizations seek to support child development and welfare and create community. The ACA values, "...the world, the people who live in it, and the contribution each individual can make" (American Camp Association, n.d.). Hexagon's parent theatre company likewise seeks "...to help children connect with others and support them in becoming the best that they can be" (CETC, 2002).

Implications for Staff and Community Relationships

The policies that I am advocating for will promote positive staff and community relationships. By seeking and achieving ACA accreditation, the staff will feel that their work has been legitimized. Annual staff training and orientation will have a focus and a purpose that was previously amorphous. Staff will be reminded of what is in it for them, not just the children. Developing staff goals and benefits can help recruit and retain excellent staff who want to be there (Brandwein, 2003). Implications for community relationships include an understanding that Hexagon camp adheres to the highest standards in organized camp programs, which may strengthen its relationships with partner organizations. Organizations such as the schools in the area, the STEM festivals, and the local and regional multicultural centers, can be assured that Hexagon camp provides a safe, child-centered program in SEL, creativity, and character development.

Conclusion

In advocating for a policy of strategic SEL training approaches for all the various constituents of the Hexagon program, I am proposing that the camp commits to the vocabulary and the most effective methods of achieving SEL goals. By advocating for a policy of seeking accreditation by the American Camp Association, I am proposing that the Hexagon program do what needs to be done to be verified as a safe and excellent camp program. Both of these policies are intended to accomplish the function of transitioning from an effective program that is known to its constituents to an effective program that is known to the larger community, and recognized internally, as an effective and excellent program in child and young adult development.

CHAPTER EIGHT: CONCLUSION

Introduction

This utilization-focused evaluation sought to determine the effectiveness of the Hexagon summer camp program generally, and its ability to convey durable lessons of SEL, creativity, and character development, specifically. Of particular interest was the process for devising the improvised Story Drama and its relationship to SEL, creativity, and character development. These points are related to student learning because social-emotional skills development has been shown to positively relate to academic performance (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011). Also, summer camp programs may help address summer academic setback and decline in a range of academic and social-emotional areas (Wilson & Sibthorp, 2018). The Hexagon program can contribute to alleviating the phenomenon of summer academic and social-emotional skills decline for child participants.

Discussion

The purpose of the program evaluation was to gather information about Hexagon camp for program improvement, possible replication, and grant-writing. For this program evaluation, I gathered data from the primary stakeholders: parents, faculty, and campers. I sent surveys to parents, had interviews conducted of faculty, and held focus group discussions with campers. I analyzed the resultant data by reading, re-reading, and synthesizing the data, deriving emergent themes. My data analysis demonstrated that the Hexagon program is effective in teaching the skills of SEL, creativity, and character development. It also demonstrated that the devised Story Drama process is a central component of the entire camp experience. I found that the greater the student experiential

engagement in the drama creation process, the more the students gained from it in terms of SEL. I also found that the lessons learned during the summer camp program carry over into the lives of the children after camp.

Through the data gathering process, I learned that the SEL, creativity, and character development growth occurred as a byproduct of the Story Drama process and the camp experience. A review of the literature on SEL showed that greater gains in these areas could be obtained by implementing a focused, school-wide (camp-wide) program. The literature also showed that the effectiveness of SEL curricula varies greatly from elementary students up to approximately the sixth grade, compared to what works effectively for adolescents from seventh grade through high school. While elementary grade students respond well and gain in SEL significantly through direct skills-development curricula, adolescents respond much more positively to programs that they find relevant to their personal experience, and to which they can contribute, centrally. Examples of effective learning programs for adolescents include Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) projects. I used a YPAR project outline (Ozer, 2016) to recommend a new approach to the devised Story Drama creation process, placing the adolescents at the center of the process, in mentorship with the camp director as a devised-drama expert. This will provide an opportunity for the adolescents to learn the creativity process of drama devising in an experiential way, while the camp director can help to layer in lessons of social-emotional learning and character development.

Based on research conducted by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) I also recommended a policy of more in-depth staff training, beyond just physical safety certifications and facilities set-up. The staff training

will include Applied Improvisation and personal empowerment training (adult SEL). Part of this training will be a task force activity designed to contribute to the achievement of accreditation by the American Camp Association, which requires that an accredited camp articulate its core values, goals, and outcomes with regard to camper development. Professional development for faculty and staff will include Applied Improvisation techniques, which are an example of best practices in adult learning, where adults are involved in their own learning, use their own experience, and work on relevant, problem-centered topics. Articulating the core standards for Hexagon camp will be a good, problem-centered topic where the adults of camp can use their own experience and learn from one another, as well as from the results of this evaluation.

Seeking ACA accreditation will help to address the issue of a loose administrative organization. Hexagon camp originated in an informal way, where the camp director, her family, and several teacher-friends decided to put on a Harry Potter-based drama experience in the form of a one-week summer camp. At that point, there was no formal organization, but rather a gathering of interested parties. In the ensuing years, they put on the camp each summer, and it grew and changed organically without a formal organizational plan in place. They relied on tradition and an end-of-the season brainstorming list of “what to do differently next time.” As a result of this history, an organization developed that was extremely dependent on the camp director as the central decision-making controller. Job descriptions, camp orientation and training, and most policies were improvised on an as-needed basis. Although mostly effective, the organization will benefit from formal policies and defined procedures, including job descriptions, regular scheduling, and articulated standards. Seeking ACA accreditation

will give a structure to the creation of an organizational plan, while achieving accreditation will recognize the excellence of the Hexagon program.

Leadership Lessons

This process has taught me a great deal about my own leadership style. At this point in my career and experience, I am an effective transformational leader. This was one of the emergent themes in the data from all three stakeholder groups that contributed to this research process. This was an epiphany for me, as I was previously reluctant to consider myself either an expert or a mentor, and yet so many of the constituents of the Hexagon program pointed it out. One of the most significant leadership growth experiences for me was a major change in my career that coincided with my decision to take on this program evaluation project. This growth experience taught me the important lesson of taking time to see what is going on in an organization, “from the balcony” (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009) rather than doing everything myself. I learned the importance of observing the political authority in an organization, and the responsibility of building alliances. The career change caused me a tremendous personal crisis of confidence; however, the process of conducting this program evaluation turned that into a very positive event, probably the best possible outcome and beyond what I ever could have imagined. It turned my disequilibrium into a transformational learning experience. I learned to trust myself and to let go of things beyond my control. I learned that I have what it takes to build an adaptive culture, with the Hexagon program as just one example. I have effectively nurtured a sense of shared responsibility for the organization and I will continue to do so. With the prospect of expanding the Hexagon program to include a second location in a different part of the country, I know I have the experience and

leadership skills to do so effectively. I have articulated my purposes and I am fortunate that the bulk of my career has been in a direction that supports the focus of my purpose. This is true even to the extent that I am now considering ways in which I can mentor younger leaders to take over my position one day. I get to practice this in my day-to-day teaching, and could see myself eventually moving into administration, particularly in teacher education. Going forward as a leader, two things I will continually consider will be – to ask myself, what does the situation look like “from the balcony?” and also, “whose voice is being heard?” This second question relates to diversity in the organization as well as the point of view of the stakeholders. As I have gained experience, I have also learned the importance of perspective. It is one of the things we try most to teach at Hexagon camp: what does the world look like and feel like from someone else’s point of view? This is an exercise in empathy and imagination, and an important aspect of developing compassion and its relative, ethical character. If you can imagine what it is like to be someone else, you can empathize. If you have empathy, you are more likely to act ethically, for you understand at a deep emotional level what someone else is going through. Teaching ethical behavior and character development through imagination are central to my purposes as an educator and a transformational leader.

Conclusion

The Hexagon program sprang from the collective social imagination of a community of people. Imagination is a very special way of thinking; it brings into being things that have not existed before and combines things that come from completely different universes of thought. It gifts us with divergent thinking, creating possibilities

and opportunities. It can bring people together and change the world. Building a magical world of wizards at Hexagon camp relies on the imagination of its community, a community of individuals who accept one another with open hearts and a willingness to play together, work together, and imagine together. Although the concept for Hexagon originated in the fictional story about a boy wizard named Harry Potter, created by J. K. Rowling, this utilization-focused evaluation tells the nonfiction story of the Hexagon community of children, adolescents, and adults. It is a community that imagines together its own unique world of wizards that fight for good and champion acceptance, justice, and love. In the words of J. K. Rowling (2008), “We do not need magic to change the world, we carry all the power we need inside ourselves already: we have the power to imagine better... We can use [imagination] to understand and sympathize with others, thus turning it into a force for good.”

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: INVITATION TO TAKE PARENT/GUARDIAN SURVEY

Dear Parent/Guardian:

My name is Amy Ressler, and I am the camp director for [Hexagon] camp. I am also a doctoral student at National Louis University, Chicago, Illinois, in Educational Leadership. I am asking for your consent to voluntarily participate in my dissertation project. The study is entitled: Immersive Story Drama: The Process and Its Impacts at a Creativity Camp. The purpose of the study is to understand how the story drama is implemented at the creativity camp. The study will also examine how the drama experience contributes to social-emotional learning, as well as creativity development.

My project will address the process of devising an improvised, large-group story drama and how it impacts those involved at the [Hexagon] Creativity and Role-play camp. I will use the data I collect to understand the process and changes that may possibly need to be made regarding the story drama.

You may participate in this study by taking the survey attached. Taking the survey will indicate that you understand the purpose of the study and agree to participate. It should take approximately 15 minutes for you to complete the survey. All information collected in the survey reflects your experience and opinion as a parent or guardian of a child who has attended the camp. The survey information is anonymous.

To take the survey, please click here: <https://goo.gl/forms/Fzfayuwvu2j5c2Bo1>

Your participation is voluntary, and you may discontinue your participation at any time with absolutely no negative effects. I will keep the identity of the camp and all participants confidential, as it will not be attached to the data and I will use pseudonyms for all participants. Only I will have access to all of the data, which I will keep in a locked cabinet at my home, on a password protected hard drive for up to 5 years after the completion of this study, at which time I will shred all data. Participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk beyond that of everyday life. While you are likely to not have any direct benefit from being in this research study, your taking part in this study may contribute to our better understanding of the implementation of the drama at the camp and what changes, if any, need to be made.

While the results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, your identity will in no way be revealed. You may request a copy of this completed study by contacting me at aressler@my.nl.edu.

In the event you have questions or require additional information, you may contact me at: phone:[phone#]; email aressler@my.nl.edu; or [my address]. If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that you feel I have not addressed, you may contact my dissertation chair,

Thank you for your participation.

Amy J. Ressler 6/6/2018

Appendix B: PARENT/GUARDIAN SURVEY

Demographic and background information

Questions that reference "school" are asking about your child's regular, academic year experience.

How old was your camper be in the summer of 2018? *

How long has your child attended Hexagon? *

What gender does your child identify? *

- Female
- Male
- Non-binary
- Prefer not to say
- Other:

My child loves school.

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Other:

My child is bullied in school. *

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

My child is academically gifted. *

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

- Other:

My child struggles academically in school. *

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Other:

My child loves to read. *

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly Agree
- Other:

My child struggles socially at school. *

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

My child is naturally very creative. *

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

My child is a leader. *

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree

- Strongly agree

My child is a follower. *

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

My child participates in extracurricular sports at school. *

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

My child participates in extracurricular arts at school. *

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

My child has access to the arts at school. *

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

My child shows compassion for others. *

- Strongly disagree
- Disagree
- Neutral
- Agree
- Strongly agree

Why do you send your child to Hexagon? *

What do you perceive to be the overarching values that are taught at Hexagon?

What do you feel is working well at Hexagon? *

What is your child's favorite activity at Hexagon? *

What do you see as Hexagon's program weaknesses? *

On a scale of 1-5 where 5 is the highest or best rating, how would you rate your child's Hexagon experience?

Unsatisfactory 1 2 3 4 5 Outstanding

What do you see your child getting from Hexagon that they don't from other activities or parts of their world?

What makes Hexagon special?

Is Hexagon a successful experience for your child? Why or why not?

What do you feel could be improved in the Hexagon program?

What are some of the greatest challenges to the Hexagon program?

How can we address these challenges?

What does your child tell you about the story that is dramatized?

How has the Hexagon experience changed your child OUTSIDE of camp?

Has the Hexagon experience contributed to the development of your child's creativity? *

Yes

No

I'm not sure

How has the Hexagon experience contributed to your child's social-emotional development? *

How has the Hexagon experience contributed to the development of your child's moral character? *

Yes
No
I'm not sure

Has Hexagon been a good value for the money?

Yes
No
I'm not sure

Is there anything else you would like to share with me about Hexagon?

Appendix C: INFORMED CONSENT FOR TEACHER INTERVIEWS

Adult Participant Interview – Teachers

My name is Amy Ressler, and I am a doctoral student at National Louis University, Chicago, Illinois. I am asking for your consent to voluntarily participate in my dissertation project. The study is entitled: Immersive Devised Drama: The Process and Its Impacts at a Creativity Camp. The purpose of the study is to understand how the devised process drama is implemented at the creativity camp. The study will also examine how the drama experience contributes to social-emotional learning, creativity development.

My project will address the process of devising an improvised, large-group drama and how it impacts those involved at the Hexagon Creativity and Role-play camp. I will use the data I collect to understand the process and changes that may possibly need to be made regarding the devised drama.

You may participate in this study by signing this Consent form indicating that you understand the purpose of the interviews and agree to participate in one, 30-minute interview, which I will voice record, with possibly up to 5 email exchanges in order to clarify any questions I may have regarding your interview data. All information collected in the interviews reflects your experience and opinion as a teacher providing instruction at the camp, or as a parent whose child has attended the camp.

Your participation is voluntary, and you may discontinue your participation at any time with absolutely no negative effects. I will keep the identity of the camp and all participants confidential, as it will not be attached to the data and I will use pseudonyms for all participants. Only I will have access to all of the interview recordings and transcripts, and field notes, which I will keep in a locked cabinet at my home or on a password protected hard drive for up to 5 years, at which time I will shred or erase all data. Participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk beyond that of everyday life. While you are likely to not have any direct benefit from being in this research study, your taking part in this study may contribute to our better understanding of the implementation of the drama at the camp and what changes, if any, need to be made.

While the results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, your identity will in no way be revealed. You may request a copy of this completed study by contacting me at aressler@my.nl.edu. In the event you have questions or require additional information, you may contact me at my email aressler@my.nl.edu. If you have any concerns or questions before or during participation that you feel I have not addressed, you may contact my dissertation chair, Dr. Carol A. Burg, email: cburg@nl.edu; or the National-Louis Institutional Research Review Board: Dr. Shaunti Knauth, NLU IRRB Chair, shaunti.knauth@nl.edu, 312.261.3526, National Louis University IRRB Board, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60603. Thank you for your participation.

Signature

Amy J. Ressler 11/24/2017 Researcher Name (Please Print) _____ Researcher Signature

Appendix D: TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. How long have you been teaching at Hexagon?
2. Why do you teach at Hexagon?
3. What do you feel is the most successful aspect of Hexagon?
4. What do you feel is not working well at Hexagon?
5. What is your favorite thing about teaching at Hexagon?
6. What frustrates you about teaching at Hexagon?
7. How has teaching at Hexagon affected your teaching outside of camp?
8. What observations do you have about the campers' experience at Hexagon?
9. What do you perceive to be the relationship of the story drama to the children's social-emotional learning?
10. What do you perceive to be the relationship of the story drama to the children's character development?
11. What do you perceive to be the relationship of the story drama to the children's creativity development?
12. Does the social-emotional learning from the drama camp program transfer to the lives of the students involved, beyond the summer camp program? What makes you think this?
13. Does the creativity development from the drama camp program transfer to the lives of the students involved, beyond the summer camp program? What makes you think this?
14. How involved have you been in the story dramas?
15. How could the planning of the story dramas be most efficiently conducted?
16. How do the story dramas impact your teaching at Hexagon?
17. What are the greatest challenges at Hexagon? How could these challenges be overcome?
18. What else would you like to tell me about teaching at Hexagon?

Appendix E: INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION

(Parental Consent for Child)

Dear Parent/Guardian:

My name is Amy Ressler and I am the camp director at Hexagon. Your child knows me as _____. I am also a doctoral student in Educational Leadership at National Louis University, Chicago, Illinois. I am researching the story drama process that is so central to the Hexagon program for my dissertation. I am asking your consent for your child to voluntarily participate in my dissertation project. The study is entitled: Immersive Devised Story Drama: The Process and Its Impacts at a Creativity Camp. The purpose of the study is to understand how the devised story drama is implemented at the creativity camp. The study will also examine how the drama experience contributes to social-emotional learning, as well as creativity development.

You are being asked to participate in research. For you to be able to decide whether you want to participate in this project, you should understand what the project is about, as well as the possible risks and benefits in order to make an informed decision. This process is known as informed consent. This form describes the purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks. It also explains how your personal information will be used and protected. Once you have read this form and your questions about the study are answered, you will be asked to sign it. This will allow your participation in this study. You should receive a copy of this document to take with you.

Explanation of Study

This study is directed by Amy Ressler who is a graduate student at National Louis University. The purpose of this research study is to understand how the devised process drama is implemented at the creativity camp and how the drama experience contributes to social-emotional learning, and creativity development. You and your child are being asked to participate in this research study.

Your child will be in the research study for approximately 30 minutes. This consent, unless you choose to withdraw it, shall remain in effect until end of the research study.

The research study involves the following:

First, I will make sure the campers *want* to participate. No one will be forced or pressured to be part of this study. I will meet with the campers in mixed-age groups, sit in a circle and ask them questions. I will ask the campers about their favorite story dramas, what makes them fun, how they feel about it and what they learn from participating in the story dramas. I will ask them what we could do to make them better, and if they ever think about the story dramas that we make at camp during the regular school year. A copy of the questions I will ask are enclosed with this letter. I will record the discussion, and transcribe them, using pseudonyms for the campers' names so they will not be identified.

You and your child will be asked to review this consent form, and if you choose to allow your child to participate in this study you will be asked to sign it.

Risks and Discomforts

Participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk beyond that of everyday life. I will be available should you have any questions, concerns, or problems.

Benefits

While participants are likely to not have any direct benefit from being in this research study, taking part in this study may contribute to our better understanding of how improvised drama stories impact social-emotional learning and creativity, and what changes, if any, need to be made to the way the drama is created at camp.

The information learned from this research study may benefit other children with social-emotional development or creativity.

Confidentiality and Records

All participation is voluntary, and participants may discontinue participation at any time with absolutely no negative effects. I will keep the identity of the camp and all participants confidential, as it will not be attached to the data and I will use pseudonyms for all participants. Only I will have access to all data collected, which I will keep in a locked cabinet at my home or on a password protected hard drive for up to 5 years after the completion of this study, at which time I will shred all interview transcripts.

While the results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, your identity will in no way be revealed. You may request a copy of this completed study by contacting me at aressler@my.nl.edu.

Contact Information

In the event you have questions or require additional information, you may contact me at my email aressler@my.nl.edu. If you have any concerns of questions before or during participation that you feel I have not addressed, you may contact my graduate advisor at: cburg@nl.edu; or the National-Louis Institutional Research Review Board: Dr. Shaunti Knauth, NLU IRRB Chair, shaunti.knauth@nl.edu, 312.261.3526, National Louis University IRRB Board, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60603.

By signing below, you are agreeing that:

- you have read this consent form (or it has been read to you) and have been given the opportunity to ask questions and have them answered
- you have been informed of potential risks to you and your child and they have been explained to your satisfaction.
- you are 18 years of age or older
- your participation and your child’s participation in this research is completely voluntary
- you and your child may leave the study at any time with absolutely no negative effects. If your child decides to stop participating in the study, there will be no penalty to your child and he/she will not lose any benefits to which he/she is otherwise entitled.

Parent Printed Name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Child’s Name _____

Address: _____ Phone Number: _____

Researcher’s name / signature _____ Date _____

Appendix F: INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION

(Child Assent)

You are being asked to participate in research. For you to be able to decide whether you want to participate in this project, you should understand what the project is about, as well as the possible risks and benefits in order to make an informed decision. This process is known as informed consent. This form describes the purpose, procedures, possible benefits, and risks involved in participating in this study. It also explains how your personal information will be used and protected. Once you have read this form and your questions about the study are answered, you will be asked to sign it. This will allow your participation in this study. You will receive a copy of this document to take with you.

I am inviting you to take part in this study being run by me, Amy Ressler. You know me as _____ at camp. In this study, I will try to learn more about how to make the story dramas that we create at camp work better, teach kids about feelings, stories, creativity, and be fun for everybody. By participating in this study, you may do some activities with me such as talking with me (and some other campers) about your favorite story dramas.

This study will not hurt you in any way and if you participate you will help me figure out what makes the story drama most fun and meaningful, what kinds of things kids learn from playing in the stories, and what we can do to make the story dramas the best they can be in the future.

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to. If you decide to participate in the study, you can also stop at any time with absolutely no negative effects. Your parents have already been asked to give their permission for you to take part in this study, but you don't have to if you don't want to. You are free to talk this over with your parents before you decide whether or not to participate.

There are no risks associated with participating in the group discussion. All of the information will be confidential. The names will be removed from all papers and stored in locked files in a locked room at my office at home. Five years after the study, approximately 2023, I will shred all data I collect for this study.

While the results of this study may be published or otherwise reported to scientific bodies, your identity will in no way be revealed. You may request a copy of this completed study by contacting me at my email: aressler@my.nl.edu. If you have any questions at any time, please ask me. If you have any concerns of questions before or during participation that you feel I have not addressed, you may contact me at my email: aressler@my.nl.edu, or my graduate professor: Dr. Carol Burg; or the NLU's Institutional Research Review Board: Dr. Shaunti Knauth, NLU IRRB Chair, shaunti.knauth@nl.edu, 312.261.3526, National Louis University IRRB Board, 122 South Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60603.

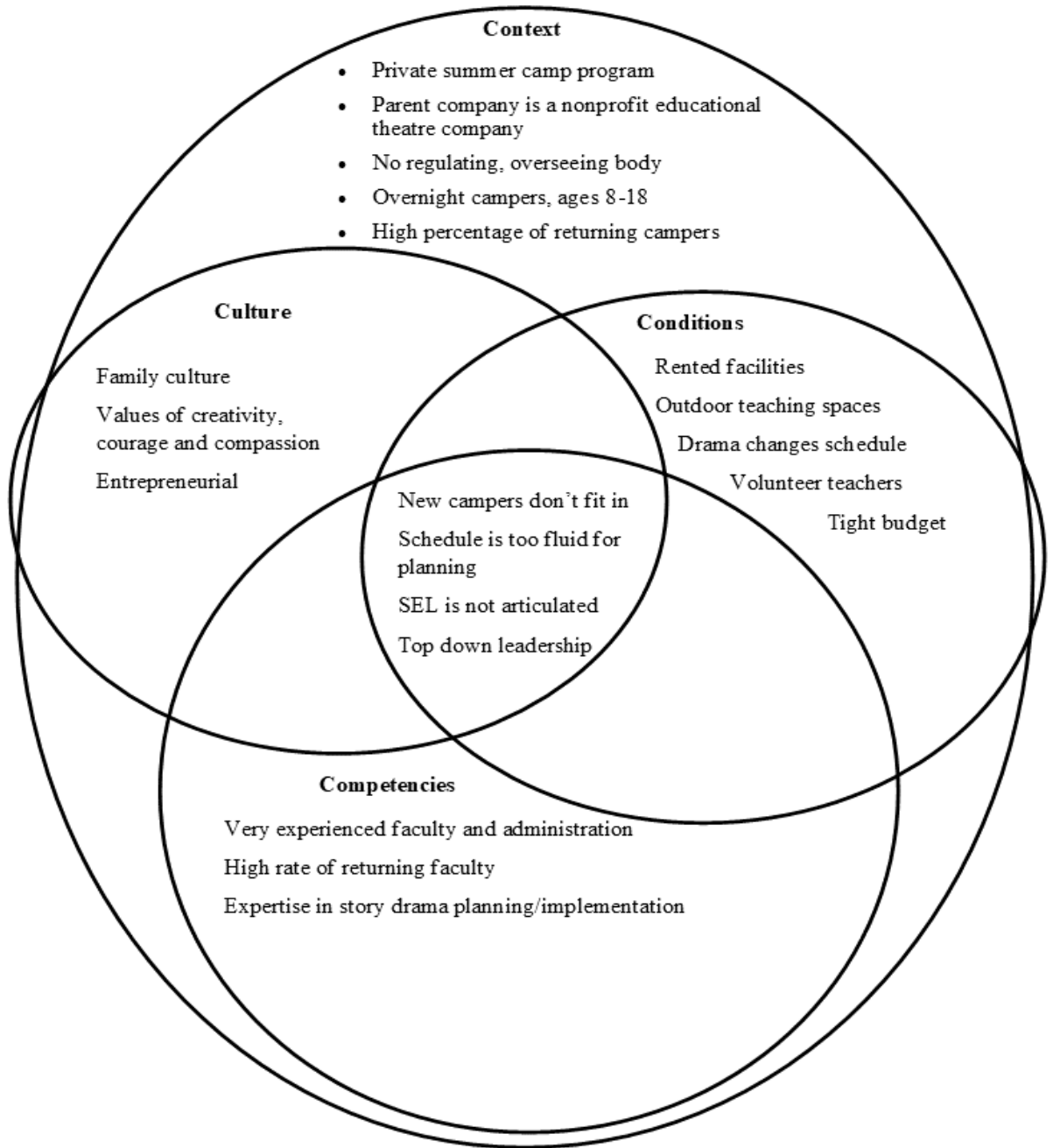
IF YOU PRINT AND SIGN YOUR NAME ON THIS FORM IT MEANS THAT YOU HAVE DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE AND HAVE READ EVERYTHING THAT IS ON THIS FORM. YOU AND YOUR PARENTS WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS FORM TO KEEP.

_____ Student Name (Printed)	Amy J. Ressler _____ Name of Researcher (Printed)
_____ Student Name (Signed)	_____ Name of Researcher (Signed)

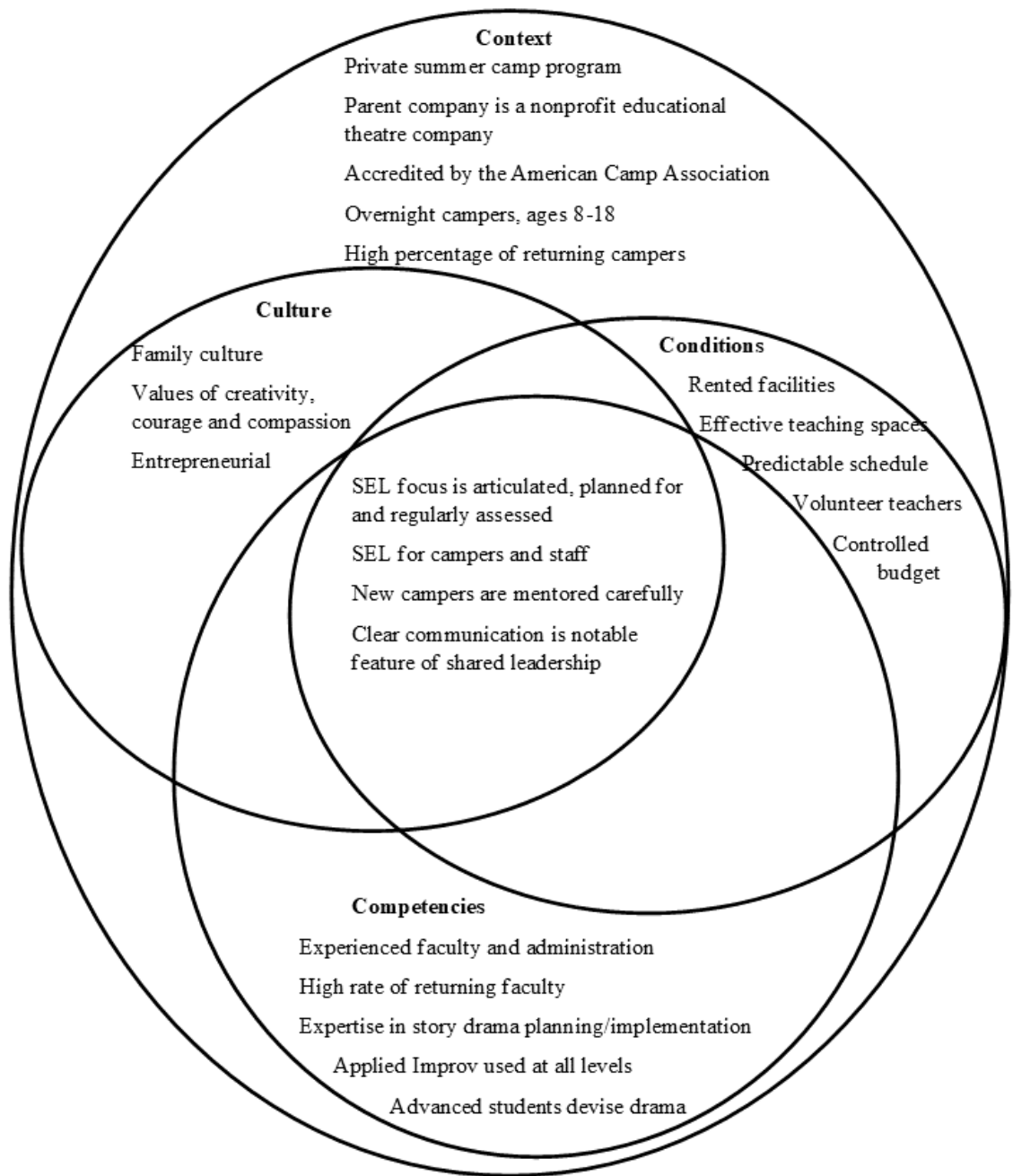
Appendix G: CAMPER FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How many summers have you been coming to camp?
2. What is your favorite thing about camp?
3. What is your least favorite thing about camp?
4. What are the most challenging things about camp?
5. Do you have any ideas for how to improve camp?
6. What were your favorite story dramas?
7. What did you like about them?
8. What do you tell your folks about the story dramas?
9. What are some of your favorite parts that you played in the story drama?
10. What makes a story drama fun for you?
11. What is the best part of the story drama?
12. How do you feel when you're acting in the story drama?
13. What should we do to make the story drama better?
14. Do you ever think about or talk about the story dramas during the regular school year?
15. How does Hexagon camp help you understand and control your thoughts and feelings in your life outside of camp?
16. How does Hexagon help you be more creative in your life outside of camp?

Appendix H: "AS-IS" DIAGNOSTIC CHART



Appendix I: 'TO-BE' ENVISION CHART



Appendix J: STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS CHART

Social-Emotional Learning	
Elementary age campers	Acting Right: Building a Cooperative, Collaborative, Creative Classroom Community Through Drama
Middle school age campers	Princeton-Blairstown Center Middle School SEL free Curriculum
High school age campers	YAPR – based drama project planning
Staff Professional Development	
For Prefects	Empowerment training
For Faculty	Applied Improvisation
De-centralized Organizational Tasks	
Daily schedule	Volunteer faculty
Newbie program	Two experienced Prefects
Graduation ritual	Prefects
<u>ACA Accreditation process</u>	
	Core Statements:
Staff community project	Rights & Dignity of Campers/ Staff
	Goals & Outcomes
	Camper Development
	Environmental Activities
Administration	Emergency & Accident Response plan
	Personal Vehicle Use policy
	Camper arrival & departure plan
	Risk Management